



## Media Release – 21 August 2024

### Why Women Gain More from a Workout: The Surprising Science

Exercise has long been celebrated as a natural remedy for a host of health issues, and recent research underscores its particularly profound benefits for women. The latest findings published in the [Journals of the American College of Cardiology](#) reveal that women experience more significant health improvements from exercise than men, highlighting the critical importance of physical activity for women's health. These improvements include a substantial reduction in the risk of early death, making regular exercise an essential component of a healthy lifestyle for women.

While women experience greater health benefits from exercise compared to men, [the latest Ministry of Health findings](#) reveal that less than half (43.7%) of women in Aotearoa meet basic physical activity guidelines. This highlights the importance of emphasising the specific health advantages exercise offers women, including a reduced risk of early death. Promoting physical activity is, therefore, crucial for improving women's health.

The main findings from recent research showed the following:

1. **Reduced Risk of Early Death:** Women who engage in just 140 minutes of physical activity per week can lower their risk of early death by 18%. In contrast, men need more than double that amount—300 minutes per week—to achieve the same reduction.
2. **Consistent Benefits Across Exercise Types:** Women see greater reductions in the risk of early death from various types of exercise compared to men, regardless of the exercise's intensity or duration.
3. **Need for Sex-Based Exercise Guidelines:** The study underscores the necessity for sex-specific guidelines in exercise recommendations to ensure everyone can achieve optimal health outcomes.

Clear evidence highlights the importance of women prioritising regular exercise, not just for overall health but also to significantly reduce the risk of early death. Throughout Aotearoa, numerous facilities are dedicated to helping women lead healthier lives through regular physical activity. Many gyms and fitness centres offer a wide range of programs specifically designed to meet women's needs, providing supportive and motivating environments. These facilities offer diverse workout options—from high-intensity interval training to low-impact exercises—and ensure comfort and inclusivity with female-only spaces and sessions. Additionally, the exercise profession is welcoming to women, with over 55% of exercise professionals being female. By accommodating various preferences and fitness levels, these facilities empower women from all backgrounds to confidently pursue their health goals.

*Exercise NZ is proud to highlight these supportive environments that are committed to making physical activity and exercise accessible, enjoyable, and tailored to the unique needs of women across the country. For more information on this release or to arrange an interview, please contact Richard Beddie at [richard@exercisenz.org.nz](mailto:richard@exercisenz.org.nz) or P: 0800 66 88 11, M: 027-520-5744.*