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New Systematic Review finds that Iron Supplementation Benefits Physical Performance in Women of Reproductive Age

Women of childbearing age are at higher risk for iron-deficiency anemia because of blood loss during their monthly periods. About 1 in 5 women of childbearing age has iron-deficiency anemia.¹

Adequate body stores of iron are necessary for optimal endurance exercise performance. Severe iron depletion resulting in overt iron-deficiency anemia clearly depresses endurance fitness.²

A New systematic review finds that daily iron supplementation can improve physical performance in women of reproductive age. The researchers who conducted the study said that their findings provide a strong rationale for preventing and treating iron deficiencies among those women.^{3,4}

After screening thousands of studies from a variety of databases, the authors identified 22 studies that met inclusion criteria: controlled trials that measured exercise outcomes in women of childbearing age randomly assigned to receive daily oral iron supplementation or control.^{3,4}

Results showed that iron supplementation boosted maximal exercise, as confirmed by increases in maximal oxygen consumption and also improved submaximal exercise performance, which was confirmed by reductions in heart rate. These benefits are clearest in iron deficient and trained women.^{3,4}

In conclusion, this new systematic review establishes evidence of a beneficial effect from iron supplementation on exercise performance in women of childbearing age. This data might also be used as an aid in establishing and maintaining iron deficiency prevention programs, as well as designing future randomized control trials.

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References:

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