



## WELLNESS

### In the News

Catch up on the latest **wellness-related developments** from the past month.

#### **Omega-3 Supplements and Weightlifting May Improve Overall Health**

A recent study suggests that combining omega-3 supplements with consistent weightlifting may offer significant health benefits, including improvements in athletic performance and enhanced heart and brain health. Researchers found that athletes who took omega-3 fatty acid supplements during a strength-training regimen experienced positive changes in cholesterol profiles, brain-health markers and gains in muscular strength compared to those who did not supplement. Other key health outcomes included lower LDL (or "bad") cholesterol and triglycerides, reduced inflammatory markers and improved neurochemical markers like dopamine or serotonin.

However, the findings have significant limitations because the study only included healthy, physically active men with a history of strength training. This limited scope makes it unclear if these benefits apply to the general public, particularly individuals with existing chronic diseases. Experts noted that while omega-3s are known for their anti-inflammatory benefits and importance for immune resilience, it's generally preferable to obtain them from food-based sources like fatty fish, walnuts or chia seeds. Furthermore, some individuals, such as those taking blood thinners, may need to avoid omega-3

supplements altogether. Despite the limitations, the study suggests that omega-3 supplementation could be a cost-effective and convenient way to enhance exercise performance, though more research is needed to understand its effects on a broader population.

Consult with your primary care provider before starting any supplement, especially if you take blood thinners or have a medical condition.

#### **Study Reveals Cardiorespiratory Fitness Preserves Brain Health**

A recent study published in *The British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that cardiorespiratory fitness among older adults is associated with better outcomes related to cognitive ability, including memory and executive functioning. Cardiorespiratory fitness refers to the ability of the heart, lungs and blood vessels to deliver oxygen to the muscles during prolonged physical activity.

The study involved nearly 650 participants in the United States between 65 and 80 years old, whose cardiorespiratory fitness was evaluated using a treadmill test designed to measure VO2 max, which refers to the maximum amount of oxygen the body can utilize during intense exercise. Following this, participants underwent cognitive assessments

across five critical brain function domains: working memory, episodic memory, processing speed, executive function/attention control and visuospatial function. The findings revealed that individuals with higher cardiorespiratory fitness, as indicated by their VO2 max scores, performed better across all five of these cognitive areas, independent of their age or APOE4 gene status. APOE4 is a gene associated with an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive decline.

This study reinforces public health recommendations encouraging physical activity across all age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week. For older adults, activities such as walking, swimming, strength training and aerobics classes can offer significant health benefits.

Contact your health care provider before starting any exercise program.

### Record Low Number of Americans Report Drinking Alcohol

A recent Gallup poll revealed that a record low of 54% of U.S. adults say they consume alcohol. This is the lowest percentage in nearly 90 years of the survey. From 1997 to 2023, Gallup's research found that at least 60% of Americans reported drinking alcohol. This downward trend is likely influenced by the growing belief among Americans that even moderate alcohol consumption can be harmful to one's health.

The decline in alcohol consumption has been accompanied by a growing popularity of alternative beverages. In fact, consumers spent \$829.2 million on nonalcoholic options in 2024 compared to \$565 million in 2023, according to data firm NIQ. Popular alternative beverage options include nonalcoholic beers, wines and spirits, mocktails, sparkling water and kombucha.

The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults shouldn't drink alcohol or drink in moderation if they choose to drink alcohol,

which is two drinks or less in a day for men and one drink or less for women. However, some health experts warn that all alcohol intake is bad for your health. Similarly, the World Health Organization has stated that no level of alcohol consumption is safe. Alcohol has been found to increase the risk of several types of cancer, such as throat cancer, colon cancer, breast cancer and liver cancer. Additional health risks include high blood pressure, heart disease, liver disease, stroke, digestive problems, weakened immune system, memory problems and mental health conditions.

Contact your health care provider to better understand your risks related to alcohol consumption.

Stay tuned for more wellness-related news and developments.