Cigarette smoke directly damages muscles in the body
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Not only is smoking bad for your lungs, but new research shows that components in cigarette smoke directly damages your muscles. The research, published in *The Journal of Physiology*, indicates that smoking decreases the number of small blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to muscles in the legs.

We know that smoking limits a person's ability to exercise because it makes their muscles weaker. It was widely believed this muscle weakness is because the lungs become inflamed and eventually destroyed by habitual smoking, therefore limiting activity and exercise.

However, the findings of this study suggest that cigarette smoke directly damages muscles by reducing the number of blood vessels in leg muscles, thereby reducing the amount of oxygen and nutrients they can receive. This can impact metabolism and activity levels, both of which are risk factors for many chronic diseases including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and diabetes.

Ellen Breen, the lead investigator commented on the study:

'It is vitally important that we show people that the use of tobacco cigarettes has harmful consequences throughout the body, including large muscle groups needed for daily living, and develop strategies to stop the damage triggered by the detrimental components of cigarette smoke.'


Provided by The Physiological Society