

High-intensity interval training, strength exercise beneficial in RA

September 3 2024, by Elana Gotkine



For patients with rheumatoid arthritis, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and strength exercise are beneficial for cardiovascular health, physical fitness, and overall health, according to a study published online

Aug. 23 in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Annelie Bilberg, Ph.D., from the University of Gothenburg Sahlgrenska Academy in Sweden, and colleagues examined the effects of HIIT and strength exercise on [cardiovascular health](#), [physical fitness](#), and overall health in a study involving 87 patients with [rheumatoid arthritis](#).

Participants were randomly assigned to an intervention group (IG), which performed HIIT and strength exercise for 12 weeks, or a control group, which was instructed to be physically active on a moderately intensive level for ≥ 150 minutes/week. The change in cardiorespiratory fitness (VO_2 max) was the primary outcome.

The researchers observed a significant mean group difference in favor of the IG in terms of change in VO_2 max (3.71 mL/kg/min). Significant mean group differences of change in favor of the IG were also seen for oxygen pulse, [waist circumference](#), one-minute sit-to-stand, handgrip strength, overall health, and the Patient Global Impression of Change. There were no significant mean group differences of change seen for pain, Disease Activity Score in 28 joints, and erythrocyte sedimentation rate.

"HIIT and strength exercise in combination appear to be feasible and well tolerated and could be recommended as a treatment option to improve cardiovascular and physical health in patients with well-controlled rheumatoid arthritis," the authors write.

More information: Annelie Bilberg et al, High-intensity interval training improves cardiovascular and physical health in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: a multicentre randomised controlled trial, *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (2024). [DOI: 10.1136/bjsports-2024-108369](https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2024-108369)

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