

Guido Francesco Guida, MD, MSc, PhD



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THE MORE YOU EXERCISE THE BEST YOU LIVE

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by Guido Francesco Guida

Over-65s can get a 50% reduction in cardiovascular death by moderate physical activity. The study has been led by Noël C. Barengo, Riitta Antikainen and coll. and conducted in collaboration with Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University, Miami, (USA) and Faculty of Medicine, University of Oulu.

The study was led for 12 year in nearly 2500 adults aged 65 to 74 years and found that moderate physical activity reduced the risk of an acute cardiovascular event by more than 30%.

The researchers classified self-reported physical activity as:

- Low: reading, watching TV or working in the household without much physical activity.
- Moderate: walking, cycling or practising other forms of light exercise (fishing, gardening, hunting) at least four hours per week.
- High: recreational sports (for example running, jogging, skiing, gymnastics, swimming, ball games or heavy gardening) or intense training or sports competitions at least three hours a week.

The investigators found that moderate and high leisure time physical activity were associated with a 31% and 45% reduced risk of an acute CVD event, respectively. Moderate and high leisure time physical activity were associated with a 54% and 66% reduction in CVD mortality.

Professor Antikainen said: “Our study provides further evidence that older adults who are physically active have a lower risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and death from cardiovascular disease. The protective effect of leisure time physical activity is dose dependent. Activity is protective even if you have other risk factors for cardiovascular disease such as high cholesterol.”

She concluded: “Physical exercise may become more challenging with ageing. However, it is important for older people to still get enough safe physical activity to stay healthy after their transition to retirement.”

