

The Hidden Benefits of Exercise

Even Moderate Physical Activity Can Boost the Immune System and Protect Against Chronic Diseases

Cold Front

In a study of how fitness fights the common cold, researchers showed that regular exercise lessens its miseries.



How each fitness level influences rates of upper respiratory tract infections:

Number of days (over 12 weeks)

7.5 **HIGH**

8.5 **MEDIUM**

10.6 **LOW**

How number of symptoms compare to low-fitness subjects



How the severity of illness compares to low-fitness subjects



Note: Based on a study of 1,000 people over a 12-week period in the winter and fall of 2000.

Source: Prof. David C. Nieman, Appalachian State University



Cold-study participants were asked to rank their fitness level on a scale of 1 to 10.

High-fitness level

Committed to regular exercise, most are normal weight

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Medium-fitness

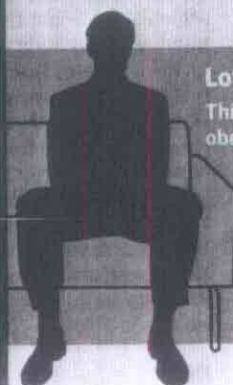
People in this group tend to be overweight and are periodic exercisers.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low-fitness

This group tends to be obese and sedentary.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other studies show that exercise...

- ★ Lowers the risk of **stroke** by 27%.
- ★ Reduces the incidence of **diabetes** by approximately 50%.
- ★ Reduces the incidence of **high-blood pressure** by approximately 40%.
- ★ Can reduce mortality and the risk of recurrent **breast cancer** by approximately 50%.
- ★ Can lower the risk of **colon cancer** by over 60%.
- ★ Can reduce the risk of developing **Alzheimer's disease** by approximately 40%.
- ★ Can decrease **depression** as effectively as Prozac or behavioral therapy.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine