

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.

This week's blog spotlights the importance of epilepsy for those with uncontrolled seizures. **CONSULT YOUR MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BEFORE STARTING ANY EXERCISE PROGRAM.**

Many people with epilepsy, especially those with uncontrolled seizures, live a sedentary life and have low physical fitness. This sedentary life may have come about because they were told that exercise can trigger seizures. Elevated body temperature generated from exercise may be a trigger for a seizure. According to a recent article by Phylis Feiner Johnson, she says that might not necessarily be so. At least for a large population of those with epilepsy.

Clinical and experimental studies have analyzed the effect of physical exercise on epilepsy. The result? Exercise can be beneficial. Regular physical exercise may have a moderate seizure preventive effect in 30-40% of the patient population, while in about 10%, strenuous exercise may provoke seizures.

Although there are rare cases of exercise-induced seizures, studies have shown that physical activity can decrease seizure frequency, as well as lead to improved cardiovascular and psychological health in people with epilepsy.

Exercise, especially aerobic exercise, clearly benefits people with epilepsy because it often reduces seizure frequency, relieves depression, reduces social isolation, and promotes cardiac and general health. In one study, 14 women completed a 3-month prospective exercise program and reported a significant reduction in seizure frequency during the period in which they exercised.

In another prospective study, 26 children with intractable epilepsy underwent video-EEG monitoring during exercise and more than half showed a significant improvement in their EEG activity. A survey of 74 patients with epilepsy reported that those who exercised had significantly fewer seizures.

Research has found that most people with epilepsy experience improved electroencephalograph (EEG) readings during and after exercise. The reasons for this are unknown, but theories include:

- The heavy breathing associated with exercise stops the build-up of carbon dioxide in the blood...
- Reduction and management of stress...
- Increase of 'feel good' brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) may calm the brain...
- Concentration may focus the brain so that seizures are less likely...

If you listen to your body, stop when you start feeling tired and slowly build up your routine, exercise can make you feel good, look great and put your mind in a better place.

Exercise options you can try can try are: aerobics, use of a recumbent exercise bicycle, Pilates, yoga, and light weight-bearing exercises. But be sure you have a trainer and please, skip the treadmill or the elliptical machine, no matter how macho you're feeling. Also, keep these exercise safety points in mind, for your own protection:

- **Before starting any new exercise program, consult with your doctor or specialist.**
- **Avoid known seizure triggers.**
- **Do NOT exercise alone.**
- **Make sure your sporting companions are aware of your condition and know what to do if you have a seizure.**

If you are going for a walk or jog, let family or friends know your route before you leave and how long you will be out. And remember, have fun! **ALWAYS REMEMBER TO CONSULT YOUR MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BEFORE STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM.**

Another article of interest: Exercise May Reduce the Risk of Epilepsy Later in Life for Men

http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/09/130904203543.htm?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Fhealth_medicine%2Fepilepsy+%28ScienceDaily%3A+Health+%26+Medicine+News+-+Epilepsy+Research%29

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