

What is the best way to exercise if you are overweight and want to improve your health?

Why did we conduct this study? We wanted to understand what kind of exercise can help adults who are overweight to:

- lose weight
- improve their physical health
- reduce muscle and joint pain

We used this information to create an exercise guide. Being overweight increases the possibility of developing osteoarthritis, so following this guide could help prevent osteoarthritis.

How did we conduct this study?

1. We searched for studies that have used exercise programs to improve the health of adults who are overweight
2. We picked out the best quality ones and read those
3. We summarized the findings of the studies
4. We used our summary to create a guide for exercise to help improve the health of adults who are overweight

How did we decide which studies to review? We were only interested in reviewing studies known as *randomized controlled trials*. In a randomized controlled trial, one group of people receives a new treatment, for example, an exercise program. Another group receives no treatment or a different treatment. If the people in the group that received the new treatment reports better results (for example, greater weight loss) than the group that received no treatment, then there is evidence the new treatment works. We only read and evaluated studies that:

- Used an exercise program to help improve the health of overweight adults
- Compared the weight, physical health, and/or muscle and joint pain in the group of people that followed the exercise program to the group of people that did not

We did not read studies that included people with other health problems besides their weight.

What did we find? There is good evidence that **exercise can improve physical health, help with weight loss, and decrease muscle and joint pain in adults who are overweight**. The kinds of the exercise programs that worked best were:



30 to 60 minutes long,
moderate intensity
exercises, **3x per week**

Moderate intensity exercise feels a little challenging, but you would still be able to have a conversation while exercising. Some examples of moderate intensity exercises are fast walking, cycling, and water aerobics.

What is our suggestion?

Adults who are overweight with no other health problems should do **moderate intensity exercises for 30-60 min, three times per week**. Exercising this way can help them lose weight, reduce muscle and joint pain, and improve their physical health. This kind of exercise can also help prevent osteoarthritis.

Information about the study:

Title: Exercise prescription for weight management in obese adults at risk for osteoarthritis: synthesis from a systematic review (2019).

Authors: Dylan Barrow, Lauren Abbate, Max Paquette, Jeffrey Driban, Heather Vincent, Connie Newman, Stephen Messier, Kirsten Ambrose, Sarah Shultz.

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