

Middle age brings weight gain without increased physical activity

28 September 2017

The Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä has examined how changes in the daily step count are related to changes in the body mass index (BMI).

During the four-year follow-up period, approximately 25 percent of the research participants, particularly women, increased their step [count](#) by more than 2,000 [steps](#), whereas approximately 19 percent decreased their step count during the follow-up.

The participants were grouped into increasers, decreasees and maintainers according to the total of their steps. The changes in the groups' BMI were compared to the changes in their step count, and the comparison of the step counts was proportioned to the time the step counter had been kept on.

During the research period, there was growth in both the women's and the men's BMI. Almost half of the participants maintained the amount of their daily aerobic steps at the same level and approximately one-fourth increased their daily step count with over 1,000 steps during the research period.

The test participants whose total step count grew by more than 2,000 steps during the follow-up period, maintained their BMI at the same level throughout the period. In contrast, BMI increased for those whose step count stayed at the same level or decreased.

"The trend in physical activity looks good. International studies have shown that physical activity generally decreases along with age, but here it increased," Professor Mirja Hirvensalo states. Even though step counts in general look good, it should be noted that the amount of passive people who take less than 5,000 steps per day did not change significantly during the research period.

The researchers remind everyone about the significance of incidental activity.

"The steps accumulate throughout the day, if you give it a chance. One does not necessarily need to go for a walk every day to increase the daily step count. Instead, attention should be paid to choices in everyday life. Does every trip need to be made by car or could some of them be done by foot, or could the stairs be taken instead of the elevator?" says Postdoctoral Researcher Kasper Salin.

The Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study has been monitoring over 3,000 Finns regularly from 1980 onwards. One part of the study considers [physical activity](#), and during the last two phases, it was monitored with step counters. During the four-year follow-up period, the step count data and the required background variables were gathered from a total of 1,033 [participants](#). During the follow-up period, the examinees were from 34 to 49 years of age. The recommended daily step count for adults is 10,000 steps.

More information: Kasper Salin et al. Changes in Daily Steps and Body Mass Index and Waist to Height Ratio during Four Year Follow-Up in Adults: Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2017). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph14091015](#)

Provided by University of Jyväskylä

APA citation: Middle age brings weight gain without increased physical activity (2017, September 28)
retrieved 23 April 2021 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-09-middle-age-weight-gain-physical.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.