

## Exercise Does Not Have To Be Too Hard

**Question:** I hate to exercise. I don't like to sweat and I don't want to give up the time. I'm active -- does that count for anything?

**Answer:** Yes. We are finding out that a small increase in your activity level can result in dramatic reductions for cardiovascular disease and heart attacks.

In my last article, I discussed how to stay on an exercise program. I urged my readers to "Commit to be Fit". For many people, this involves going to the gym as well as running, biking etc. This type of program produces athletic fitness.

However, there is more research that shows many other less strenuous activities produce "health fitness". Harvey B. Simon, MD is a Harvard Medical School professor who has written "The No Sweat Exercise Plan". In 1987, Dr. Simon wrote "The Athlete Within" and urged readers to exercise vigorously 3-6 hours per week, resulting in burning 2000 calories per week.

"I regret preaching the doctrine of aerobics as I did for so many years", says Dr. Simon. In June 2001, researchers found that most of the benefits of exercise start with the first 1000 calories burned each week. This reduced the risk of dying by 20-30% according to the Journal of Medical Science and Exercise.

It is not too hard to burn 1000 extra calories per week. This translates to 145 calories per day. A 180 pound person burns about 100 calories during 20 minutes of active housework. Walking stairs 4 times/day is another 100 calories. It takes about 100 calories to walk one mile.

You can find an exercise calculator at [www.caloriecontrol.org/exercalc.html](http://www.caloriecontrol.org/exercalc.html) to determine how many calories you burn with various activities.

The results can be dramatic. Walking 55 flights of stairs in a week results in a 33% lower death rate. One hour of gardening/week results in 66% lower risk of sudden cardiac death. Walking one hour/week results in 51% low risk of coronary artery disease. Regular, demanding household cleaning lowered heart attack risk by 54% in men and 84% in women. And lastly, exercising 30 minutes just 6 days a month results in a 43% lower mortality rate.

Recently, the medical journal Diabetes Care showed that moderate exercise added nearly 2 1/2 years to life expectancy for active people, compared to those who were sedentary.

Almost everyone can add some activity to their life-style. Only a few of us are so immobilized or disabled that we can't. If you do nothing else, park your car further out in the parking lot and walk more steps into the grocery store.

One of our main goals in our clinic is to reduce your pain so that you can increase your level of activity. We help you lead a fuller, healthier life. If you have a joint problem or back problem that is stopping you from doing even mild exercise, it's time to get this fixed.

A good example is one of our recent cases. Unfortunately, this woman was involved in a serious car accident and had chronic hip pain for the last three years that stopped her from all exercise. At times, she could not even walk her own dog. With our treatment and her determination, she now is walking 18 miles/week and feeling better than ever!

There is no question that she is healthier because of it and you can be too.

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