

Good news: Activity can lower your cancer risk

Everyone knows it: Exercise is important to overall good health. It helps us to reduce the risk of major illnesses like obesity, diabetes and heart disease and to minimize the impact of aging. And if you needed one more reason, you have it now. A recent study shows that exercise can significantly reduce your cancer risk for 13 types of cancer.

Researchers have known for many years that exercise can help to reduce the risk of three forms of cancer that account for nearly one in four cancers in the US: colon, breast, and endometrial cancers. The new research shows a significant risk reduction for 10 other types of cancer as well including liver, kidney, bladder and lung cancer for both current and former smokers.

How much activity do you need to ensure reduced risk? The report indicates that the median level of activity in the study was about 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week.

That's right in line with the CDC guidelines for adults, which call for 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week (examples: brisk walking, yoga, biking on level terrain, water aerobics) or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity (examples: jogging, running, biking on uneven terrain, tennis). In addition, twice a week you should engage in muscle-strengthening activities to work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).



In the summer, as we spend more time outdoors, engaging in the right amount of activity is easy, but things get more challenging as the days get shorter and the weather gets colder. To make matters worse, the holidays and winter weather lend themselves to overindulging and comfort eating. Before the cold weather arrives, you should strategize now to ensure you have a good plan in place to sustain healthy activity levels.

Here are some ideas to keep active this winter:

- Get a gym membership or sign up for spin classes or an aerobics group.
- Buddy up. When motivation lags, it can help to have a friend to bolster your resolve.
- Add morning yoga to your daily routine.
- Take up a fun new winter sport that will motivate you: skiing, snowshoeing or skating.
- Invest in a treadmill or stationary bike for your home.

Your EAP can help. Log in to your Member site to get discounts for popular gyms and visit the Wellness Center for fitness tips and workout ideas.