Heavy drinkers who exercise two hours a week no more likely to die than teetotallers

[http://i0.wp.com/metrouk2.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/harry-readhead.jpg?crop=0px%2C11px%2C150px%2C150px&resize=150%2C150&quality=80&strip=all&ssl=1&w=40&h=40](http://metro.co.uk/author/harry-readhead/)

[Harry Readhead](http://metro.co.uk/author/harry-readhead/) Thursday 8 Sep 2016 9:45 am

**In excellent news for those increasingly struggling to justify their post-work pint or three, two-and-a-half hours of exercise per week may offset the potentially deadly impact of alcohol overconsumption, according to new research.**

University College London and the University of Sydney have found that drinking even within the recommended guidelines of 14 units per week raises the risk of premature death by 16%, and the risk of cancer by 47%.

But the research teams also found that only 150 minutes of moderate activity – for instance, walking or golf – completely cancelled out the impact of death from all causes while simultaneously reducing the cancer risk by 36%. It also cut the chance of death from hazardous drinking by more than half.

Scientists believe that alcohol consumption and exercise employ similar metabolic pathways in the body, but operate in different directions. Alcohol forces the liver to stop disposing of fatty acids, and exercise uses fat for fuel.

‘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,’ said Dr Annie Britton, of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at UCL.

‘The public health relevance of our results is further emphasised by the recently updated alcohol consumption guidelines review by the UK Chief Medical Officer that found that cancer mortality risk starts from a relatively low level of alcohol consumption.’

Experts conceded that they could not know how the detrimental affects of binge drinking, rather than regular alcohol intake, was affected by exercise.

The study involved six health surveys of 36,370 people, carried out between 1994 and 1998.

Read more: <http://metro.co.uk/2016/09/08/heavy-drinkers-who-exercise-two-hours-a-week-no-more-likely-to-die-than-teetotallers-6115852/#ixzz4OqcEWDQP>