



## Light-to-moderate physical activity associated with lower risk of AF in older adults

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**Boston, MA** - Leisure activities, including walking, golfing, gardening, and outside chores, appear to reduce the risk of developing atrial fibrillation (AF), a new study suggests [1]. Investigators observed that light-to-moderate physical activity was associated with significantly lower AF incidence in older adults, but the association was not significant among those who participated in high-intensity exercise.

"Greater leisure-time activity and walking were associated with graded lower incidence of AF, with progressively lower risk as both leisure-time activity and distances and paces of walking increased," write lead investigator **Dr Dariush Mozaffarian** (Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA) and colleagues in a study published online August 5, 2008 in *Circulation*. "Conversely, intensity of exercise had a U-shaped relationship with AF, with lower risk among individuals exercising with moderate, but not high, intensity."

Among older adults—the risk of new-onset AF is approximately 2% per year in those 65 years and older—light-to-moderate physical activity might reduce the risk of developing the arrhythmia by reducing blood pressure, lowering heart rate, or improving vascular compliance.

Using data from the **Cardiovascular Health Study**, Mozaffarian and colleagues prospectively investigated associations of leisure-time activity, exercise intensity, and walking habits with incident AF in 5446 adults aged 65 years and older. Investigators report that light-to-moderate leisure-time activities, which included gardening, outside chores, golfing, and dancing, were associated with a significantly lower risk of developing AF. Walking distance and walking pace were also associated with a lower risk of AF.

### Source

1. Mozaffarian D, Furberg CD, Psaty BM, Siscovick D. Physical activity and incidence of atrial fibrillation in older adults. *Circulation* 2008; DOI: 10.1161/circulationaha.108.785626. Available at: <http://circ.ahajournals.org>. 

