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The ONE Thing That Can Slash Your Risk of Dying From Cancer Up to 50%

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For years now, you've heard that the way to better health is to turn off the Boob Tube and get your body moving. But new evidence shows that cutting back on TV time does more than just help you slip in a little exercise. The fact is it can also add years to your life.

As reported in The Daily Mail, Time Healthland and MSNBC, a new study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine shows that every hour of TV watched by people age 25 or over equates to a 22-minute reduction in life expectancy.

The findings suggest that too much TV is as detrimental to longevity as smoking and lack of exercise, Time Healthland reports.

Sources:

- » [Daily Mail Online August 16, 2011](#)
- » [Time Healthland August 17, 2011](#)
- » [MSNBC.com March 5, 2010](#)
- » [British Journal of Sports Medicine August 15, 2011 \[Epub ahead of print\]](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Not just one, but two recent studies have concluded that watching TV can have serious repercussions. If you're over the age of 25, [every hour spent in front of the TV cuts 22 minutes off your lifespan](#). That can equate to five years' worth if you watch TV six hours a day—which some people actually do. According to the Daily Mail, the average Briton spends four hours a day in front of the TV and Americans spend an average of five hours a day mesmerized by television.

[According to the authors:](#)



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"TV viewing time may be associated with a loss of life that is comparable to other major chronic disease risk factors such as physical inactivity and obesity."

In another [meta-analysis, published earlier this summer in the Journal of the American Medical Association](#) (JAMA), researchers suggest that spending just two hours a day in front of the TV raises your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease by 20 percent. Add another hour to your viewing time, and you also significantly raise your risk of premature death from any cause...

Now, when you consider that an astonishing 90 percent of American children *under age 2* watch TV regularly, then the damage can really start adding up over time. Many kids also have TV's in their bedrooms, which adds to the problem. It's a no-brainer that if your child has a TV in their room, they're going to spend more time watching it, but [one study really made that point clear](#), showing that having a TV in the bedroom increased viewing time by nearly *nine hours a week*.

I personally recommend not letting young infants watch TV, and strictly limiting viewing time for both children and teens—and banning TV's from your child's bedroom (which would also reduce the amount of electromagnetic fields they're exposed to throughout the night). But the featured study clearly shows that TV viewing will likely cut your life short regardless of your age.



TV Watching Takes a Toll on Your Health in Many Ways

This isn't the first time we've heard about how TV watching can harm your health. Numerous other studies have linked health- and mental problems to even modest amounts of TV viewing. One researcher, [Dr. Aric Sigman, has identified](#) a slew of negative effects he believes can be blamed on watching television:

Obesity	Delayed healing	Heart trouble	Decreased metabolism	Damaged eyesight
Alzheimer's disease	Decreased attention span	Hormone disturbances	Cancer	Early puberty
Autism	Sleep difficulties	Increased appetite	Limited brain growth	Diabetes

Watching TV also has a [major impact on your brain chemistry](#). In fact, the longer you watch, the easier your brain slips into a receptive, passive mode, meaning that messages are streamed into your brain without any participation from you. (This is an advertiser's dream,

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and likely one of the reasons why TV advertising—particularly ads directed at children and teens—works so well.)

Still, at the root of it all, you find that it's really about the dangers of living a sedentary, "couch-potato" kind of life. [The Daily Mail quotes Sally Davies](#), England's Chief Medical Officer, as saying:

"Physical activity offers huge benefits and these studies back what we already know – that a sedentary lifestyle carries additional risks. We hope these studies will help more people realize that there are many ways to get exercise."

While Watching TV Takes Years Off Your Life, Exercise ADDS Years

Yes, even a modest amount of exercise has been shown to add years to your lifespan. A [study published just last month in The Lancet](#) found that a mere 15 minutes of exercise a day can increase your lifespan by three years! Those who got themselves moving for at least 15 minutes a day, or 90 minutes a week, also had a 14 percent reduced risk of all-cause mortality. Furthermore:

"Every additional 15 minutes of daily exercise beyond the minimum amount of 15 minutes a day further reduced all-cause mortality by 4 percent, and all-cancer mortality by 1 percent. These benefits were applicable to all age groups and both sexes, and to those with cardiovascular disease risks. Individuals who were inactive had a 17 percent increased risk of mortality compared with individuals in the low-volume group."



Exercise is known to be effective in the prevention of disease of all kinds, including cancer, which, naturally, will allow you to live longer. But exercise may also be imperative in the *treatment* of serious diseases such as cancer. In fact, a new [report issued by Macmillan Cancer Support](#) argues that exercise should be part of standard cancer care. It recommends that all patients getting cancer treatment should be told to engage in moderate-intensity exercise for *two and a half hours every week*, stating that the advice to rest and take it easy after treatment is an outdated view.

Research has shown that exercise can:

- Reduce your risk of dying from cancer
- Reduce your risk of cancer recurrence
- Boost energy and minimize the side effects of conventional cancer treatment

[According to BBC News:](#)

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"Previous research shows that exercising to the recommended levels can reduce the risk of breast cancer recurring by 40 percent. For prostate cancer the risk of dying from the disease is reduced by up to 30 percent. Bowel cancer patients' risk of dying from the disease can be cut by around 50 percent by doing around six hours of moderate physical activity a week."

Ciaran Devane, chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Support is [quoted](#) as saying:

"Cancer patients would be shocked if they knew just how much of a benefit physical activity could have on their recovery and long term health, in some cases reducing their chances of having to go through the grueling ordeal of treatment all over again. It doesn't need to be anything too strenuous; doing the gardening, going for a brisk walk or a swim, all count."

Exercise as a Cancer Prevention Tool

This topic is very near and dear to my heart, as I went to medical school in large part because I wanted to use exercise as a therapeutic tool to help people get healthier. I strongly believe that without fitness, it is virtually impossible to achieve optimal health. Lack of exercise can also severely hamper your recuperative efforts once disease has set in.

A [previous study by Harvard Medical School researchers](#) found that breast cancer patients who exercise moderately for three to five hours a week cut their odds of dying from cancer by about half, compared to sedentary patients. In fact, any amount of weekly exercise increased a patient's odds of surviving breast cancer. This benefit also remained constant regardless of whether women were diagnosed early on or after their cancer had spread.

One of the primary reasons exercise works to lower your cancer risk is because it drives your insulin levels down, and [controlling insulin levels](#) is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your cancer risks. It's also been suggested that apoptosis (programmed cell death) is [triggered by exercise](#), causing cancer cells to die.

Exercise also helps lower your estrogen levels, which explains why exercise appears to be particularly potent against breast cancer. And if you're male, be aware that athletes have lower levels of circulating testosterone than non-athletes, and similar to the association between estrogen levels and breast cancer in women, testosterone is known to influence the development of [prostate cancer](#) in men.

Then of course, exercise also improves the circulation of immune cells in your blood, whose job it is to neutralize pathogens throughout your body. The better these cells circulate, the more efficient your immune system is at locating and defending against viruses and diseases, including cancer, trying to attack your body.



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Exercise Tips for Cancer Patients

I would strongly recommend you read up on [my Peak Fitness program](#) or Crossfit which includes high-intensity exercises that can reduce your exercise time while actually improving your benefits.

Now, if you have cancer or any other chronic disease, you will of course need to tailor your exercise routine to your individual scenario, taking into account your stamina and current health. Often, you will be able to take part in a regular exercise program -- one that [involves a variety of exercises](#) like strength training, core-building, stretching, aerobic and anaerobic -- with very little changes necessary. However, at times you may find you need to exercise at a lower intensity, or for shorter durations.

Always listen to your body and if you feel you need a break, take time to rest. But even exercising for just a few minutes a day is better than not exercising at all, and you'll likely find that your stamina increases and you're able to complete more challenging workouts with each passing day.

In the event you are suffering from a very weakened immune system, you may want to exercise in your home instead of visiting a public gym. But remember that exercise will ultimately help to boost your immune system, so it's very important to continue with your program, even if you suffer from chronic illness or cancer.

