

# Physical activity interventions may aid substance use disorder treatment

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Physical activity may be a promising intervention to complement

substance use disorder treatment, according to a review published online April 26 in *PLOS ONE*.

Florence Piche, from the University of Quebec in Trois-Rivières, Canada, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to identify studies assessing the effects of physical activity interventions for people with [substance use disorders](#).

Based on 43 included articles (3,135 participants), the researchers report that the most common physical activity intervention identified was of moderate intensity (three times per week for about one hour) for 13 weeks. Half of the studies (49 percent) assessed cessation/reduction of substance use as the outcome, and three-quarters showed a decrease in substance use following physical activity intervention. The second most studied effect was [aerobic capacity](#) (14 studies), with more than 71 percent of studies reporting improvement. A decrease in [depressive symptoms](#) was observed in one-quarter of the studies (28 percent).

"Results suggest that there is promising evidence indicating that physical activity can be beneficial for these patients. We conclude, too, that future researchers should better describe their interventions," the authors write. "We also maintain that it is important to consider including participants with mental comorbidities and to monitor [physical activity](#) adherence during the intervention and mention it in the results. This will help reduce methodological bias and allow for clear results that can be generalized."

**More information:** Florence Piché et al, Characteristics and impact of physical activity interventions during substance use disorder treatment excluding tobacco: A systematic review, *PLOS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0283861](#)



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