Boost Your Mood With Exercise

Have you ever tried exercise to relieve stress or a bad mood? Chances are you felt better afterward. Scientific research has demonstrated that the link between exercise and mental health is strong, though not fully understood. Research shows exercise provides short- and long-term psychological improvements, including:

1. **Reversing stress** – Exercise can provide an immediate distraction from stressful worries and frustration. It helps you cope by producing a sense of calm as it relieves muscle tension and boosts energy. It’s important to choose exercise options you enjoy.

2. **Building self-esteem** – Achieving fitness goals, even small ones, can build confidence, restore positive feelings and give you a sense of control, as well as improve your body image.

3. **Lifting depression** – Working the muscles releases mood-enhancers in the brain, and may reduce chemicals that worsen depression. Alleviating a depressed mood and anxiety generally takes a longer course of exercise. The best results may occur with moderately intense aerobic workouts lasting 30 to 40 minutes most days of the week. They may significantly cut symptoms of moderate depression. Weight training and mind-body exercise such as yoga might also be effective.

It offers an immediate reward: Mood-boosting benefits can happen within minutes, while the physical effects of regular exercise, such as weight loss and increased muscle mass, can take weeks.

Baby Boomers: Staying Well into Old Age

If you’re a baby boomer, you know lifestyle affects how healthy you are today and how well you may age. After all, boomers largely revolutionized physical fitness and founded the pursuit of wellness. How we live can help us avoid premature disease and disability often linked to aging. Yes, it takes good genes and good medicine – but the rest is up to you.

4 Factors for Healthy Aging

>> **Weight** – If you’re overweight, begin losing excess pounds now to protect your joints from arthritis and your heart from elevated blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels. **Goal:** Lose 1 to 2 pounds per week through reduced calories and added physical activity.

>> **Exercise** – It’s as close to a magic bullet as you’ll find for staying well. Put regular exercise on your daily to-do list. **Goal:** Get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week; stretch daily; and strength train 2 to 3 workouts weekly.

QuikQuiz™:

Drug Disposal – Down the Drain?

If you’re like most people, you probably have a collection of half-used or expired medications in your medicine cabinet – prescription and over the counter. Test your knowledge of safe drug disposal.

1. Some communities in the U.S. will take unused or expired medicines for disposal.
   - True  - False

2. The FDA says most medicines can be thrown into your trash with precautionary steps.
   - True  - False

3. Chemicals and toxins from drugs tossed down the sink or toilet can leak into groundwater, potentially polluting the environment and posing health hazards.
   - True  - False

“Good health is not something we can buy; However, it can be an extremely valuable savings account.” – Anne Wilson Schaef
5 Food Habits You Can Fix  By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

There's an old saying that goes, If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got. If any of the negative food habits below describe your lifestyle, it's time to switch to that adage. Change what you do and it can enrich you! Here are some common eating habits and how you can change them:

- If you drink lots of soft drinks: Cut back and choose water or sparkling water flavored with mint, citrus or cinnamon. Excess sugar in regular soft drinks may increase chronic disease risk and contribute to weight gain.
- If you confuse snacks with treats: Snacking between meals is beneficial if you choose nutritious options such as fruit, nuts, Greek yogurt or vegetables with hummus. They help sustain energy levels and stabilize blood sugar. Treats such as candy bars, chips or cookies are not nutritious snacks.
- If you eat mostly processed foods: Start by planning easy recipes that call for favorite fresh, whole foods. Tour a grocery store with a dietitian (free at some supermarkets), and learn how to prepare quick dishes without processed ingredients.

- If you dine out nightly: Invest some time and energy in cooking. Start once a week with a simple recipe; then add more ideas to your collection. You'll soon find that cooking can be easy and fun, is much less expensive than dining out, and helps you control your weight.
- If you skip breakfast: Don't. An early meal can help you stay alert and energized for several hours. Start the day with a protein- and fiber-rich small meal, such as oatmeal with yogurt or scrambled eggs and whole-grain toast. It will help you stay alert and energized all morning long.

Baby Boomers: >>Continued from other side.

>> Sleep – Ongoing sleep deprivation may contribute to numerous health problems, including type 2 diabetes, depression and metabolic changes – including abnormal cholesterol and high blood pressure – which are linked to obesity. Regular exercise improves sleep quality. Goal: Follow the exercise plan on the other side.

>> Preventive Care – Routine preventive services, such as diabetes and cancer screenings, can be lifesavers. Goal: Work with your provider to reduce your health risks, such as smoking and stress.

In addition to regular health screenings, ask your provider about:

- Immunizations.
- Hepatitis C screening.
- Depression symptoms.
- Alcohol use.
- Vitamin D and calcium needs.

Thanks to ongoing research and education in the value of a healthy lifestyle and prevention, we have the ability to age in better health than ever before.

Thyroid Trouble?

The thyroid produces hormones that control your body’s metabolism – the way every cell in your body uses energy.

When the thyroid doesn’t produce enough hormones, the condition is called hypothyroidism or underactive thyroid.

The symptoms of underactive thyroid include: unusual fatigue and weakness, weight gain, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, dry skin, hair loss and cold intolerance. Hypothyroidism seldom causes symptoms in the early stages. But over time, if left untreated, it can cause a number of health problems, such as obesity, joint pain, abnormal cholesterol and heart disease.

Causes: Hypothyroidism may be due to a number of factors, including autoimmune disorder, radiation therapy and use of lithium.

When to test for thyroid trouble: If you have persistent symptoms, talk to your health care provider. Fortunately, thyroid disorders usually respond well to treatment.

QuikQuiz™: >>Continued from other side.

ANSWERS

1. True. Community-based drug take-back programs offer the best option for disposal. Ask your pharmacist about programs in your area.

2. True. If there isn’t a drug take-back program in your area, you can remove drugs from their original containers and mix them with an undesirable substance such as coffee grounds or cat litter. Then place the mixture in a sealable, unbreakable container (that prevents leaking) in your trash.

Important: By taking safeguards with old medicines before tossing them, you may prevent children or animals from consuming them. Note: Some medicines have specific disposal instructions. When in doubt about proper disposal, ask your pharmacist or provider.

3. True. However, the FDA says the main way drug residues enter our water systems is by people taking medicines and then naturally eliminating them; many drugs are not completely absorbed or metabolized by the body.

Tip: Before tossing out prescription medicine containers, scratch out all identifying information to protect your privacy.

Poison Prevention Week is March 15 to 21.

Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/15V3tools.