

Different types of physical activity offer varying protection against heart disease

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While it is well known that physical activity is important for heart health, neither research nor recommendations consistently differentiate between the benefits of different types of physical activity. New research, presented at the ACC Latin America Conference 2018 in Lima, Peru, found that while all physical activity is beneficial, static activities—such

as strength training—were more strongly associated with reducing heart disease risks than dynamic activities like walking and cycling.

"Both [strength training](#) and aerobic activity appeared to be heart healthy, even in small amounts, at the [population level](#)," said Maia P. Smith, Ph.D., MS, statistical epidemiologist and assistant professor in the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at St. George's University in St. George's, Grenada. "Clinicians should counsel patients to exercise regardless—both activity types were beneficial. However, static activity appeared more beneficial than dynamic, and patients who did both types of physical activity fared better than patients who simply increased the level of one type of activity."

Researchers analyzed cardiovascular risk factors, such as [high blood pressure](#), overweight, diabetes and high cholesterol, as a function of self-reported static and/or dynamic activity (strength training or walking/biking) in 4,086 American adults using data from the 2005-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The researchers then adjusted for age, ethnicity, gender and smoking and stratified by age: 21 to 44 years old or over 45 years old.

In total, 36 percent of younger and 25 percent of older adults engaged in static activity, and 28 percent of younger and 21 percent of [older adults](#) engaged in dynamic activity. Researchers found engaging in either type of activity was associated with 30 to 70 percent lower rates of cardiovascular disease risk factors, but associations were strongest for static activity and in youth.

"One interesting takeaway was that both static and dynamic activity were almost as popular in older people as younger," Smith said. "I believe this gives clinicians the opportunity to counsel their older patients that they will fit into the gym or the road race just fine. The important thing is to make sure they are engaging in physical activity."

Smith said future [research](#) and data collection should use definitions of [physical activity](#) that separate static from dynamic activity to further investigate independent effects.

Provided by American College of Cardiology

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