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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.

Resistance Training Eases Chronic Low Back Pain

Resistance training for the whole body for 16 weeks brought a 60% improvement in chronic low back pain, but aerobic training did not, according to a small study by Robert Kell, PhD, and colleagues at the University of Alberta. Both pain and function improved with resistance training, which included dumbbells, barbells and other load-bearing exercise equipment.

Kell RT, Asmundson GJ. A comparison of two forms of periodized exercise rehabilitation programs in the management of chronic nonspecific low-back pain. *J Strength Cond Res.* Mar 2009;23(2):513-523.

Increased Exercise Helps Quality of Life

Though it is always possible to get too much of a good thing, when it comes to the effects of exercise on quality of life (QOL), reasonable increases in exercise dosage appear to have a positive effect on the quality of life. Researchers measured the effect of 50%, 100%, and 150% of a standard physical activity recommendation on QOL in a 6-month randomized controlled trial. Participants were 430 overweight or obese postmenopausal women with sedentary lifestyles. Eight aspects of physical and mental QOL were measured at baseline and after six months with the use of the Medical Outcomes Study 36-Item Short Form Health Survey. The key finding: positive change in all mental and physical aspects of QOL, except bodily pain, was dose dependent. Higher doses of exercise were associated with larger improvements in mental and physical aspects of QOL, independent of weight change.

Martin CK, Church TS, Thompson AM, Earnest CP, Blair SN. Exercise dose and quality of life: a randomized controlled trial. *Arch Intern Med.* Feb 9 2009;169(3):269-278.

