

- Physical fitness

MENTAL HEALTH AND FITNESS

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We all know how important exercise is for keeping us physically healthy. But did you know that exercise can also help keep you mentally healthy?



Research shows that people who exercise regularly have better mental health and emotional well-being, and lower rates of mental illness.

Taking up exercise seems to reduce the risk of developing mental illness. It also seems to help in treating some mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety. For example, for mild depression, research suggests physical activity can be as effective as antidepressants or psychological treatments like cognitive behavioural therapy.

Why does exercise make us feel better, mentally?

Often, people who exercise regularly do it simply because it makes them feel good. Exercise can boost your mood, concentration and alertness. It can even help give you a positive outlook on life. And while we don't know exactly why or how exercise boosts mood, here are some possible explanations:

- Regular exercise can help you sleep better. And good sleep helps you regulate your moods.
- Exercise can improve your sense of control, coping ability and self-esteem. People who exercise regularly often report how good achieving a goal makes them feel.
- Exercise can distract you from negative thoughts and provide opportunities to try new experiences.
- It offers an opportunity to socialise and get social support if you exercise with others.
- Exercise increases your energy levels.
- Physical activity can be an outlet for your frustrations.
- Exercise can reduce skeletal muscle tension, which helps you feel more relaxed. The physical benefits of exercise are also important for people with mental illness. It improves your cardiovascular health and overall physical health. It is important because people with mental health issues are at a higher risk of suffering from chronic physical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, arthritis as well as asthma.