

Exercise, RA, and the heart

Welcome to summer! We got off to a hot start these past few days in Boston. Fortunately, the mornings and evenings remain cool enough to get outside. For anyone, and especially individuals who have rheumatoid arthritis (RA), getting physical activity into your routine has benefits for your heart. As an added bonus in RA, studies have found that physical activity can modestly reduce inflammation and even joint damage among patients on RA therapy.

The effect of physical activity on reducing your risk of heart disease is generally what we call dose-dependent. The more physical activity you do, the more you reduce your risk for heart disease. However, just like a medication, it is possible to get too much of a good thing. However, for many of us, myself included, are not in danger of too much physical activity.

To give you an example of the current recommendations for physical activity in the US, we've provided some information from the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHG). The recommendations are slightly different for adults under age 65 and over age 65. Since the average age of LiiRA participants is right around age 57, I've provided an example for the under 65 recommendation.

For everyone, some activity is better than none. For even more health benefits from aerobic activity, the recommendations include 150 minutes or 2.5 hours each week of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity. This includes brisk walking (>3 mph but not race walking), gardening, or bicycling slower than 10mph.

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Keep in mind that these recommendations are very general and everyone is starting from a different place. It is important to ease yourself into increased activity. For example, simply incorporating a walk for 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week can have measurable health benefits. As always, I recommend talking to your rheumatologist or primary care before embarking on an exercise program.

More information on the ODPHP guidelines can be found at: <https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/adults.aspx>

Scientific articles from:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbspin.2015.10.002>

What's new?

We are now recruiting RA patients at Cambridge Health Alliance and North Shore Medical Center.

Would you like to see something in our next newsletter? Contact us!

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Enrollment Numbers

Enrolled: 34

Completed: 27

Target: 75 patients over 3 years
(We have <2 more years to go)



Team Spotlight



Gabrielle has been a research assistant with the LiiRA study for the past two years. Join us in congratulating Gab as she heads to medical school at Tufts University this August! She loves to cook and bake. You can usually find her at her desk with a snack. Gab's favorite season is summer and she loves going to the beach!

Meet the rest of the team here: <http://www.liira.org/the-team.html>

Recruiting Sites

 BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

 MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

 BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S Faulkner Hospital

 NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER

 **CHA** Cambridge Health Alliance