
Exercise Helps Survive First Heart Attack



According to a study conducted with 70,000 patients of Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, people who are fit are more likely to survive their first heart attack. The study by Henry Ford and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is published in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

Clinton Brawner, PhD., Clinical Exercise Physiologist and Senior Bioscientific Clinical Staff Researcher at Henry Ford Health System believes that the data from this study clearly shows that doctors who have patients with cardiovascular risk factors should be telling them to start an exercise program to improve their fitness and their chances of survival in case of a heart attack. She explains that the study findings show that higher aerobic fitness before a heart attack is associated with better short-term survival after the first heart attack.

Previous studies have also reported a strong association between exercise and long-term risk of death in various patient populations but this study is the first of its kind to examine the relationship between exercise and early death following a first heart attack.

See Also: [Regular Exercise a Must for Heart Health](#)

During this analysis, the study researchers focused on 2061 patients who suffered their first heart attack after the stress test, during follow-up. Mean time between the attack and the exercise test was six years. They found that patients who had a high level of fitness were 40 percent less likely to die within a year of their first heart attack as compared to patients with lower fitness. In addition, those who were more active and fit also reduced the likelihood of death during the year following the first heart attack by nearly 8 to 10 percent for each level of increased fitness they had reached during the stress test.

This study provides evidence that clearly link fitness to survival after a first heart attack. Findings suggest that low fitness may be a risk of death following a heart attack along with other factors such as smoking, high blood pressure or diabetes.

"While up to 50% of fitness may be based on genetics, physical activity is the only behaviour we have that can improve fitness," Dr. Brawner says.

Source: [Mayo Clinic Proceedings](#)

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Published on : Tue, 2 Feb 2016