Effects of Exercise on 24-Month Maintenance of Weight Loss

by Pamela Jones, MA

Carrying excess weight has been linked to many health diseases and concerns. Exercise and nutritional changes are vital to achieving a healthy weight loss, but many studies have shown that these habits need to continue to maintain the weight loss. Specific types of exercise programs are still being reviewed to understand what levels of exercise are most beneficial for weight loss.

Researchers at the Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center at the University of Pittsburgh wanted to review the effects of specific exercise intensities and durations. The results, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, suggest any exercise is helpful and more intense exercise may not be better than moderate intensity. Although highest weight losses were noted in a small group of women who had exercised the most.

About the Study

The randomized study followed 201 overweight or obese women aged 21-45 over a 24-month period. The women were given dietary restrictions of 1200-1500 kcal/day and ongoing support with meetings and phone calls. They were assigned to one of four exercises each with varied intensity and duration.

- At six months and at 24 months there was no significant difference in weight loss between the groups.
- Participants lost between 8%-10% of their baseline weight.
- Twenty-three percent of women achieved weight loss of >10% from their baseline and had exercised the most with an average of 275 minutes per week.

How Does This Affect You?

Physical activity is an important component to a weight-loss program, but it also needs to be continued to help in weight maintenance. Although general physical activity guidelines only call for a minimum of 30 minutes of activity 3-5 days a week, weight loss and maintenance may require more. According to this study 40 minutes of activity seven days a week was most successful.

It is also important to note that participants in this study received regular help to maintain their programs. If you are trying to lose weight or maintain weight loss, talk to health or fitness professionals such as dietitians, exercise physiologists, or personal trainers to help you with your program.

RESOURCES:

American Council on Exercise
http://www.acefitness.org/

American Dietetic Association
http://www.eatright.org/

REFERENCES:


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