

Exercising more, sitting less reduces heart failure risk in men

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US Marines exercising on the USS Bataan. Credit: United States Navy

Sitting for long periods increases heart failure risk in men, even for those who exercise regularly, according to new research published in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation: Heart Failure*.

Preventing heart failure, researchers found, requires a two-part behavioral approach: high levels of [physical activity](#) plus low levels of sedentary time. The study is the first to examine the link between heart failure risk and sedentary time, said Deborah Rohm Young, Ph.D., lead researcher and a senior scientist at Kaiser Permanente in Pasadena, Calif.

"Be more active and sit less. That's the message here," Young said.

Researchers followed a racially diverse group of 84,170 men ages 45 to 69 without heart failure. Exercise levels were calculated in METs, or metabolic equivalent of task, a measure of the body's energy use. Sedentary levels were measured in hours. After an average of nearly

eight years of follow-up, researchers found:

- Men with low levels of physical activity were 52 percent more likely to develop heart failure than men with high [physical activity levels](#), even after adjusting for differences in [sedentary time](#).
- Outside of work, men who spent five or more hours a day sitting were 34 percent more likely to develop heart failure than men who spent no more than two hours a day sitting, regardless of how much they exercised.
- Heart failure risk more than doubled in men who sat for at least five hours a day and got little exercise compared to men who were very physically active and sat for two hours or less a day.

Study limitations included: Since no women were studied the results may not apply to them; results were self-reported, which could mean physical activity was over reported; results were based only on time outside of work and can't be applied to overall sedentary activity; and participants were members of comprehensive health plans, so results may not apply to [men](#) lacking health insurance.

The study supports the American Heart Association recommendation that people get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity to reduce their risk for [heart failure](#) and other cardiovascular diseases, Young said.

Provided by American Heart Association

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