

**For immediate release**

June 3, 2010

**HIT THE TREADMILL—NOT JUST THE BOOKS—TO BOOST GRADES**

Study: College grades were better with vigorous activity

BALTIMORE – Many college students sweat before finals, but those who also sweat through exercise may have an edge, according to a study presented today at the [American College of Sports Medicine's 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting](#) in Baltimore.

A study of 266 undergraduates showed higher grade point averages (GPA) among those who more often engaged in at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity—generally defined as effort of seven or eight on a scale of one to 10. (According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, those exercising moderately can talk but not sing, while vigorous activity makes it difficult to say more than a few words without pausing for breath.)

Though exercise advocates may not be surprised that those who are physically active tend to get better grades, researchers say this study involved older students than most.

“While the link between physical activity and academic achievement is well established for elementary and middle-school students, this has been less studied among college students,” said Joshua Ode, Ph.D., who supervised the study. “We documented a positive association between vigorous activity and GPA.”

Researchers, including Jennifer Flynn (then an undergraduate), also examined other factors that might correlate with GPA, including gender, race, study time, participation in university athletics, class standing and major (kinesiology/other).

“After accounting for these variables, vigorous physical activity was still associated with GPA,” she said. The research team developed an equation that includes physical activity, gender and major to predict GPA. “Students who participate in vigorous activity seven days per week have GPAs that average .4 higher, on a scale of 4.0, than those who participate in no vigorous activity.”

Noting the relatively small sample size, Ode and Flynn called for more research to further clarify associations between physical activity and academic achievement throughout one’s college career. Meanwhile, said Ode, their findings reinforce what many experts already recommend—a daily dose of physical activity to reduce stress, improve performance and increase one’s sense of well-being.

-30-

The conclusions outlined in this news release are those of the researchers only, and should not be construed as an official statement of the [American College of Sports Medicine](#).