

No 21 Cycling is good for your knees, says study

Cycling is a great way to keep fit and healthy. It strengthens our heart, keeps our weight down, and is good for mental health. A little-known and (perhaps) surprising benefit of getting on a bike is that it is good for our knees. A new study says cyclists are less likely to experience knee pain later in life than people who do not ride bicycles.

The study was conducted by a research team from Baylor College of Medicine in the USA. Researchers surveyed 2,600 men and women, with an average age of 64. The survey participants were asked about their levels of physical activity. They also had X-rays of their knees taken. This was to look for signs and levels of arthritis in their knee joints.

The lead researcher, Dr Grace Lo, said the results of the research were surprising. She said cyclists were 21 per cent less likely to have signs of osteoarthritis compared to those who did not have a history of cycling. She added: "I was surprised to see how very strong the benefit [of cycling] was."

A lot of research shows that cyclists are around 20 per cent less likely to die prematurely. Dr Lo said cycling, "is a great preventative strategy for many things, including arthritis". Osteoarthritis is often called "wear-and-tear" arthritis. It's what happens when we use the cartilage in our joints a lot. The cartilage wears down and becomes painful. Arthritis most commonly affects the over-50s.

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