

Exercise is good for you, but it won't cut hot flashes

July 31 2013

Exercise has proven health benefits, but easing hot flashes isn't one of them. After participating in a 12-week aerobic exercise program, sedentary women with frequent hot flashes had no fewer or less bothersome hot flashes than a control group. This randomized, controlled study from the MsFLASH Research Network was published today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society.

The 248 women in the trial were either approaching menopause or were postmenopausal; 142 of them continued to go about their usual activities, and 106 participated in aerobic [exercise training](#) three times a week for 12 weeks at a fitness center. All the women kept daily diaries on their hot flashes and night sweats and on how well they slept and also completed questionnaires about insomnia, depression, and anxiety.

Although exercise had small positive effects on sleep quality, insomnia, and depression, it had no significant effect on hot flashes for the women overall. Race and initial fitness did make some difference, however. White women in the [exercise program](#) did show improvement in their hot flashes compared with [white women](#) who maintained their usual activity level, but there was no similar difference among African-American women. Also, women who were more fit to begin with had greater improvement in their hot flashes with exercise.

The study helps to settle a debate about the effect of exercise on hot flashes. Previous studies have been inconsistent, but this study

corroborates a recent Cochrane review on the topic, which concluded that there was no evidence to support the use of exercise as an effective treatment for hot flashes and night sweats.

"Midlife women cannot expect exercise to relieve [hot flashes and night sweats] but may reasonably expect it to improve how they feel and their overall health," said the investigators.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

Citation: Exercise is good for you, but it won't cut hot flashes (2013, July 31) retrieved 25 December 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-07-good-wont-hot.html>

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