

Building Health, Fortifying Resilience

Social isolation and loneliness have been linked to increased risk of numerous health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, depression, and suicide¹. While physical distancing and self-isolation are necessary to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, finding ways to maintain and improve health are more important than ever.

A simple and effective way to enhance health and wellbeing – while also preventing illness – is regular physical activity.

► BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Did you know that 80-90% of physically active people believe they are less vulnerable to illness than before they were active²? And it's not all in their heads – scientists agree.

Research shows that people who engage in regular physical activity are 50% less likely to get an upper respiratory tract infection, such as the common cold, than people who are less active³. Activities like brisk walking, in particular, have been shown to reduce the risk of pneumonia – a complication of viruses like the one that causes COVID-19 – by 18%⁴. And when physically active people do get sick, the severity of their symptoms is reduced by up to 41%⁵.

► LIFT YOUR SPIRITS

People who get active on a regular basis have up to 45% lower odds of experiencing depression, and up to 48% lower odds of developing anxiety⁶. Regular physical activity has also been associated with positive mood and life satisfaction, which contribute to psychological wellbeing⁷.

But the benefits of physical activity don't end there. Regular physical activity is also an effective treatment for people with mental illness. With regular exercise, people with mental illness can improve symptoms, sleep quality, and quality of life⁸.

► BUILD A STRONG, HEALTHY BODY

Physical activity is important for healthy growth and development for children and youth, and prolongs strength and independence in later life. As much as 50% of the decline in a person's physical and cognitive

function between the ages of 30 and 70 is due to physical inactivity – not aging⁹. In other words, physical activity is critical for health throughout the lifespan.

In fact, regular physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease (33%), hypertension (32%), stroke (31%), colon cancer (30%), breast cancer (20%), Crohn's disease (37%), and type 2 diabetes (42%). As a key player in the fight against disease, physical activity can reduce the risk of premature death by up to 31%¹⁰.

To achieve these benefits, all that's needed is 20 to 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activities like brisk walking on 5 or more days of the week¹¹.



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