

- Exercise

How exercising regularly could benefit your sleep

Western Daily Press · 11 Apr 2024 · 23 · ■ By JAMEL SMITH

Ever noticed you tend to sleep better when you're more in the groove with your fitness regime?



A new long-term study, published in the journal *BMJ Open*, found that regularly exercising twice a week or more significantly cuts the risk of insomnia.

People who do regular exercise were 42% less likely to have difficulty falling asleep than those who were inactive, and 22% less likely to report symptoms of insomnia, according to the research.

Here are a few tips to help you get into a regular routine...

SET SHORT-TERM GOALS

“Setting short-term goals can act as a stepping stone to help you reach your target,” suggests Olly Banks, personal trainer at Fitness First.

“Whether it’s something simple like turning up to a set amount of workouts in a week, or just staying consistent with your nutrition, short-term goals help make positive steps towards the bigger picture.”

SET REALISTIC TARGETS

“The worst thing you can do is set a goal that is too ambitious,” says Martyn Oakey, head of fitness at Everlast Gyms, part of Sports Direct. “Set an attainable fitness goal, something that you can work towards that can keep you motivated.”

WORK-OUT WITH A FRIEND

Penny Weston, a fitness and wellness expert and director of Moddershall Oaks Country Spa Retreat, says: “Keeping exercise fun and consistent is key: for many people, making it a part of your social life is the way to achieve this.

“Often, we are subconsciously looking for an excuse not to do a workout and will find plenty of other things to do instead, but if you know you’ve scheduled it with a friend, you are more likely to attend as you do not want to let them down.”

DIVERSIFY YOUR WORKOUTS

To prevent boredom and hitting a plateau in your fitness journey, try mixing up your workouts with different cardio, strength training and flexibility routines, or explore new

classes and bootcamps. Martyn adds: “There are hundreds of workout trends online that can transform your current workouts into something fresh and exciting.”

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES

Olly says: “If you set a short-term goal and stick to it, acknowledge and celebrate this, just as much as you would acknowledge when you’ve slipped up.

“We often forget we need to reward ourselves when we reach a goal, instead of just setting another one straight away and forgetting that success.”

You could motivate yourself with some physical rewards.

Martyn adds: “It’s no secret that buying new sports gear can add a new layer of excitement for working out. So why not set a goal, and once completed, treat yourself to a new pair of running trainers or workout gear?”

WORK-OUT AT HOME

You don’t always need to get to the gym or a class for a workout. Experts say you can achieve excellent results at home using just your body weight.