

Exercise for Your Mind

(Ivanhoe Newswire) -- New research from Group Health Cooperative in Seattle reveals exercising three times a week or more may reduce the risk of dementia by up to 40 percent.

For the study, researchers followed more than 1,500 people ages 65 or older for six years. They found exercise significantly reduces the risk for dementia and Alzheimer's. The study also revealed people already affected by either illness will benefit from exercising.

Eric B. Larson, M.D., lead study author and director of the Center for Health Studies at Group Health Cooperative, says, "We learned that a modest amount of exercise would reduce a person's risk of dementia by about 40 percent. That's a significant reduction."

People who were frailest at the start of the study benefited most. Dr. Larson says, "This means that older people really should use it even after you start to lose it because exercise may slow the progression of age-related problems in thinking."

Study investigators believe future research should try to determine whether exercise causes a lower rate of dementia or whether physical activity is a proxy for "life engagement."

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