

Vigorous exercise could prevent 10% of flu cases

Doing at least two and a half hours of vigorous exercise each week cuts the chance of developing flu, new data suggests.

Around 4,800 people took part in this year's online [Flu Survey](#), run by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The Flu Survey, now in its fifth year, tries to track as much detail as possible about who does and does not get flu.

One of the questions people must answer when they register, as well as their age, if they are around children and if they have been vaccinated, is how many hours of "vigorous exercise" they do each week, such as running, fast cycling or competitive sports, ranging from none to more than five hours.

They are then asked to log in each week and note how they are feeling, and whether or not they have any flu-like symptoms.

The researchers say their findings suggest 100 cases of flu per 1,000 people could be prevented just by engaging in vigorous exercise.

However, moderate exercise did not appear to have a protective effect, the researchers said.

Dr Alma Adler, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: "We need to treat this result cautiously as these are preliminary findings. However, they are consistent with findings for other conditions and really show the health benefits of exercise.

"Although many people have dodged the flu bullet this winter, flu can occur at any time, so taking advantage of the better weather is a great opportunity to get out and get fit to ward off flu this spring."