

# Putting on the pounds after weight loss? Hit the gym to maintain health gains

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Although obesity is a major risk factor for disease, much of the threat may be associated with the metabolic (or cardiometabolic) syndrome, a cluster of risk factors related to diabetes and heart disease. Losing weight can improve health and reduce many of these risk factors. However, many people struggle to keep the weight off long-term. Now, researchers at the University of Missouri have found that people who perform resistance training while regaining weight can help maintain strides in reducing their risks for chronic disease.

"Long-term [weight loss](#) maintenance is uncommon without regular exercise," said Shana Warner, a doctoral student in the MU Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. "It is very important to address other things that can be done to maintain health as opposed to focusing solely on body weight. Our research indicates that following a consistent exercise program can help maintain certain aspects of metabolic health, even in those who experience weight regain."

The study consisted of two phases, meant to simulate real-life weight loss and regain. In the first phase, overweight and obese participants lost 4 to 6 percent of their initial body weight by following an eight to 12-week regimen of diet and aerobic exercise. In the second phase, participants regained 50 percent of the weight they had lost. During the regain phase, participants performed 45 minutes of supervised resistance training three times each week.

Researchers found that weight training during weight regain has a positive effect on health, which can reduce the risk of diabetes, [heart disease](#) and other diseases. Participants maintained improvements acquired through weight loss in cardiorespiratory fitness, body fat percentage, systolic blood pressure and other factors. In addition, participants significantly increased strength and lean body mass. However, they did not maintain reductions in visceral abdominal fat:

the fat deposited around internal organs.

This study furthers research completed earlier this year, in which MU researchers found that participation in [aerobic exercise](#) while regaining weight counters many of the risk factors associated with chronic diseases. These studies are some of the first to consider the effects of exercise on people's health who regain weight they recently lost.

**More information:** The study, "The Effects of Resistance Training on Metabolic Health with Weight Regain," was published this year in *The Journal of Clinical Hypertension*.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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