

Have You Helped Your Heart Today?

It's Never Too Late to Start Exercising!

A new study published in the current issue of *Heart* magazine sheds some light- and gives some hope- to those who have started working out later in life. Even if you start exercising at age 40 or over, the benefits to your heart can be substantial.

Researchers from the University of Heidelberg in Germany re-analyzed data from a study of coronary heart disease of 312 heart disease patients between 40- 68 years old compared to 479 healthy people. Asked about their patterns of physical activity since age 20, those who were moderately to very active throughout their adulthood had a 62-percent lower risk of heart disease compared to people who had not exercised in adulthood at all.

But the most interesting data is this: those who said they were sedentary from age 20 to 39 but took up exercising at age 40 or later cut their heart disease risk by 55 percent. Risk reduction was greatest among those who became very active, faring even better than people who were active in their twenties and thirties but stopped activity after 40 (this last group still had a 35 percent lower risk of heart disease than people who were completely sedentary). The authors concluded that while optimal health is likely to be enjoyed by those who exercise all their lives, it is never too late to start. Regular exercise, even if started in later life, still confers many benefits and substantially cuts the risk of heart disease.

For more information contact The Health Heart Program of the Columbia County Department of Health (518) 828-3358 ext 1314/15 or log on to <http://www.columbiacountynyny.com/depts/health/heart.html>