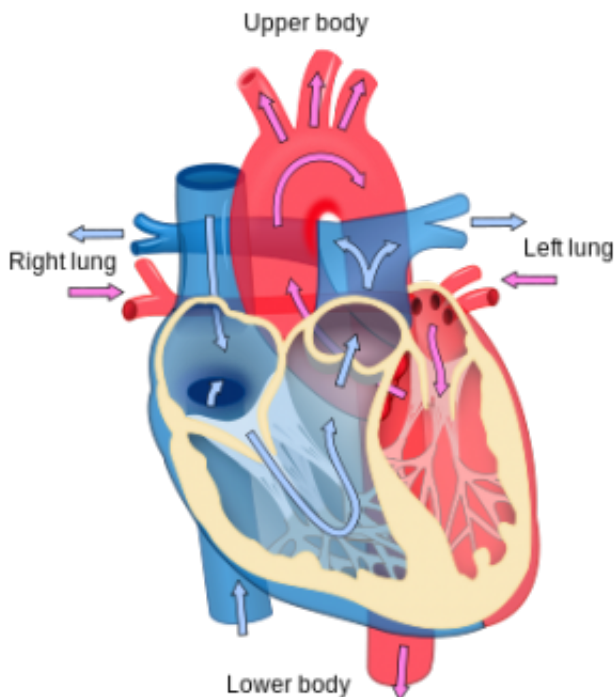


Resuming exercise soon after heart attack can improve heart recovery

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Heart diagram. Credit: Wikipedia

Exercise promotes heart health. However, many lifestyle factors cause heart disease, and regular activity may not be enough to prevent heart attacks. A new study in the *American Journal of Physiology–Heart and Circulatory Physiology* expands on the heart benefits of exercise, investigating whether regular exercise still helps the heart even after a heart attack occurs.

After a [heart attack](#), restoring blood flow to the oxygen-starved region of the heart is not enough to make the heart function normally again. The affected area scars and thins, and the heart changes structurally. Because of the remodeling and loss of working heart muscle, heart attack survivors can develop other heart complications. A team of researchers from Germany and Luxembourg investigated whether [aerobic exercise](#)

could reduce the scarring, thinning and structural changes, improving recovery success in physically active individuals.

Mice ran on a wheel regularly for six weeks prior to heart attack induction, then resumed activity five days after heart attack and continued exercising for four more weeks. Compared to sedentary mice, the hearts of the exercising mice had less heart attack-induced scarring, thinning and inflammation. According to the researchers, exercising regularly before and soon after heart attack ameliorated the structural changes associated with poor outcomes. "Our results suggest that the re-initiation of exercise can be recommended to patients relatively early" after heart attack, the researchers wrote.

More information: "Exercise attenuates inflammation and limits scar thinning after myocardial infarction in mice."

ajpheart.physiology.org/content/309/2/H345.full.pdf

Provided by American Physiological Society

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