

How Can Playing Soccer Keep You Mentally Fit

by Gregory M. Steinberg

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, did you know there are also mental health benefits? Gregory M. Steinberg discusses advantages of playing soccer.

AUSTIN, TX, USA, January 29, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- We all know soccer (also called football in many other countries) is the most popular sport in the world. There's no question it's good for our physical health and fitness and well as building our strength and endurance. But did you know there are also hidden mental health benefits to playing soccer? [Gregory M. Steinberg](#) discusses some of the hidden advantages of playing soccer as it relates to your mental well-being.

The most obvious advantage soccer has towards improving mental health is that it improves your general health. "It's all connected," Gregory says. Since soccer is a game in which players use their legs, torso, and head to maneuver the ball and score goals, the average player can get quite the workout. And everybody knows when you improve your general health, it also affects your brain's health. "However, the health benefits go way beyond this, and it's more complex than most people realize," he adds.

Probably the most important way soccer improves mental health is through teamwork. Team members on average tend to be more confident and more cooperative overall. In fact, a special issue of American Psychologist entitled The Science of Teamwork includes 20 articles from various professionals demonstrating the importance of teamwork in a wide variety of settings. The article looks at the theory, research, and applications of team science. There is a now a science behind it, says Suzanne Bell, PhD, an associate professor DePaul University in Chicago.

[Gregory M. Steinberg says](#) that these studies show when players come together to achieve a common goal, a type of synergist effect is reached. An increase in skills like concentration and self-discipline occurs. Gregory says that individual sports activities can do this also, but within a team, the synergistic effect occurs. This enables the team to achieve a greater outcome than if the participants worked alone. He mentions the team-building projects the military uses as just one example.

Other benefits of participating in team efforts include the increase in chemicals the brain releases, like endorphins, when engaging in physical activity. The endorphins are a natural painkiller, Gregory adds. These chemicals help you feel happier and more relaxed. This, in turn, helps in building relationships within the team which contribute to the overall team performance. In addition, participating in sports like soccer contributes to a good night's sleep which also reduces stress. With regular physical activity, panic attacks are decreased, and chronic anxiety is lessened which is also great contributor to better mental health.

"It's not just your physical well-being that changes," he says. "And I'm sure we'll learn more as more studies are done."

[Gregory M. Steinberg is](#) a previous division 1 soccer player who loves to talk about sports. By day, he is a certified program architect and consultant who loves helping businesses grow. He has 2 master's degrees, one being an MBA from the Tuck School of Business, as well as a

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