

How Much Riding Provides the Most Health Benefits?

We are all familiar with the multitude of literature that exercise enhances health. However, I had never seen a study that quantified how much benefit various levels of exercise provided. It is pretty amazing and goes along with what Dr. Mirkin has told me: endurance athletes live longer.

The 2018 study was an effort to examine the association between physical activity and successful aging which they defined as “not suffering from chronic diseases, having optimal social engagement and mental health, as well as lack of physical disability.” The study was conducted at the University of Sydney, Australia, involving 1,500 adults over the age of 49 who were followed over a period of ten years. They tracked the results of those who reported exercise levels between walking up to those who exercised vigorously.

What they found was that members of the study who engaged in more than 5,000 MET minutes/week compared with those who reported less than 1,000 MET minutes/week were *twice as likely* to enjoy successful aging.

So what does this mean for us? MET min/week it is a measure of total metabolic equivalent minutes of activity per week. Those of us who want the benefits of being most likely to enjoy successful aging (from an exercise perspective) need 5,000 MET/min each week or more. How does this relate to our riding intensity and length?

Bicycling.com ran an article interpreting the study which calculated MET/min at various riding speeds in order to meet the 5,000 minutes per week goal. Their explanation (with some extrapolation by your humble writer) was as follows:

Riding 12-14 mph would require about 10 hours per week in order to reach that goal.

Riding 14-16 mph would require just over eight hours per week.

Riding 16-19 mph would require only seven hours per week.

Therefore, the faster you ride each hour accomplishes your goal in the shortest amount of time.

Here are the health benefits they found to be associated with meeting the goal of achieving “at least” 5000 MET/min each week (which they defined as successful aging):

“absence of stroke, coronary artery disease, angina, acute myocardial infarction (AMI), cancer, diabetes, optimal cognitive, physical, mental, respiratory and vascular function; and the lack of disability; and being functionally independent.”

This strikes me as a worthy goal to pursue.

Source: www.nature.com/scientificreports, “Physical Activity as a Determinant of Successful Aging over Ten Years” by Bamini Gopinath, Annette Kifley, Victoria M. Flood and Paul Mitchell, July 12, 2018.

Bicycling.com, “Here’s Why You Should Ride for 10 hours Every Week” by Selene Yeager, July 25, 2018.

Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. Although his primary office is in Clearwater, he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is the author of the [Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook](#) which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident this valuable resource is available to you absolutely free of charge at www.jimdodsonlaw.com.

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