

Decreased breast cancer risk linked to active lifestyle

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(Medical Xpress)—An active lifestyle such as doing housework, brisk walking and gardening helps to reduce the chance of getting breast cancer, new research shows today.

The research – the largest ever looking at [physical activity](#) and [breast cancer](#) – is part of ongoing work by the [European Prospective Investigation of Cancer](#) (EPIC), a Cancer Research UK co-funded study and one of the biggest studies into the links between diet, lifestyle and cancer.

Researchers looked at over 8,000 breast cancer cases in women. They found that the group who were the most physically active were 13 per

cent less likely to develop breast cancer compared with those who were physically inactive.

Researchers found that women who were moderately active had an eight per cent lower chance of developing breast cancer.

Previous research has estimated that more than three per cent of breast cancers, more than five per cent of colon cancers and around four per cent of womb cancers in the UK in 2010 were linked to people doing fewer than 150 minutes of at least [moderate intensity](#) physical activity per week.**

Professor Tim Key, a Cancer Research UK [epidemiologist](#) based at the University of Oxford who works on the EPIC study, said: "This large study further highlights the benefits of being active – even moderate amounts. There is also a lot of evidence that exercise reduces the risk of [bowel cancer](#). More research is needed on other [types of cancer](#), and to investigate the mechanisms which could explain the links."

The government recommends we do 150 minutes a week of [moderate physical activity](#) – such as [brisk walking](#). But only 39 per cent of men and 29 per cent of women are managing this.

Sara Hiom, director of information at Cancer Research UK, said: "While maintaining a healthy bodyweight and cutting back on alcohol remain two of the best ways of reducing our risk of breast cancer, being active can clearly play a role too – but doesn't have to cost you money or too much time.

"You don't need to train like an Olympic athlete but the excitement of watching team GB win so many golds might have inspired some of us to spend less time on the sofa. And, as this research confirms, exercise can include anything that leaves you slightly out of breath like doing the

gardening, walking the dog or housework.

"Small changes in your daily routine can make all the difference, like taking the stairs instead of the lift or walking some of the way to work, school or the shops and add up over the course of a week."

"Keeping active could help prevent more than 3,000 cases of cancer in the UK every year. And it can have a positive effect on your health"

More information: Steindorf, K et al., – *International Journal of Cancer* (2012) Physical activity and risk of breast cancer overall and by hormone receptor status: The european prospective investigation into cancer and nutrition [DOI: 10.1002/ijc.27778](https://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.27778)

Parkin, D.M. Cancers attributable to inadequate physical exercise in the UK in 2010. *Br J Cancer*, 6 Dec 2011; 105 (S2):S38-S41; [doi: 10.1038/bjc.2011.482](https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.2011.482)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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