



## Mental Health

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You know exercise can help you look and feel your best, but did you know it can also improve your mental outlook?

When we exercise to keep our bodies healthy, we are also helping our minds stay fit!

Regular exercise can relieve symptoms of anxiety, depression and other mental and emotional health conditions. Additional positive benefits include restful sleep and improving one's mood.

Everyone can obtain substantial mental health benefits from exercise and fitness. Studies show short workouts (8 minutes) could help lower sadness, tension and anger and help improve resistance to disease. Many people exercise to boost confidence along with reducing anxiety and stress, all of which contribute to psychological health and well-being. <sup>1</sup>

While exercise is not a cure for depression or anxiety, the psychological and physical benefits it provides can help improve your symptoms.

Another good reason to exercise is so that you can sharpen your mind.

The February 2003 *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences* reported that the deterioration of gray matter in people who exercised regularly was significantly reduced over people who did not regularly exercise! Most severe mental decline is usually caused by disease, whereas most age-related losses in memory or motor skills result from inactivity, a lack of mental exercise and stimulation. <sup>2</sup>

Studies show that walking on a regular basis, for as little as 20 minutes a day, can help sharpen your memory skills and concentration and improve your learning ability. It's easy to add a few extra steps to your day. Another easy tip is to park your car farther from the shopping mall or your office building, or take the stairs instead of the elevator in your workplace. Make exercise a priority and use half of your lunch break to take a walk. You will feel better both physically and mentally ~ and your memory will thank you for it!

Exercise is positive for physical and mental health!

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.findcounseling.com](http://www.findcounseling.com)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu)