

Short Exercise Bouts Help Adherence

Many folks exercise to help deflate a bit of a spare tire, but have trouble sticking with it. About half the people who begin new exercise programs drop out during the first year. This number might be reduced by tackling shorter exercise bouts several times a day, instead of trying to swallow the whole thing at one time, according to a study from the University of Pittsburgh. There were two groups of overweight women. One group began exercising for 20 minutes, building to 40 minutes, five days a week for 20 weeks. The other group broke the same level of exercise down into 10 minute chunks. The short periods group averaged 224 minutes of exercise a week, compared to 188 for the once a day women. Both groups achieved about 5% increase in maximal oxygen uptake, which means there was not much difference in fitness. But the short exercise bouts group shed about 40% more weight during the 20 weeks. It is hard for out-of-shape folks to enjoy unaccustomed exercise, especially if they set their target too high. This puts a damper on their motivation. Several short exercise periods work just about as well one long one. For some people it may be a good idea to make that several bouts of different exercises to add variety. Anything that helps their motivation to stick with an exercise program is worth trying.

About the Author

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