



Latest Exercise and Weight Loss Research - Can You Eat Less and Stay on the Couch?

You will have seen a few headlines in the media with headlines claiming that exercise does not help with weight loss, with some even asking whether you are 'wasting your time' at the gym.

While a headline can be shocking, what's behind a headline can often be something a little (or a lot) different to what it first appears. So before you ditch the workout and put your feet up let's take a look at the research study that inspired the headlines.

The main study that the latest round of articles has come from is from the City University in New York and is titled 'Constrained Total Energy Expenditure and Metabolic Adaptation to Physical Activity in Adult Humans'; perhaps a less catchy headline than 'gym users are wasting their time at the gym' but more truthful. The research did discover some limitations to weight loss and exercise, however despite the media headlines claiming going to the gym may be a waste of time, they actually reported that there was a POSITIVE relationship between exercise and weight loss. They did discover that the relationship was markedly stronger over the lower range of physical activity. In this study, the lower range is moderate activity, such as exercising regularly, the weight loss benefits plateau at the higher volume end.

What the study does prove is that there is a 'sweet spot' for physical activity and health benefits. Too little and we expose ourselves to risks of lifestyle diseases caused by inactivity, but beyond a moderate level, the number of calories expended at higher levels may not increase.

What the reporting of the study does leave out is the other benefits and gains of exercise at higher volume. Ask many of those lifting heavier weights, running longer distances, and engaging more activity, and they will tell you that weight loss is quite low on their list of benefits.

The question many people are asking is whether they should be exercising to assist with weight loss and the answer, regardless of any headline is YES.

In fact the study's results are overwhelmingly good news, telling us in order to get weight loss and health gains, we can work out at a moderate level, rather than needing to exercise for long periods. However anyone who thinks they can out exercise a bad diet has just been given another reason to not use their activity levels to excuse their poor nutritional choices.

"Exercise is really important for your health," says one of the researchers involved in the study Herman Pontzer of City University in New York. "That's the first thing I mention to anyone asking about the implications of this work for exercise. There is tons of evidence that exercise is important for keeping our bodies and minds healthy, and this work does nothing to change that message. What our work adds is that we also need to focus on diet, particularly when it comes to managing our weight and preventing or reversing unhealthy weight gain."

While the media is a great way to keep up to date with trend, and to find out about studies such as this one, you can't assume that the headlines are strictly correct.

While reading in depth into academic studies is not always practical (or realistic) it is simple to get advice from a qualified and experienced REPs registered exercise professional who will be able to give you exercise information based on the facts, not the headlines.

References:

WASTING TIME IN GYM

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/12127997/Gym-bunnies-are-wasting-their-time-study-suggests.html?sf19886267=1>

Anti Exercise in weightloss

<http://www.iflscience.com/health-and-medicine/more-exercise-does-not-necessarily-mean-more-calories-burnt>

<http://www.cell.com/action/consumeSharedSessionAction?JSESSIONID=aaau91Nqa-PFd4XLUa6kv&MAID=bRY8mID2cwU5685oStZMog%3D%3D&SERVER=WZ6myaEXBLElcey8uceZQQ%3D%3D&ORIGIN=426479467&RD=RD>

References:

Richard Wiseman study: http://www.quirkology.com/UK/Experiment_resolution.shtml

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