



New Study Reveals Swimming Can Cut Men's Risk of Dying in Half

Research shows swimming may be the prescription for longevity

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A new study shows that swimming cuts men's risk of dying by about 50% compared to runners, walkers and sedentary peers. The University of South Carolina study led by Dr. Steven Blair evaluated comprehensive physical exams and behavioral surveys from thousands of people who were enrolled in the Aerobics Center Longitudinal Study (ACLS) over the last 32 years. The results were presented at the 2008 World Aquatic Health Conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and have been published in the International Journal of Aquatic Education and Research.

"Swimmers had the lowest death rate," explains Blair. He adds that the study takes into account age, body mass index, smoking status, alcohol intake, hypertension, other medical factors and family history. "This is the first report that examined mortality rates among swimmers in comparison with other types of physical activity and sedentary lifestyle. We conclude that men who swim for exercise have better survival rates than their sedentary peers," he summarizes.

The ACLS includes extensive medical and physical activity data on more than 40,000 men, age 20-90 years. "These lower rates in swimmers compared with walkers and sedentary men might well be expected," comments Dr. Blair, "but it is surprising that we also observed lower mortality in swimmers than in runners," he adds. "Therefore, swimming appears to be a healthful alternative to other types of physical activity." The study population was limited to white, well-educated, middle- to upper-class men. While this limits the generalizability of the study, it should not affect the study's internal validity, advises Blair. He explains that, "there is no compelling reason to assume that the benefits of swimming would be different for women or for men in other socioeconomic groups. In an earlier study in this same population we found that both women and men had similar benefits from swimming in terms of fitness and other health indicators."

Dr. Blair also found that regular swimmers had a higher cardiorespiratory fitness than walkers and sedentary people. He concludes that, "Swimming provides a healthful alternative to traditional modes of exercise for improving cardiorespiratory fitness and health for the general population, as well as for patients suffering from chronic diseases. Swimming may be a good alternative exercise for individuals who cannot participate in running or other forms of physical activity." Future research will compare injury information between swimming and other forms of physical activity."

Founded in 1965, National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF), which helped fund this research, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving public health worldwide by encouraging healthier living through aquatic education and research. NSPF is the leading educator of aquatic facility operators and the chief philanthropic research sponsor in the aquatics field. For additional information, visit www.nspf.org.



For Immediate Release

For more information about the Swimming Longitudinal Study or to schedule an interview with Dr. Steven Blair, P.E.D. or Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph.D., CEO of the NSPF, please contact Laurie Batter of BatterUp! Productions at batterup@batterupproductions.com or 760-438-9304 (in California).

About NSPF®

The National Swimming Pool Foundation® (NSPF®) has given back \$3.5 million of all revenue in the past five years to fund grants to prevent illness, injury, and drowning, and to demonstrate the benefits of aquatic activity. The Foundation works towards its mission to encourage healthier living through aquatic education and research with its collection of educational products and training, and sponsors the annual World Aquatic Health™ Conference. Visit www.nspf.org.

About Steven Blair

The American Heart Association (AHA) recently bestowed its Population Research Prize on Steven N. Blair, PED, “for leading major population studies that established the benefits of aerobic exercise in achieving cardiorespiratory fitness, thereby reducing illness and death from cardiovascular disease.” Blair is a professor in the departments of Exercise Science and Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the University of South Carolina’s Arnold School of Public Health. He is a prolific author of scientific papers and chapters, and was the senior scientific editor for the US Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health. For more information please read his [ProfNet](#) profile.