

Don Colbert: Add This to Your Exercise Routine

A recent study by the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) found that listening to your favorite music can improve vascular function in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD).

A total of 74 heart patients were divided into three groups. Patients in the first group underwent three weeks of supervised aerobic exercise training. Patients in the second group received the same aerobic exercise training but, in addition to exercise, also listened to their favorite music for 30 minutes every day. Patients in the third group listened to their favorite music for 30 minutes every day but did not participate in any aerobic exercise.

Maintain Healthy Blood Vessels

Researchers measured the levels of various substances in the blood that play a key role in the proper dilating and constricting of blood vessels. The medical term for this is endothelial function and is evaluated by monitoring the level of nitric oxide, asymmetric dimethylarginine, symmetric dimethylarginine and xanthine oxidase in the blood stream.

Professor Marina Deljanin Ilic, one of the doctors involved in the study, says, "In the setting of cardiovascular risk factors and cardiovascular disease, the endothelium [inner blood vessel lining] loses its normal function. Since endothelium-derived nitric oxide is necessary to maintain an adequate vascular response, correction of endothelial dysfunction has become a goal of therapy."

She continues, "Exercise training has been shown to improve endothelial function and is the cornerstone of a multifaceted program of cardiovascular rehabilitation. However, little is

known about the role of music in cardiovascular rehabilitation or the effects of listening to favorite music on endothelial function.”

Exercise Plus Music Is Better

The results of the study confirmed the value of music. After three weeks, while the group that exercised had better nitric oxide levels than the group that did not exercise, the group that both exercised and listened to music had the best levels by far.

Xanthine oxidase, which should decrease as vascular function improves, decreased in all three groups but far more significantly in the patients who exercised and listened to music. This group also displayed healthier levels of the remaining substances.

Ilic remarks, “The combination of music and exercise training led to the most improvement in endothelial function ... possibly by β -endorphin mediated activation of endothelium derived nitric oxide. The vascular health benefits of music may be due to endorphins or endorphin-like compounds released from the brain when we hear music we like.”

She concludes, “Listening to favorite music alone and in addition to regular exercise training improves endothelial function and therefore may be an adjunct method in the rehabilitation of patients with CAD. There is not an ‘ideal’ music for everybody, and patients should choose music which increases positive emotions and makes them happy or relaxed.”

Don Colbert, M.D., is board certified in family practice and in anti-aging medicine. He also has received extensive training in nutritional and preventive medicine, and he has helped millions of people discover the joy of living in divine health.

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