

# Regular exercise may help protect against severe Covid

More exercise means less risk of developing severe Covid, according to a new study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. The study, which involved 48,440 people who developed Covid in California, US, found that those who had been the most active before falling ill were the least likely to be hospitalised or die due to the illness.

The data was gathered before vaccines became available and do not suggest that exercise can substitute immunisation. But they do intimate that regular exercise — whether it's going for a swim, walk, run or bike ride — can substantially lower the chances of becoming seriously ill if infected. Researchers and physicians at Kaiser Permanente Southern California, the University of California, San Diego, and other institutions, compared information on how often people exercised with whether they wound up hospitalised this past year due to Covid.

Researchers found that people in the least-active group wound up hospitalised at twice the rate of people in the most-active group. Scientists found that advanced age and organ transplants increased the likelihood of hospitalisation and mortality from Covid more than being inactive. However, the study did not delve into whether exercise reduces the risk of becoming infected with Covid in the first place. The researchers recommended walking briskly for half an hour five times a week, and said exercise might be especially beneficial for those awaiting their first vaccine.

— THE NEW YORK TIMES



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