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Mild, moderate and vigorous exercise may be effective for depression

In a randomised controlled trial, 946 patients recruited from primary care in Sweden who had a patient health questionnaire score of 10 or more (moderate depression) were randomised to light, moderate and vigorous exercise or treatment as usual or guided internet CBT (ICBT).^{1,2}

The exercise interventions were for 55 minutes three times per week for 12 weeks. At the end, the exercise groups had a better outcome than treatment as usual, and the same as ICBT.² The numbers needed to treat were 4 to get one person a 50% reduction in their baseline score (personal communication M Hallgren 2016).

The mild exercise group did yoga and balance exercises and there was no mindfulness component with the yoga. The moderate and vigorous groups did aerobic classes at their respective intensities. The exercise group met a study person weekly to discuss their exercise but did not do any psychological work.

References:

1. Helgadóttir B et al Training fast or slow? Exercise for depression: A randomized controlled trial (2016). [Click here](#)
2. Hallgren M, Helgadottir B, Herring MP, et al. Exercise and internet-based cognitive-behavioural therapy for depression: multicentre randomised controlled trial with 12-month follow-up (2016). [Click here](#)

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