



April 30, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MI

Physical Activity vs. Exercise

The authors of the editorial mentioned in [Tuesday's message](#) suggest you're being sold a bill of goods on the benefits of exercise as it relates to losing weight. In the opening paragraph, they state that a recently published paper claimed that 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week is a miracle cure for reducing the risk of and treating chronic disease. They then say that physical activity reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and some cancers by at least 30%. Then they say physical activity is not effective to help people lose weight.

Are the statements correct? Yes and no. The problem is that they intentionally, in my opinion, use the words exercise and physical activity interchangeably, but they're not the same thing. Exercise is a component of physical activity: intentional movement. Physical activity is all movement, intentional or not. From the moment you turn over to hit the snooze button and swing your legs over the side of the bed in the morning, every movement you make is physical activity. When you decide to put on your boots and go for a hike, that's exercise.



They state that physical activity levels have stayed the same for the past 30 years and therefore, the reason obesity rates have skyrocketed is due exclusively to increased food intake. I think they know better. It's true that exercise levels have not changed—but physical activity has declined. Maybe not enough to explain the obesity rates we have, but they've gone down significantly, and I think we all know that; in the audio version of this message, I'll give you examples of how physical activity has declined over the past 30 years.

What was their real agenda? I'll let you know when I wrap this up on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: Br J Sports Med doi:10.1136/bjsports-2015-094911.

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