Do YOU go to the gym? Regular exercise could mean you can drink as much as you want

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CYCLING regularly or going for a brisk walk or hitting the gym could offset the risk of death from alcohol-related illnesses, research has shown.

Results from the study suggest that even the minimum recommended amount of exercise could cancel out the additional risk of heart attacks, strokes and cancers linked with regularly drinking alcohol.

The analysis pointed out that even 'occasional drinking' was associated with a higher cancer risk, compared to being teetotal.

However, scientists now say even the minimum recommended physical activity of up to 150 minutes of walking or cycling per week demonstrates significant health benefits.

“In this large British general population cohort we found the association between alcohol intake and mortality risk was moderated by physical activity,” said study leader Emmanuel Stamatakis, associate professor of exercise, health and physical activity at Sydney University.

“Our results provide an additional argument for the role of physical activity as a means to promote the health of the population, even in the presence of other less healthy behaviours.”

He went on to concede that alcohol consumption was 'an integral part of western culture' with 24 per cent of men and 18 per cent of women in England drinking more than the recommended weekly amount.

“The public health relevance of our results is emphasised by the recently updated alcohol consumption guidelines by the UK Chief Medical Officer,” he said.

**The association between alcohol intake and mortality risk was moderated by physical activity**

Emmanuel Stamatakis

“These found that cancer mortality risk starts from a relatively low level of alcohol consumption.”

Researchers found there was even a heightened death risk for those who drank within recommended limits but failed to reach and stick to minimum exercise guidelines.

The risk was reduced or cancelled out for those who were physically active, from the minimum recommended activity levels upwards.

The findings, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, used health data to look at alcohol use and exercise levels of 36,000 people in England and Scotland aged over 40.

Around 14 per cent were life-long abstainers and former drinkers, while 13 per cent exceeded the then recommended weekly maximum – 14 units for women and 21 for men.

Levels of weekly physical activity were categorised as “inactive”, “active at the lower end of the recommended scale” and “active at the upper end”.

Around 60 per cent of participants were in the bottom group, with almost half admitting to doing no physical activity at all.

Here are out top 10 foods to prevent heart disease.

The others in that category failed to achieve the minimum recommended amount.

Around 15 per cent achieved the lower recommended weekly target with the final 25 per cent hitting the higher target.

New government guidelines say men and women should not regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week, equivalent to six 175ml glasses of wine or six pints of lager or ale.

Drinking is known to increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and several types of cancer.

[Drinking ANY amount of alcohol can cause SEVEN different types of cancer, expert warns](http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/692140/alcohol-causes-seven-different-types-of-cancer-mouth-throat-liver-bowel-breast)