



January 14, 2017 – Grand Rapids, MI

How Exercise Affects Menopause: Heart and Brain

In the last post, I talked about the effects of menopause on the muscles and bones; in short, the changes in the muscles reduce physical abilities, and exercise can help that. But there's another factor when it comes to physical performance: the heart and cardiovascular system. Once a woman passes 30, her aerobic capacity declines every decade. That means oxygen doesn't reach the muscles and brain as often. Her physical reserves wane.

Exercise can have a positive impact on the heart. It's a muscle—it responds to being stressed. With exercise, the blood vessels retain their elasticity. Her aerobic capacity declines more slowly and is definitely not as noticeable.

Exercise also helps the brain. The fluctuation of hormones can be stabilized by exercise and can help the mood swings a woman may experience; depression associated with menopause decreases. How about hot flashes? Yes, exercise can help with that as well; it's not a cure, but any reduction in symptoms would be welcome to a woman who feels like she's standing in the Sahara at high noon.

You can't stop menopause, but you can help make it easier to deal with. The degree to which exercise helps menopausal and post-menopausal women will vary because every woman is different. Take 30 days. Walk like you mean it for just 15 minutes every day, and see what happens to your body. The time and effort you invest may be just what you need to make this transition and new reality a whole lot more comfortable.



What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

WGUV FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** ***Straight Talk on Health***

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* Sunday at 7:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. in the Eastern Time Zone on WGUV-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to www.wgvu.org/wgvunews and clicking on "Listen Live" at the top.

The health information in this message is designed for educational purposes only. It's not a substitute for medical advice from your healthcare provider, and you should not use it to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. It's designed to motivate you to work toward better health, and that includes seeing your healthcare professional regularly. If what you've read raises any questions or concerns about health problems or possible diseases, talk to your healthcare provider today.

Subscribe to the Message from Dr. Chet at DrChet.com — © Chet Zelasko PhD LLC