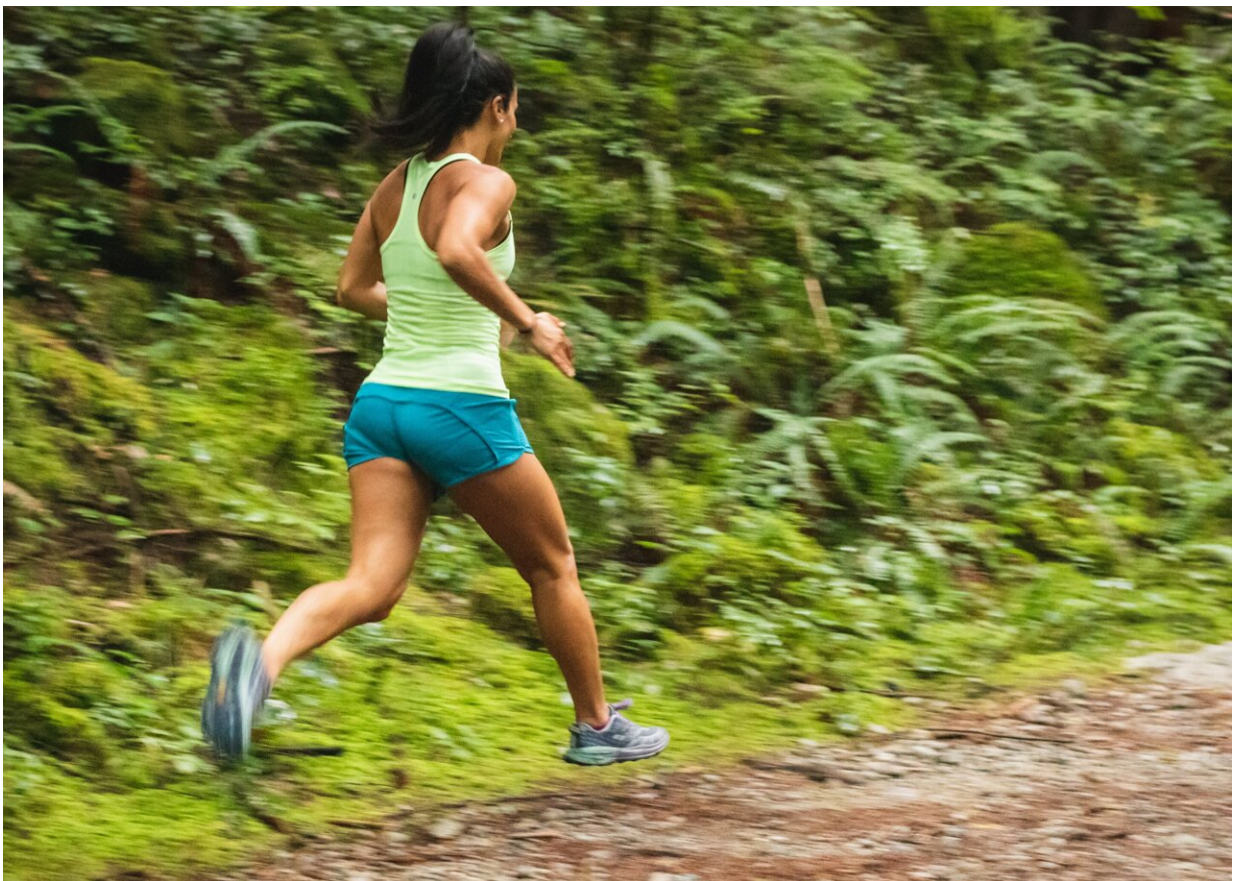


Researchers find 'weekend warrior' physical activity provides similar heart-related benefits as more regular exercise

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People who find it difficult to find time to exercise during a busy work

week may concentrate their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity to one to two days of the week or weekend.

In an analysis published in *JAMA* that was conducted by investigators at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), this "weekend warrior" pattern was associated with similarly lower risks of heart disease and stroke compared with more evenly distributed exercise.

Guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous [physical activity](#) per week for overall health, but it's unclear if concentrated exercise can provide the same benefits as more evenly distributed activity.

"Our analysis represents the largest study to address this question," says lead author Shaan Khurshid, MD, MPH, a faculty member in the Demoulas Center for Cardiac Arrhythmias at MGH.

Khurshid and his colleagues examined data on 89,573 individuals in the prospective UK Biobank study who wore wrist accelerometers that recorded their total physical activity and time spent at different intensities for a full week.

Among participants, 33.7% were inactive (less than 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week), 42.2% were active weekend warriors (at least 150 minutes with at least half achieved in 1–2 days), and 24.0% were active-regular (at least 150 minutes with most exercise spread out over several days).

After adjustments, both activity patterns were associated with similarly lower risks of heart attack (27% and 35% lower risks for active weekend warriors and active-regular, respectively, compared with inactive), [heart failure](#) (38% and 36% lower risks), [atrial fibrillation](#) (22% and 19% lower risks), and stroke (21% and 17% lower risks).

"Our findings suggest that interventions to increase physical activity, even when concentrated within a day or two each week, may improve [cardiovascular outcomes](#)," says senior author Patrick T. Ellinor, MD, Ph.D., acting chief of Cardiology and the co-director of the Corrigan Minehan Heart Center at MGH.

The team also plans to assess whether weekend warrior–type activity might be associated with reduced risks of a broader spectrum of diseases.

Additional co-authors include Mostafa A. Al-Alusi, MD, Timothy W. Churchill, MD, and J. Sawalla Guseh, MD.

More information: Accelerometer-Derived "Weekend Warrior" Physical Activity and Incident Cardiovascular Disease, *JAMA* (2023). DOI: [10.1001/jama.2023.10875](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.10875)

Provided by Massachusetts General Hospital

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