

# Women over 50 should exercise more

**W**omen over 50 must exercise to keep weight from piling on, a recent study shows.

A newly-released, 13-year study of more than 34,000 women showed that, given our typical American diet, women must engage in moderate-intensity physical activity daily to maintain a healthful weight.



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“There’s no sugarcoating it,” says I-Min Lee, lead author of the study and epidemiologist at

Brigham and Women’s Hospital at Harvard Medical School, where she also is a professor of medicine.

She emphasized that beyond weight control, through moderate daily exercise, “it’s possible to get the health benefits of physical activity, such as lowering the risk of heart disease, some cancers and type 2 diabetes, by following the government guidelines and doing at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week.”

The study’s participants, all of whom

were classified as of normal weight, were divided into three groups:

» The most active group, who engaged in 60 minutes (one hour) of moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, daily,

» The moderately-active group, who exercised 150 minutes (2½ hours) per week (or about 30 minutes each day for five days a week),

» And the women who exercised less than 150 minutes (2½ hours) per week.

It is no mystery that the latter group reported an average of 6 pounds weight gain. But what may be surprising is that even the second group also exhibited demonstrable weight gain.

Doing something is better than nothing, but the study clearly shows that even a moderate commitment to exercising won’t help to keep off weight as we age.

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