

# Motivating healthy adults to be more physically active improves their cardiorespiratory fitness

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Fewer than half of adults in the United States meet the recommended physical activity guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Often physical inactivity may be associated with overweight and obese individuals, but even healthy, normal-weight Americans sometimes fail to meet physical activity guidelines. Now, University of Missouri researchers have found that simply encouraging healthy adults to be more physically active can improve their cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF).

Jo-Ana Chase, a doctoral student in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, examined how CRF improved among healthy adults when they received motivational physical activity interventions, such as educational sessions, recommendations from health professionals or counseling.

"In this study, we examined the impact of these types of physical activity interventions among healthy people because this population still can be affected by chronic diseases as they age, and they will need to be reminded of how important physical activity is in chronic disease prevention," Chase said.

The interventions and the methods in which they were delivered varied; however, all the interventions were aimed at getting [individuals](#) to be more active, which also helped individuals improve their CRF.

"Recommendations to be more active don't necessarily have to come from a fitness expert to improve CRF results and could easily come from a nurse or physician," Chase said. "Also, these interventions don't have to be time consuming. A quick conversation with clinician appeared to be as effective as a more intensive intervention, such as

a day-long seminar on the benefits of increased endurance activity."

Chase also found that when healthcare professionals recommended endurance and resistance training as a way for individuals to get fit, CRF improved more than when patients were advised to do endurance exercise alone.

"We found that interventions that included recommendations for both endurance and resistance exercises, such as weight training, were more effective in improving CRF," Chase said. "These findings support the importance of adhering to the current national [physical activity guidelines](#) that promote both aerobic and resistance exercise."

Chase also believes that healthcare providers should recommend physical activity to all patients, healthy or not, as increased physical activity will lead to better CRF, which can lead to reduced risks for [chronic diseases](#), such as diabetes and heart disease.

"These simple, low-cost, motivational interventions can help individuals increase their physical activity; however, more research needs to be done to determine exactly how often and how much [physical activity](#) individuals need to improve and maintain their CRF," Chase said.

**More information:** Chase's study, which was co-authored by Vicki Conn, associate dean for research at the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, was published in *Nursing Research* and was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Nursing Research.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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