

Study: Weight training improves Parkinson's symptoms

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New research suggests weight training for two years significantly improves the motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease compared to other forms of exercise such as stretching and balance exercises. The clinical trial, which compared two forms of exercise for Parkinson's disease, was released today and will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 64th Annual Meeting in New Orleans April 21 to April 28, 2012.

"While we have known that many different types of exercise can benefit Parkinson's patients over short time periods, we did not know whether exercise improves the motor symptoms of Parkinson's over the long term," said study author Daniel Corcos, PhD, with the University of Illinois at Chicago.

For the study, 48 people with Parkinson's disease were randomized to progressive resistance exercise, known as weight training, or they were assigned to the exercise known as fitness counts, which includes flexibility, balance and strengthening exercises. The groups exercised for one hour, twice a week for two years.

The severity of motor symptoms, including [tremors](#), was measured using the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) after six, 12, 18 and 24 months of exercise. Scores were taken when the participants were not taking their medication.

While both forms of exercise reduced motor symptoms at six months of

exercise, participants who did weight training saw a 7.3 point improvement in their UPRDS score after two years while the fitness counts group returned to the same scores they had at the start of the study.

"Our results suggest that long-term [weight training](#) could be considered by patients and doctors as an important component in managing Parkinson's disease," said Corcos.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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