

# Study finds placebo effect also applies to exercise training

April 25 2023

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

You can get a better effect from your training if you believe that the training program you are following has been put together especially for you, according to Kolbjørn Andreas Lindberg, a research fellow at the

University of Agder in Norway.

"If you believe that the [training](#) program you are following has been optimized for you, that in itself will have an effect, regardless of the content of the program. It is exactly the same as the [placebo](#) effect we know from medicine," says Lindberg who has conducted a [pilot study](#) on the effect this can have on training. The results have been published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Have you ever taken paracetamol to relieve a pounding headache, only to feel better even before the pill has had a chance to work? Then you have experienced the placebo effect.

Placebo is the name for the somewhat strange phenomenon that occurs when medication or treatment works better if you believe it will work.

"The placebo effect has been studied for over 70 years, but looking at it in the context of exercise research is new," Lindberg says.

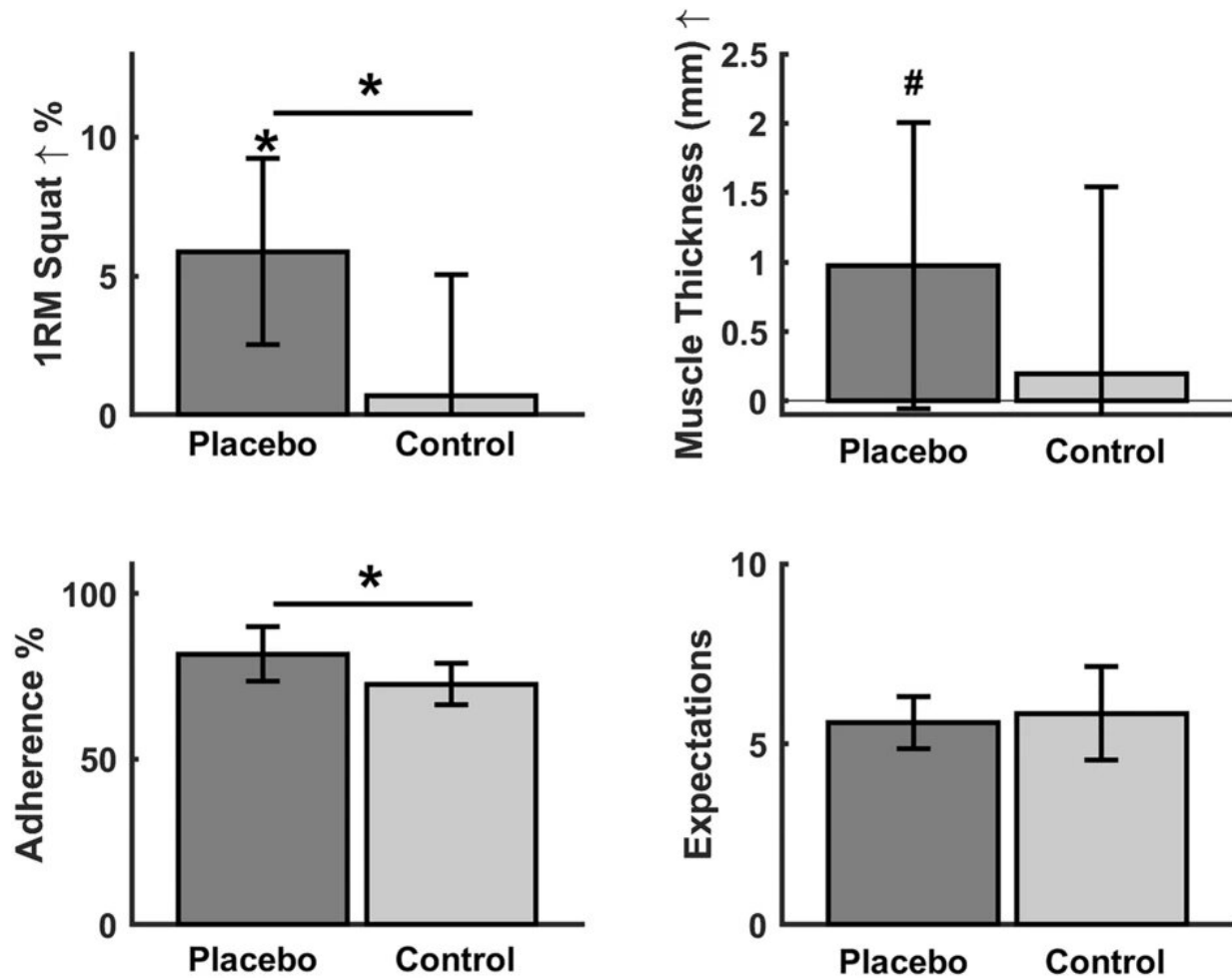
Placebo drugs are an important part of clinical research. In so-called blind trials, the active drug and placebo are administered to patients according to a code, so neither the researchers nor the subjects know who has been given what.

In this way, researchers can objectively evaluate the effect of the medication.

Forty people participated in the study by Lindberg and his colleagues. After a series of physical tests in the laboratory, they were all given different training programs.

Half of the participants were told that the training program they received had been specially adapted to them based on the tests that were carried

out. This was the intervention group.



Illustrating percent change in 1RM (*One repetition maximum*) squat, change in muscle thickness (mm: millimeters), Adherence between groups measured as percentage of completed scheduled training sessions as well as median expectation (SETS: Stanford Expectations of Treatment Scale) of the placebo and control group. \*p

Citation: Study finds placebo effect also applies to exercise training (2023, April 25) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-04-placebo-effect.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.