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## Daily Activity Tied to Lower Alzheimer's Risk

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Higher levels of daily physical activity are associated with a decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease, new research suggests.

The report, in the April 24 issue of *Neurology*, included 716 people, average age 82, without cognitive impairment. Each wore a wrist actigraph, a device that measures movement, for about 10 days to establish his or her usual level of daily physical activity. Over the next four years, 71 of them developed Alzheimer's.

The researchers found that [those in the lowest 10 percent for physical activity were more than twice as likely to develop the disease](#) as those in the highest 10 percent. The association held after controlling for age, sex, education, vascular diseases, depression and the frequency of social activities.

Dr. Aron S. Buchman, the lead author, said animal studies have also found that environmental enrichment, including physical activity, protects against cognitive decline, possibly by increasing the size of blood vessels and the number of neurons in the brain.

Early Alzheimer's disease itself might lead to lower physical activity, but the researchers eliminated that possible explanation because the initial level of activity was not associated with previous cognitive decline.

"We weren't measuring only exercise activity, but any activity over a 24-hour period," said Dr. Buchman, an associate professor of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center. "Even very old people who can't participate in formal exercise may be able to derive the benefit."

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