

AOA Exercise Survey

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Exercise Is Just What the Doctor Ordered

American Osteopathic Association Survey Shows Almost Half of Adults Who Discuss Exercise with Their Primary Care Physicians Meet National Fitness Recommendations

(CHICAGO) – Many adults turn to their primary care physician for information about the role exercise plays as part of a healthy lifestyle. According to a new online survey by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), more than 40% of adults who discuss exercise with their primary care physicians meet the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation of getting a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as doubles tennis or brisk walking, every week while only 26% of adults who do not discuss exercise with their physician meet these national recommendations.

The survey results are being announced in advance of National Osteopathic Medicine Week 2011, being held April 17-23. During this week, osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students across the nation are reaffirming their commitment to speak with their patients, family and friends about the importance of exercise and how physical activity can help prevent health problems.

"Regular exercise plays a vital role in treating and preventing many chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, obesity and hypertension," says AOA President Karen J. Nichols, DO. "Often, simple lifestyle choices, like establishing a regular exercise routine, can help to reduce the risk of chronic illness later in life."

More than 75% of survey respondents who have a designated primary care physician have discussed the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Of that number, 50% said that concern over weight gain or being overweight prompted that discussion. High cholesterol (35%) and having high blood pressure (30%) were the next highest causes for discussion about exercise with their physician.

Although 80% of all survey respondents participate in moderate-intensity exercise on a weekly basis, the AOA's survey found that 68% of adults are coming up short of the recommended minimum national guidelines of 30 minutes per day five days per week, or 150 minutes per week. Lack of time is the top barrier for more than half of adults surveyed, especially for adults under age 30. Almost half of adults also cite lack of motivation as a barrier to exercise.

Dr. Nichols notes there are many ways exercise plays a role in leading a healthy lifestyle, including:

- Helping prevent chronic disease.
- Improving mood by stimulating brain chemicals that could leave people feeling more relaxed than they were before their workout.
- Increasing bone density and reducing risk of bone fractures.

To find health calculators for body mass index and other tools to lead a healthy lifestyle, visit the AOA's website at www.osteopathic.org and go to the [About Your Health](#) section.

Other survey results of note:

- Men were more likely to discuss exercise with their physician if they suffered from heart disease or high blood pressure while women were more likely to discuss exercise with their physician due to other health conditions, such as fatigue, sleep problems and depression.
- Walking is the top type of exercise for all adults surveyed. Stretching exercises are the second most popular for adults ages 18 to 49 while gardening or yard work is the second most popular exercise for adults ages 50 to 64.
- Most people choose to stay close to home when exercising by working out in their home (55%), their neighborhood (36%) and in their own yard (23%). Respondents in urban areas were almost twice as likely to exercise in a gym or health club (23%) compared to those who live in rural areas (13%).

About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) proudly represents its professional family of more than 70,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs); promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.

About the Survey

The survey was conducted from March 11 to March 13, 2011. A total of 1,037 respondents completed the online survey. A sample size of 1,037 has a margin of error of approximately ± 3.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

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Contact:

Nicole Grady

(800) 621-1773, ext. 8038 (Toll free)

(312) 202-8038 (Office)

ngrady@osteopathic.org

Or

Vicki Martinka

(800) 621-1773, ext. 8159 (Toll free)

(312) 202-8159 (Office)

vmartinka@osteopathic.org