

EXERCISE CAN PREVENT OR AT LEAST REDUCE SEVERITY OF COVID-19 SYMPTOMS



As coronavirus swept across our country and around the world, doctors were noticing a trend early on in the pandemic. Many of those who were severely ill from COVID-19, were obese.

Within weeks following the declaration that COVID-19 was a pandemic, initial findings were published by the Journal of the American Medical Association. The study investigated the characteristics and outcomes among 5,700 COVID-19 hospitalized patients in the New York City area. The JAMA study confirmed that the most common underlying conditions in COVID-19 patients were hypertension, obesity and diabetes. Hypertension accounted for 56%, obesity 42% and diabetes 33% of COVID-19 patients.

Diabetes increases the risk for coronavirus complication because it weakens the immune system. People with diabetes are more prone to infections, resulting in being more prone to poorer outcomes as the ability to fight off the infection diminishes. Doctors also hypothesize that low levels on inflammation associated with diabetes, worsened the outcomes for patients with COVID-19. The response to the coronavirus infection prompts a hyperinflammatory chemical called cytokines. In excess, cytokines overdose becomes too much for the body to handle. At the JAMA study end point, 21% had died and of those, patients with diabetes were more likely to have received mechanical ventilation or care in the ICU.

However, there is a flip side to the story. Researchers at the University of Virginia School of Medicine say that 80% of COVID-19 patients show mild symptoms, with no need for respiratory support and was likely due to regular aerobic activity. Aerobic activity is defined as any type of cardiovascular conditioning, also known as “cardio”. The objective is to sustain moderate intensity physical activity to improve cardiorespiratory fitness and your health. The UVA research says exercise may reduce the risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). Muscles release a potent antioxidant known as extracellular superoxide dismutase (EcSOD) that hunts down free radicals to protect tissues and help prevent diseases. The production of EcSOD is enhanced by cardiovascular activity.

Taking precaution is the best plan for preventing coronavirus. In addition to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended basic infection prevention tips that include wearing a mask, social distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting, studies suggest that exercise should be considered as a preventive treatment to eliminate or reduce the severity of symptoms of COVID-19. Yan, PhD, exercise researcher at UVA urges people to find ways to exercise even while maintaining social distancing. Exercise is a critical component to diabetes management, weight management and lowering high blood pressure.

Sedona Fitness for Women offers a fitness club that allows you to stay active, while socially distant. Our airy gyms are spaced far apart and are cleaned after every use by the users as well as staff. Safety protocols are in place to protect members, staff and follow CDC and local government guidelines. There’s no better time to focus on self-care habits and work on dropping some of the weight gained from the lockdown.

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