

Resistance Exercise May Improve Sleep Quality More Than Aerobic Exercise

By: Avery St. Onge, Integrative Practitioner



A new study suggests resistance exercise may promote better sleep quality than aerobic exercise, offering a new way to improve sleep and cardiovascular health.

The preliminary research was presented at the American Health Association's Epidemiology, Prevention and Lifestyle Conference 2022. The experiment was based on previous studies which found that lack of sleep can lead to high blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as atherosclerosis, the result of a build up of fatty materials in arteries.

For this study, researchers set out to determine how different forms of exercise affect sleep quality. To do so, researchers recruited 386 overweight/obese adults with body mass indexes from 24 to 40 kg/m². In addition, all participants were inactive with elevated blood pressure. Participants were then split up into four groups: a no-exercise group, an aerobic exercise only group, a resistance exercise only group, and a combined aerobic and resistance exercise group. For 12 months, every participant in the exercise groups had 60-minute supervised work out session, three times a week, for 12 months. In the beginning of the experiment, participants completed sleep quality assessments that measured sleep duration, sleep efficiency, sleep latency, and sleep disturbances.

The study found that prior to the experiment, 35 percent of participants had poor sleep quality. In the resistance and resistant aerobic combination groups, sleep efficiency was increased, however in the aerobic and no-exercise group there was no significant change. Sleep latency was slightly reduced only in the resistance group. Sleep quality and disturbances were improved across all groups.

Although there were limitations to the study in that sleep habits were self-reported, this preliminary research indicates that resistance training may be among the most effective forms of exercise to improve sleep quality. These results may help provide insight for future treatments for cardiovascular health.

About the Author:

Avery St. Onge



Avery St. Onge is the Associate Editor of Integrative Practitioner. She's a recent graduate from The George Washington University where she studied journalism and mass communications. During her time at GWU, she focused her reporting on health and wellness. She wrote articles and produced podcasts and videos about topics such as technological advancements in medicine and flaws within college health centers. As a Type 1 diabetic, she is hyperaware of the benefits of a holistic, mind/body approach to medical treatments and is committed to sharing the latest news in integrative medicine.