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## Walking Faster, Longer Linked to Significant Cardiovascular Benefits



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According to a study conducted with older Americans, modest physical activity was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in both men and women older than 75 years of age.

Regular physical activity is generally advised for this population but to date, there was very little supportive evidence to prove its benefits.

This study, conducted by Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, Dr.PH, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, and colleagues included 4207 American adults with a mean age of 73 years at the start of the study. The participants were followed for ten years and were assessed at baseline and during follow-up on different aspects of physical activity such as a greater pace, walking distance, and leisure activity.

The findings showed that each activity was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. Those who were more active had lower risk of future heart attacks and stroke. Those who walked at a faster pace than three miles per hour had a 50%, 53%, 50% lower risk of CHD, stroke and total CVD, respectively as compared to those who walked at a slower pace of less than two mph.

Participants who walked around seven blocks per day or more had a 36%, 54% and 47% lower risk of CHD, stroke and total CVD, respectively, as compared to those who walked up to five blocks per week. Participants that engaged in leisure activities such as lawn-mowing, raking, gardening, swimming, biking and hiking, also demonstrated a lower risk of CHD, stroke and total CVD, as compared to those who did not engage in such activities. These results were similar in both men and women.

See also: ['Life's Simple 7' Programme Reduces Risk of Heart Failure](#)

"Our study of older Americans shows that, even late in life, moderate physical activity such as walking is linked to lower incidence of cardiovascular disease," commented the first author Luisa Soares-Miranda, Ph.D., a member of the research team and currently a postdoctoral student with the Research Centre in Physical Activity, Health and Leisure, Faculty of Sport at the University of Porto, Portugal. "It appears that whether one increases the total distance or the pace of walking, CVD risk is lowered. Fortunately, walking is an activity that many older adults can enjoy."

These findings thus confirm a positive relationship between walking and leisure activities and CVD. Even if vigorous activities become difficult in old age, it is important to continue light to moderate exercise to improve health and wellbeing.

Source: [Tufts University](#)

Image Credit: Wikimedia Commons

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