

Benefits of Physical Activity

Exercise— you know you should do it, but you get stuck trying to decide if you should join a gym, try a yoga class, or start walking. Despite your good intentions, you end up doing nothing.



Exercising regularly, every day if possible, is the single most important thing you can do for your health. What are the health benefits of exercise?

Help you control your weight. Along with diet, exercise plays an important role in controlling your weight and preventing obesity. To maintain your weight, the calories you eat and drink must equal the energy you burn. To lose weight, you must use more calories than you eat and drink.

Reduce your risk of heart diseases. Exercise strengthens your heart and improves your circulation. The increased blood flow raises the oxygen levels in your body. This helps lower your risk of heart diseases such as high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, and heart attack. Regular exercise can also lower your blood pressure and triglyceride levels.

Help your body manage blood sugar and insulin levels. Exercise can lower your blood sugar level and help your insulin work better. This can cut down your risk for metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes. And if you already have one of those diseases, exercise can help you to manage it.



Improve your mental health and mood. During exercise, your body releases chemicals that can improve your mood and make you feel more relaxed. This can help you deal with stress and reduce your risk of depression.

Help keep your thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp as you age. Exercise stimulates your body to release proteins and other chemicals that improve the structure and function of your brain.

Strengthen your bones and muscles. Regular exercise can help kids and teens build strong bones. Later in life, it can also slow the loss of bone density that comes with age. Doing muscle-strengthening activities can help you increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength.

Improve your sleep. Exercise can help you to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.

Increase your chances of living longer. Studies show that physical activity can reduce your risk of dying early from the leading causes of death, like heart disease and some cancers.

The Surgeon General recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise like brisk walking or 75 minutes of rigorous exercise like running every week. You can break those up in small increments.

References

1. Benefits of exercise retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/exercise-and-fitness>
2. Physical activity retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/exercise-and-fitness>

