

- Lifestyles

It matters to stay active

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As we advance in age, things we used to do effortlessly have become a bit of a struggle, the most telling is when we get out of bed in the morning. Let's not mention the prescribed pills that we had started to pop. But there's a fix, although it doesn't totally erase the age-related inconveniences. The simple act of getting and walking outside likely makes us do some form of exercise. Within a few minutes of moving, we start to feel better. Our bodies release endorphins, the 'feel good' chemicals when we get active. Done regularly, the effects last, especially the energy boost. We get vitamin D from the early morning sun as well as organic compounds from plants called phyton-cides that boost our immune functions.

Healthy heart – regular activity lowers our risk of heart disease, controls our blood pressure and improves our blood cholesterol levels. Bottom line is, regular exercise is good for the heart.

Weight control – diet and exercise give us a healthy weight, especially us who are way above the numbers on the calendar. Just 30 minutes at least five times a week is all medical and fitness practitioners ask of us to be fit and healthy.

Stress relief – I speak for myself. There are times when I feel a little cranky and I find the need to walk around to clear things. It worked for me, calmed my body and brain. Me and my wife Denise spent three months with two smart alecky toddlers and although we loved it, was a bit stressful. Taking them out for a walk not only cleared our senses but also the little ones. Science says the level of adrenaline and cortisol, the stress hormones, drop after some moderate activity.

Restful sleep – it doesn't matter when we do it, but with regular exercise, we tend to sleep faster and more soundly. Notice how easy it is to fall asleep after a good exercise. We feel good waking up the following day.

More productive – there were studies made that people taking a break from work and do a little exercise are shown to be more productive and creative getting back to their jobs. Because they have become efficient, they tend to be happier and get along well with their workmates.

Extra years – according to the American Heart Association, people who maintain a healthy weight and are regularly exercising live an average of 7 years longer than people who prefer to warm their seats. We don't have to be hard core fitness buffs. A little perspiration, not the sweat from the 'higop sa init nga sabaw' type, helps than not exercising at all.

For me, walking is the preferred activity. Doing this regularly and of course with some diet, bouts with arthritis have been rare, and if ever there's a visit, the pain on the problem joint is easier to deal with.*