

Half the recommended exercise can cut risk of serious illness

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Doing just half the amount of recommended exercise can be enough to reduce the risk of serious illness, research from the Department for Health have found.

Professor Conrad Earnest and colleagues studied patients with [Metabolic Syndrome](#), a combination of medical disorders that together increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The study was designed and carried out in the United States to examine the minimal threshold for exercise benefits based on public physical activity guidelines.

The guidelines, which are very similar to those in the UK, recommend that adults do at least two hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-[intensity exercise](#), such as brisk walking, a week and muscle strengthening for two more days a week.

People who took part in the trial were split into groups and given doses set at 50%, 100% and 150% of the recommended guidelines.

The study referred to criteria for Metabolic Syndrome set out in the National Cholesterol

Education Program, including [waist circumference](#) and blood pressure and used an analytical technique developed by researchers at the Cambridge Medical Research Council.

The results showed that these metabolic syndrome characteristics were improved in those who did as little as 50% of the guidelines.

Professor Earnest said: "Our results show that people can significantly improve their Metabolic Syndrome risk at just half the dose of current exercise guidelines, showing that even a little really goes a long way to improving health. In essence, there's really no reason not to do something active."

The results of the study are published in the paper "Dose Effect of Cardiorespiratory Exercise on Metabolic Syndrome in [Postmenopausal Women](#)" in *The American Journal of Cardiology*.

Provided by University of Bath

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