

Being physically active can lower older adults' risk for dying

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For older adults, being physically active is an important part of overall good health. In fact, experts say that nine percent of all premature deaths are caused by not getting enough physical activity. Physical activity is known to reduce deaths from heart disease, diabetes, chronic lung disease, and mental illness.

A team of researchers looked more carefully at the relationship between death and physical exercise among older adults in Brazil (where the number of [older adults](#) grew 40 percent between 2002 and 2012). Their study was published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

They drew on information from the "COMO VAI?" (Consórcio de Mestrado Orientado para a Valorização da Atenção ao Idoso) study. During the study, from January to August 2014, researchers conducted home interviews with 1,451 adults older than 60. Of these, 971 participants were given wrist monitors to measure their physical activity. Researchers also asked participants about their smoking habits and how they would rate their health.

Additionally, researchers learned about the chronic health conditions participants said they had, including [high blood pressure](#), diabetes, heart problems, Parkinson's disease, kidney failure, high cholesterol, depression, stroke, and cancer. The researchers then rated participants' ability to perform their normal daily activities, including bathing, dressing, getting from bed to chair, going to the bathroom, and feeding.

Not surprisingly, the researchers learned that people who had the lowest levels of physical activity had higher rates of death compared to people who had higher levels of activity.

The researchers concluded that their main findings suggest that low levels of physical activity are associated with higher risks of death, no matter what a person's level of health was. Overall, [physical activity](#) was important for avoiding early death in older men and women.

More information: Renata M. Bielemann et al, Objectively Measured Physical Activity Reduces the Risk of Mortality among Brazilian Older Adults, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.16180](#)

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