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PHOENIX, AZ, USA, May 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hiking is an outdoor activity that comes with many perks, [says Donald Dirren](#). Fresh air, beautiful views, the sights and sounds of nature...they all have a profound effect on the nervous system. And though hiking is mostly known as a physical activity, it greatly benefits your mental and emotional health as well.

Hiking is Excellent Cardio Says Donald Dirren

Usually, when you're hiking, you are walking over uneven terrain. And whether you're hiking uphill or down, the intervals make walking an even more beneficial form of exercise. Cardio lowers your risk of heart disease, helps burn calories and control your weight, and improves blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Hiking also strengthens your core and your lower body. As you walk over uneven terrain, your core engages to help you keep your balance, and the muscles in your lower body flex and work to keep you moving. This burns calories and builds muscle, both of which contribute to keeping a healthy weight, [states Donald Dirren](#).

Hiking Boosts Your Mood

As an excellent form of exercise, hiking releases endorphins, dopamine, and other feel-good chemicals into your brain as you walk and climb. This can drastically improve your mood and help fight off the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

It's not just the exercise that's good for the soul though, says Donald Dirren. Being outside in nature is its own tonic. Science backs up this opinion wholeheartedly. Did you know that even looking at a picture of a tree can lower your blood pressure significantly and release chemicals like serotonin and dopamine? All of this contributes to a drop in cortisol, which is a stress hormone that contributes to inflammation, over-eating, and anxiety.

Hiking Strengthens Your Bones

You probably aren't thinking about your bone health when you decide to go for a hike, but it's an excellent form of exercise--especially for those with osteoporosis or arthritis. Because walking is a body weight-bearing exercise, it strengthens bones by increasing cell production, says Donald Dirren. This can help combat the effects of osteoporosis by improving bone density and slowing calcium loss, both of which make your bones less likely to break.

A study performed by the University of Washington had women with osteoporosis walk for an hour three times a week and measured their bone density and strength. Those who followed the regime saw a six percent increase in bone density in just nine months!

The University of Washington found that women with osteoporosis who walked for one hour three days per week increased their bone density in the spine and other parts of the body by 6 percent over a nine-month period. Just make sure you're waking with good posture to get the most benefit from your hiking, [Donald Dirren explains](#).

Caroline Hunter
Web Presence, LLC
[email us here](#)

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