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Exercise and Fitness Report

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Treadmill Plus Leg Resistance Training Improves Peripheral Artery Disease

Treadmill exercise and leg resistance training are helpful to patients with peripheral arterial disease, resulting in improved function and circulation whether or not intermittent claudication is present. In a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* Mary McDermott, MD and colleagues found that six months of treadmill exercise led to significant improvements in maximal walking time, the six-minute walk test, brachial artery dilation, and overall quality of life. Resistance training of the legs was associated with improved treadmill walking, quality of life, and stair-climbing ability.

McDermott MM et al. Treadmill exercise and resistance training in patients with peripheral arterial disease with and without intermittent claudication. A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA* 2009; 301: 165-174.

When Doctors Write Prescriptions for Exercise, People Exercise More

When physical exercise was specifically prescribed in writing by doctors for women aged 40-74, and a nurse led them through an "exercise intervention," they were more likely to exercise on their own than women for whom exercise was not prescribed in this way. This "green prescription" program in New Zealand resulted in a 10% increase in physical activity, but it also resulted in an increase in exercise-related injuries.

Lawton BA, Rose SB, Elley CR, Dowell AC, Fenton A, Moyes SA. Exercise on prescription for women aged 40-74 recruited through primary care: two year randomised controlled trial. *BMJ.* December 11, 2008 2008;337

Certain Knee Injuries Do Well Without Surgery

Surgery is a frequently utilized treatment for people with anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries of the knee. A Swedish study shows that after 2-5 years, people with ACL injuries who do not have surgery recover muscle strength and function as well as those who do. This is important in part because good muscle function is important in preventing early-onset arthritis.

Ageburg E, Thomee R, Neeter C et al. Muscle strength and functional performance in patients with anterior cruciate ligament injury treated with training and surgical reconstruction or training only: A two to five-year followup. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2008;59:1773-1779.

