

Just 10 minutes of physical activity multiple times a day improves health

January 4 2013, by Sharyn Alden



Despite the importance of physical activity, many people feel they don't have enough time to exercise. An active lifestyle that includes engaging in physical activity for less than 10 minutes multiple times a day can have the same health benefits as more structured exercise, finds a new study in the *American Journal of Health Promotion*.

"There were little differences in levels of [health outcomes](#) between those who received moderate to intense levels of physical activity in 10 minute

bouts or longer compared to those who were physically active in shorter bouts of activity," said lead author Paul D. Loprinzi, Ph.D., assistant professor in the department of exercise science at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. "This suggests that shorter bouts of about activity of 150 minutes a week may be just as beneficial as engaging in fewer bouts of longer duration."

The researchers pulled data from a national survey of 6,321 people between 18 and 85 years old whose activity levels were measured along with blood pressure, glucose and total [cholesterol levels](#). With the exception of [body mass index](#), people who engaged in a so-called active lifestyle, with multiple bouts of moderate to [vigorous physical activity](#) lasting less than 10 consecutive minutes had similar improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol and other [health measures](#) as people who engaged in structured exercise for longer periods.

"This research demonstrates the same findings I regularly see in my practice," said Laura Pady-Porter, M.S., a clinical exercise physiologist at the University of Wisconsin Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

"As [health care providers](#), we are still telling our patients to exercise for 30 minutes daily and are not taking into account busy schedules, health concerns or general deconditioning levels."

She added that both consumers and [health care professionals](#) need to be informed that even 10 minute bouts of physical activity, preferably several times a day, are just as advantageous as 30-minute minimum bouts a day.

"I continue to be amazed when patients say they have never been informed that 10 minute bouts of physical activity can be just as beneficial as 'suffering' through 30 minutes of consecutive exercise," said Pady-Porter. "Once I explain the option of several 10 minute sessions, I see better compliance."

Regular exercise not only benefits a person's health, it can improve their overall quality of life. But one of the biggest barriers to getting people moving is their attitude about exercise.

"A person's attitude or beliefs can hold them back from being active," said Loprinzi. "Our findings are particularly informative as an individual who perceives him or herself to be too busy to be active may still be able to enhance their healthy by adopting an active lifestyle approach."

More information: Loprinzi, P. and Cardinal, B. (2012) Association Between Biologic Outcomes and Objectively Measured Physical Activity Accumulated in 10-Minute Bouts, *American Journal of Health Promotion*, Published online Dec. 31.

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