

Benefits of Exercise on Mental Health by Dr Gautam Arora Neurologist

Why Exercise is so useful today for Mental health By Dr Gautam Arora Neurologist

MONROE, NJ, USA, March 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the world continues to slowly emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the long-term impacts of the last 18 months on physical and

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Exercise has many advantages but most under recognized is Mental Illness”

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mental health are yet to be determined. Some mental health experts fear a “tsunami” of mental health issues to emerge in the near future. Investment in strategies to improve and address mental health has never been more prescient.

Aerobic exercises, including jogging, swimming, cycling,

walking, gardening, and dancing, have been proved to reduce anxiety and depression.³ These improvements in mood are proposed to be caused by exercise-induced increase in blood circulation to the brain and by an influence on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and, thus, on the physiologic reactivity to stress. The report also points to a 19 study meta-analysis, which found that yoga was better for depressive symptoms in contrast to no treatment or treatment as usual for people with: depression, post-traumatic stress, schizophrenia, anxiety, alcohol use, and bipolar disorder.

How does exercise help depression and anxiety?

Regular exercise may help ease depression and anxiety by: Releasing feel-good endorphins, natural cannabis-like brain chemicals (endogenous cannabinoids) and other natural brain chemicals that can enhance your sense of well-being

Taking your mind off worries so you can get away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression and anxiety

Regular exercise has many psychological and emotional benefits, too. It can help you: Gain confidence. Meeting exercise goals or challenges, even small ones, can boost your self-confidence. Getting in shape can also make you feel better about your appearance. Get more social interaction. Exercise and physical activity may give you the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as you walk around your neighborhood can help your mood. Cope in a healthy way. Doing something positive to manage depression or anxiety is a healthy coping strategy. Trying to feel better by drinking alcohol, dwelling on how you feel, or hoping depression or anxiety will go away on its own can lead to worsening symptoms.

While structured group programs can be effective for individuals with serious mental illness, lifestyle changes that focus on the accumulation and increase of moderate-intensity activity throughout the day may be the most appropriate for most patients.¹ Interestingly, adherence to physical activity interventions in psychiatric patients appears to be comparable to that in the general population.

the benefits of exercise and physical activity for mental health are most apparent when: intensity is moderate to vigorous, it occurs several times per week, engaging in a combination of aerobic and resistance training, and it includes mindfulness-based activities like yoga, Tai Chi, and Qigong.

Exercise and the mind

Exercise pumps blood to the brain, which can help you to think more clearly. It increases the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory. It also increases the connections between the nerve cells in the brain. This improves your memory and helps protect your brain against injury and disease. Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function.² Exercise has also been found to alleviate symptoms such as low self-esteem and social withdrawal.³ Exercise is especially important in patients with schizophrenia since these patients are already vulnerable to obesity and also because of the additional risk of weight gain associated with antipsychotic treatment, especially with the atypical antipsychotics. Patients suffering from schizophrenia who participated in a 3-month physical conditioning program showed improvements in weight control and reported increased fitness levels, exercise tolerance, reduced blood pressure levels, increased perceived energy levels, and increased upper body and hand grip strength levels.⁵ Thirty minutes of exercise of moderate intensity, such as brisk walking for 3 days a week, is sufficient for these health benefits. Moreover, these 30 minutes need not to be continuous; three 10-minute walks are believed to be as equally useful as one 30-minute walk.

Exercise — a tool against depression

Some of the strongest evidence for the mental benefits of exercise centers on depression. In 2016, Hovland and his colleagues searched the published literature and identified 23 clinical trials that tested the effectiveness of exercise in treating depression. Exercise was clearly effective and, in few studies, on par with antidepressant drugs, the researchers concluded.

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