

Physical Activity and Mental Health



Benefits

Regular physical activity can help:

- manage depression, anxiety disorders, chronic pain, post traumatic stress disorder, addiction and eating disorders
- reduce "day to day" stress, sadness and loneliness
- increase happiness
- boost self esteem
- enhance your memory, attention and ability to process information
- reduce fatigue and improve sleep quality
- increase resilience against future stress and depression, and provide a healthy coping mechanism in the face of life's challenges

Tips and Suggestions

If time is a concern, even a few minutes a physical activity are better than none at all; consistency is the key.

- begin with 10-15 minutes of movement
- focus on shorter sessions when your time is less flexible and longer sessions on days you have more time

Make it enjoyable

- focus on activities you enjoy or try out new activities
- exercise in an environment where you feel motivated and comfortable

Recognize small opportunities for movement throughout your day

- "Chores" can be opportunities for exercise (eg. mowing the lawn, vacuuming)
- Walk, bike and/or park farther away from work
- Dance or stretch while cooking supper or watching your favourite show

Resources and Further Reading

**Canadian Psychological Association "Psychology Works"
Fact Sheet: Physical Activity, Mental health, and Motivation:**
[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorks
FactSheet_PhysicalActivity_MentalHealth_Motivation.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorksFactSheet_PhysicalActivity_MentalHealth_Motivation.pdf)

Help Guide:

[https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-
benefits-of-exercise.htm](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm)

**Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and
the Brain** by John J. Ratey

