

- Exercise / Muscles**Muscle training can lower disease risk: experts**

The Japan Times · 31 Mar 2022 · 2 · MAGDALENA OSUMI STAFF WRITER

The pandemic may have changed workout trends for good, but there is no getting away from the fact that staying physically active will lower the risk of death or becoming ill. That said, how much exercise do we really need to stay healthy, and what sort of exercise should we be doing?

A group of Japanese researchers say they have an answer.

Hailing from some of the country's leading universities — Tohoku, Waseda and Kyushu — the researchers recently found that exercising your muscles for up to 60 minutes per week is optimal for preventing serious diseases such as cancer and reducing the risk of death. They warned, however, that overtraining may be ineffective or even risky.

The results support the view of the World Health Organization, which recommends that adults should engage in moderately intense strength training at least twice a week, along with moderate aerobic exercise.

The data showed that, compared with those who did not exercise, people who performed muscle strengthening exercises had a 10% to 17% lower risk of dying or developing conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease or Type 2 diabetes. The risk of death or developing those illnesses was lower in that group of people regardless of whether they did aerobic conditioning exercises such as walking.

Furthermore, muscle strength training for a period of 30 to 60 minutes per week was found to be most effective in reducing the risk of death, cardiovascular disease and cancer, cutting the chance between 10% and 20%.

The findings showed that muscle strengthening activities were associated with a 17% lower incidence of diabetes, with the risk of diabetes sharply decreasing when strength training activities were performed up to 60 minutes per week.

However, the researchers warned of the negative effects of too much training.

After 130 to 140 minutes of muscle training, positive health effects were no longer seen, with the exception of issues related to diabetes, prompting the experts to warn against engaging in such exercise more frequently. In fact, the risk of developing a disease appeared to be higher for those who spent more time working out.

The researchers found that combining aerobic exercise with appropriate muscle strength training further lowered the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer mortality.

The study's findings were published on Feb. 28 in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, a biweekly publication covering sports science and sports medicine.

The research group scrutinized the results of 1,252 studies published worldwide that examined the relationship between strength training, illness and death. Sixteen highly reliable studies were selected and the results were integrated to ascertain the relationship between the duration of muscle training and the risk of disease onset and death. The researchers referred to studies conducted in the United States, England and Scotland, Australia and Japan.