

Exercise key to improving quality of life for kidney patients, researcher says

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Exercise-based rehab can slow chronic kidney disease, boost transplant readiness and recovery and improve quality of life, a study shows.

In the complex web of health care, where [chronic conditions](#) can cast long shadows over patients' lives, fresh hope is piling up.

Health care has long been looking for [holistic approach](#) to care for people with [chronic kidney disease](#) (CKD), which affects 7.2 million in the UK—10 percent of people.

Now exercise-based rehabilitation is making waves as a game-changer, says a [study](#) in the research journal *Current Opinion in Nephrology and Hypertension*.

Researchers at Brunel University London and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust analyzed pivotal recent evidence about the impact exercise can have on the health of people with kidney disease.

"There is now a body of evidence and kidney-specific guidelines that firmly support a rollout of pragmatic and scalable exercise-based interventions for people living with CKD," said King's College Hospital Consultant Physiotherapist Dr. Sharlene Greenwood. "We are indeed nearly there now."

Many with CKD need support to self-manage their condition in ways like sticking to their medications, monitoring progression and making [lifestyle changes](#) where needed, as well as looking after their emotional health. Self-management interventions emphasizing physical activity gain momentum in CKD care, requiring early implementation.

Preparing for kidney transplant surgery and recovering after it are both key stages when exercise-based rehab such as walking, swimming and cycling can make a vital difference for people with CKD.

Digital apps nudging people to exercise regularly and recognizing progress and achievements show huge potential, the study finds. This

kind of easy-to-offer, cost-effective exercise-based therapy for CKD patients cuts need for training staff to do it. But the patients who would benefit most from it—those facing digital poverty—are the least likely to access and use it.

Patients about to have [kidney dialysis](#) and people on the transplant list would benefit in many ways from holistic well-being assessments, the paper also recommends. That way, health care professionals can tailor exercise-based rehab to patients' specific needs, getting them in the best shape for treatment and speeding up recovery times.

"With our growing body of evidence, recommendations and guidelines, it is indeed time to ensure people living with [kidney](#) disease have the support they may need to live well with [kidney disease](#)," said Brunel's Dr. Ellen Castle. "Yes, more research is needed, but it is now time to evaluate and implement rehabilitation for people living with CKD. Digital solutions, alongside face-to-face delivery, provide exciting future modalities of delivery in this field."

More information: Ellen M. Castle et al, Exercise as a therapeutic intervention in chronic kidney disease: are we nearly there yet?, *Current Opinion in Nephrology & Hypertension* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/MNH.0000000000000923](#)

Provided by Brunel University

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