

# Exercise may lower risk of death for men with prostate cancer

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A new study of men with prostate cancer finds that physical activity is associated with a lower risk of overall mortality and of death due to prostate cancer. The Harvard School of Public Health and University of California, San Francisco researchers also found that men who did more vigorous activity had the lowest risk of dying from the disease. It is the first study in men with prostate cancer to evaluate physical activity after diagnosis in relation to prostate cancer-specific mortality and overall mortality.

The study appears in an advance online edition of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

"Our results suggest that men can reduce their risk of [prostate cancer](#) progression after a diagnosis of prostate cancer by adding physical activity to their daily routine," said Stacey Kenfield, lead author of the study and a Harvard School of Public Health researcher. "This is good news for men living with prostate cancer who wonder what lifestyle practices to follow to improve cancer survival."

Prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed form of cancer among men in the United States and affects one in six U.S. men during their lifetime. More than 2 million men in the U.S. and 16 million men worldwide are prostate cancer survivors.

The study was conducted in 2,705 men diagnosed with prostate cancer in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study over an 18-year period. The participants reported the average time per week they spent doing physical activity, including walking, running, bicycling, swimming and other sports and outdoor work.

The results showed that both non-vigorous and vigorous activity were beneficial for overall survival. Compared with men who walked less than 90 minutes per week at an easy pace, those who walked 90 or more minutes per week at a normal

to very brisk pace had a 46% lower risk of dying from any cause.

Only vigorous activity-defined as more than three hours per week-was associated with reduced prostate cancer mortality. Men who did vigorous activity had a 61% lower risk of prostate cancer-specific death compared with men who did less than one hour per week of vigorous activity.

"We observed benefits at very attainable levels of activity and our results suggest that men with prostate cancer should do some [physical activity](#) for their overall health, even if it is a small amount, such as 15 minutes of activity per day of walking, jogging, biking or gardening," said Kenfield.

"However, doing [vigorous activity](#) for three or more hours per week may be especially beneficial for prostate cancer, as well as overall health," she said.

**More information:** "Physical Activity and Survival After Prostate Cancer Diagnosis in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study," Stacey A. Kenfield, Meir J. Stampfer, Edward Giovannucci, June M. Chan, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, online January 4, 2011.

Provided by Harvard School of Public Health

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