

Hot flashes? Active days bring better nights

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Getting a good night's sleep isn't always easy for women at menopause. Exercise may help, but women can have a tough time carving out leisure time for it. The good news from a study published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of the North American Menopause Society, is that higher levels of routine daily physical activity may be the more important key to a better night's sleep for many women who have hot flashes or night sweats.

Although exercise is known to improve sleep for people in general, studies in [menopausal women](#) haven't been conclusive. That's why the researchers at the Pittsburgh site of the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN) focused exclusively on women with [hot flashes](#) or night sweats and also drew the distinction between leisure time and household activity. The 27 white and 25 [African American women](#) in the study, who were 54 to 63 years old, kept diaries rating their sleep and wore sleep monitors. They also completed questionnaires about their physical activity, including routine household and [caregiving](#) chores requiring light, moderate, or vigorous effort as well as sports and exercise.

The results showed that the women who had higher levels of activity reported better sleep and fewer nighttime awakenings. The positive effects were mainly associated with household and caregiving activity rather than sports or exercise.

But there were significant racial and body mass differences: The advantages were mainly in women who were white and not obese. More

study needs to be done to find out why African American and [obese women](#) may not get the same sleep benefits, but it will likely be important to distinguish between leisure and non-leisure time activity to do so, said the authors.

The study will be published in the September 2013 print edition of *Menopause*.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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