

# Exercise improve symptoms in irritable bowel syndrome

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The study, which was conducted at Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Gothenburg and at Alingsas Hospital, included 102 IBS patients between the ages of 18 and 65. Half the group was randomly allocated to increase their physical activity and the other half to maintain their usual lifestyle. Both groups received supportive phone calls from a physiotherapist. The active group increased their physical activity on their own, but with the advice and support from the physiotherapist.

"They were advised to perform moderate to vigorous physical activity for 20 to 30 minutes three to five times a week," says Elisabet Johannesson, a registered physiotherapist and one of the authors of the article.

At the start of the study and after three months the participants in the study were asked to rate their different IBS complaints, such as abdominal pain, stool problems and quality of life.

"The group with unchanged lifestyle had an average decrease of symptoms by 5 points. The active group on the other hand showed a symptom improvement with an average reduction of 51 points," says Riadh Sadik, a senior physician who has been responsible for the study.

The researchers also showed that the group with an unchanged lifestyle had deteriorating symptoms in 23% of cases, compared with the active group in which only 8% felt worse.

The measurement of fitness in the study showed a slight increase in the activity group only. "This suggests that even a slight increase of [physical activity](#) may reduce symptoms and protect from deterioration," says Sadik.

The study is published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology* and has attracted great attention in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden.

**More information:** *American Journal of Gastroenterology* , Title of the article: Physical Activity Improves Symptoms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome: A Randomized Controlled Trial, Authors: Elisabet Johannesson, Magnus Simrén, Hans Strid, Antal Bajor and Riadh Sadik

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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