

What does no physical exercise mean for your body?

Moderate but consistent and regular exercise can do wonders for the body



While exercise routine can be flexible and personal, not exercising at all can be detrimental to health. Not only does it help a person to stay physically active and healthy, exercising also ensures their mental well-being which, in the pandemic, has been prioritised.

Amol Naikawadi, the joint managing director and preventive healthcare specialist at Indus Health Plus tells indianexpress.com that sports, along with fitness and genes can help build and strengthen a person's immunity.

"We have seen and heard many conversations around the immediate effects of exercise, but the lesser-known fact is it can help us fight off bacteria, viruses, and other disease-causing agents. An exercise routine can remove the bacteria from our internal airways, increase antibodies and make them more robust, improve blood flow, and reduce stress hormones like cortisol, adrenaline," he explains.

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Naikawadi also says moderate but consistent and regular exercise can do wonders for the body. "Locomotion and movement are essential. Along with helping in terms of immunity, they reduce inflammation in the body, decrease blood sugar levels, help in maintaining a healthy weight, ward off lifestyle diseases, thus promoting longevity."

The most effective fitness activities, he says, include heavy and fast-paced walking, cycling, and running. "These are sufficient to bring in more immune cells into circulation."

But what happens when no exercising happens at all?

According to Naikawadi, no exercise will lead to a weaker immune system and make our bodies more susceptible to different types of infections. Apart from affecting our immune system, it will also increase the chances of obesity, cardiovascular ailments, diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases.

"Don't force your body to perform high-intensity workouts right from day 1, or if you've just recovered from sickness. Exercise within your constraints. The best way to track your fitness would be to keep a check on the number of steps you've walked," he warns.

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What about genetic traits for fitness?

Naikawadi adds that sometimes, it may be the case that our body does not respond well to exercise, and that is because of genes.

"Some people get easily fatigued from mild workouts, and some gain weight despite a strenuous fitness regime. Every individual has a different response for various forms of exercise and sports which is in part dependent on the genes. Understanding your genetic blueprint can help you lay out a fitness plan best suited to your body," he informs. Rejuvenate your body by drinking herbal tea with lemon, honey and tonics made up of ginger, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon, tulsi, etc.

"We also need to remember Covid-19 is still persisting. Many experts suggest there may be a spike in the number of cases during the rainy season. Ensure you avoid stepping out unless absolutely necessary. Eat healthy and increase your immunity. Exercise and meditate to keep your mental and physical health in check. Get a full body check-up to ensure you have taken all the measures to prioritise your health," says Naikawadi.

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You can find out the impact of exercise on your weight and various other physiological processes like:

- Blood pressure response to exercise
- HDL cholesterol levels with exercise
- Insulin sensitivity with exercise
- Hand grip strength
- Weight loss with exercise

Additionally, to understand what kind of exercise is best suited for you, a genetic/DNA test can guide you. Sports genomics, a relatively new concept, studies the genetic makeup or architecture that contributes to an athlete's performance, Naikawadi says.