

# Health Benefits of Exercise



## Exercise helps curb cigarette cravings

According to a survey directed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20.9 percent of adults over the age of 18 in the United States are smokers. The risks of smoking are numerous and well-known, including an increased risk for lung cancer, emphysema and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Many methods are available to help smokers quit, and a new theory about smoking cessation is being explored by scientists: a small body of new research shows that exercise can decrease cigarette cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

A study recently published in *Mental Health and Physical Activity* examined the effects of exercise on a group of 45 smokers. After being deprived of cigarettes for 12 hours, the subjects performed bouts of moderate and high intensity activity and then completed surveys about their mood, cravings and withdrawal symptoms. The results were then compared to a group of smokers who did not exercise. Results clearly indicated that moderate bouts of activity enhanced mood and decreased withdrawal symptoms and cigarette cravings. Although researchers agree that larger studies are needed to provide concrete evidence that exercise is a viable option for smoking cessation, this small study provides valuable insight.

Everson ES, Daley AJ and Ussher M. (2008). The effects of moderate and vigorous exercise on desire to smoke, withdrawal symptoms and mood in abstaining young adult smokers. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 1, 26-31.

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