

Heavy exercise not too high a hurdle for bariatric surgery patients

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Bariatric surgery patients can undertake a rigorous exercise program after the procedure, in order to continue to lose weight and avoid regaining weight, according to a UT Southwestern Medical Center study.

"Until now, we didn't know until now whether morbidly obese bariatric [surgery patients](#) could physically meet this goal," said Dr. Abhimanyu Garg, chief of nutrition and [metabolic diseases](#) and senior author of the study appearing online and in a future issue of *Obesity*. "Our study shows that most bariatric surgery patients can perform large amounts of exercise and improve their physical fitness levels. By the end of the 12 weeks, more than half the [study participants](#) were able to burn an additional 2,000 calories a week through exercise and 82 percent surpassed the 1,500-calorie mark."

Usually reserved for people more than 100 pounds overweight, bariatric surgeries have become more widely accepted over the past decade as a safe and effective method for long-term weight loss. About 15 million people nationwide are morbidly obese and roughly 220,000 underwent bariatric surgery in 2009 alone, according to the American Society for Metabolic Surgery.

For this study, researchers recruited 33 adults. Twenty-one participants were randomly assigned to the [exercise program](#) and 12 to the control group. [Exercise group](#) members worked out at least five days a week, gradually increasing the number of calories burned from 500 the first

week to at least 2,000 calories the final week. All participants received dietary counseling and were told to keep their daily caloric intake between 1,200 and 1,500 calories.

"We found that participants in the exercise group increased their daily step count from about 4,500 to nearly 10,000 so we know that they weren't reducing their physical activity levels at other times of the day," Dr. Garg said. "We also found that while all participants lost an average of 10 pounds, those in the exercise group became more aerobically fit."

Dr. Garg said he now wants to complete a larger and longer-term clinical trial to investigate the benefits of exercise as a tool to prevent weight regain.

Provided by UT Southwestern Medical Center

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