



- HOME
- ABOUT
- RISK FACTORS
 - High Blood Pressure
 - Diabetes
 - Atrial Fibrillation
 - High Cholesterol
 - Physical Inactivity
 - Poor Diet
 - Alcohol
 - Obesity
 - Smoking
 - Stress and Depression
- RESOURCES
 - Videos
 - Blog
 - Podcast
 - Useful links
 - Additional Reading
 - Media Releases

- News
-  English
 -  English
 -  Português
 -  Русский
 -  Español
 -  Français
 -  Polski

- CONTACT

DONATE

8 Facts on Exercise and Stroke Risk



Regular activity not only improves physical and mental health; it also reduces your risk of developing numerous health problems, including high cholesterol,

heart disease and stroke. Here are some great reasons to get up and move more:

1. High levels of inactivity increase stroke risk

The more exercise you do, the lower your risk of stroke. One study showed adults under 60 who had low physical activity and spent more than eight hours a day sitting around had a four times higher risk of stroke than those reporting less than four hours a day of inactive leisure time (1).

2. Active men and women have 25-30% less chance of stroke

Whether it's walking, leisure pursuits or simply having a physically demanding job, active men and women generally have a 25% to 30% lower risk of stroke or mortality than less active people (2).

3. Physical inactivity is 1 of 10 key risk factors for stroke

According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity is one of the main risk factors of stroke, along with high blood pressure, elevated lipids, diabetes, smoking, unhealthy diet and obesity (3). As a result, exercise therapy is becoming a recommendation both pre- and post-stroke by medical professionals.

4. Physically active jobs reduce stroke risk by up to 43%

Being physically active isn't only measured by how long you spend in the gym. What you do for a living is equally important. A high level of activity at work is associated with a stroke risk reduction of 43%, while those with moderately active jobs see a reduction of 36% (4).

5. Leisure pursuits reduce stroke risk by up to 20-25%

Whether you choose to spend your time off watching TV or climbing mountains, it

almost certainly has an effect on stroke risk too. Findings from one study showed high levels of physical activity during leisure time were associated with a reduced risk of up to 25%, in comparison to inactive leisure time (4).

6. 30 minutes of moderate exercise is beneficial to stroke survivors

The optimal duration of exercise in relation to lowering stroke risk has long been debated. But one report suggests 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise is more beneficial to stroke survivors than doing a whole hour of low-intensity exercise, as it is more effective at lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels (5).

7. 1 in 5 adults don't do enough exercise

All over the world, people are eating more and moving less. It's now estimated that 1 in 5 adults and four out of five adolescents (aged 11-17) don't do enough physical activity. This is compounded by the fact that poorer people; the elderly; the disabled; and marginalised communities have fewer opportunities to be active (6).

8. Non-communicable diseases are responsible for 71% of deaths globally

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) include heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and represent one of the major causes of death for people aged 30 to 70 every year. Regular physical exercise is the key to their prevention and treatment, which is why the World Health Organization is aiming to reduce physical inactivity by 15% in the next ten years (6).

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