

# Exercise linked to improved erectile and sexual function in men

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Credit: Peter Griffin/Public Domain

Men who exercise more have better erectile and sexual function, regardless of race, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

While past studies have highlighted the relationship between better erectile function and [exercise](#), African-American men have been

underrepresented in this literature.

"This study is the first to link the benefits of exercise in relation to improved erectile and sexual function in a racially diverse group of patients," said Adriana Vidal, PhD, senior author of the study and investigator in the Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute and Department of Surgery.

Nearly 300 study participants self-reported their activity levels, which researchers then categorized as sedentary, mildly active, moderately active or highly active. The subjects also self-reported their sexual function, including the ability to have erections, orgasms, the quality and frequency of erections and overall sexual function.

Results found that men who reported more frequent exercise, a total of 18 metabolic equivalents, or METS, per week, had higher sexual function scores, regardless of race. MET hours reflect both the total time of exercise and the intensity of exercise. A total of 18 METS can be achieved by combining exercises with different intensities, but is the equivalent of two hours of [strenuous exercise](#), such as running or swimming, 3.5 hours of [moderate exercise](#), or six hours of [light exercise](#).

In contrast, men of any ethnicity who exercised less reported lower levels of sexual function. Additional contributors to low [sexual function](#) included diabetes, older age, past or current smoking and coronary artery disease.

Stephen Freedland, MD, co-author on the study and director of the Center for Integrated Research in Cancer and Lifestyle in the Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute, cautions that exercise should be tailored for each individual.

"When it comes to exercise, there is no one-size-fits-all approach," said

Freedland, who also serves as co-director of the Cancer Genetics and Prevention Program. "However, we are confident that even some degree of exercise, even if less intense, is better than no exercise at all."

**More information:** *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*. 2015 March: The Association of Exercise with Both Erectile and Sexual Function in Black and White Men.

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