

When it comes to exercise, quality trumps quantity

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(HealthDay)—You've probably heard that you need to get at least 150

minutes of moderate exercise every week. But a study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* suggests that a mix of different types of exercise brings better results than simply adding more quantity.

That's important if you spend hours at the gym, but focus solely on [strength training](#) or pounding the treadmill.

Researchers at Skidmore College in New York compared the effects of different exercise regimens. Their findings: participants got the most benefits from a program that included [resistance exercise](#), cardio workouts, [interval training](#) and stretching, along with eating moderate amounts of protein throughout the day. The theory is that this blend addresses more of your body's needs.

The approach led to impressive results—weight loss, less belly fat, lower [blood sugar levels](#) and an increase in lean muscle, the study authors said.

Adopting this balanced regimen is as simple as adding a few new disciplines, like a yoga class twice a week after resistance work or including resistance work after a cardio session. The findings also suggest that you can jazz up your standard cardio workout a few days every week with interval training, alternating intense bursts of the activity with slower and longer segments of the same activity.

The American College of Sports Medicine also suggests including motor skills training for balance, agility and coordination. You can meet this goal through the same classes you might take for flexibility, such as yoga, Pilates and tai chi.

Give these suggestions a try:

- Cardio 5 times a week with interval training on 3 sessions.
- Strength training 2 to 3 times a week but not on consecutive days.

- Stretching/flexibility exercises 2 to 3 times a week.

More information: The American College of Sports Medicine has detailed [recommendations on exercise quantity and quality](#) to help you plan your ideal schedule.

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