

COMMUNITY FITNESS & WELLBEING

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16 WAYS EXERCISE MAKES YOU A HAPPIER PERSON



1. INCREASED DOPAMINE IN THE BRAIN



Dopamine is a chemical in the brain that's associated with feelings of pleasure & happiness. And exercise is one of the best ways to increase your brain's dopamine production, giving you that much-needed mood improvement.

2. LOWERS ANXIETY & DEPRESSION



Recent studies have shown that people who suffer from anxiety and depression can achieve long-term relief from exercising and its mood-boosting benefits.

3. ENERGY BOOSTER



Ever have a really great workout, and then feel even more energized after you were done? That's because exercise is a wonderful energy booster, and more energy equals increased levels of happiness.

4. STRESS REDUCER



Stressed out? Exercise is a form of low-level stress itself, and the more you subject yourself to the "stress" of working out, the better your body will adapt to handling other kinds of stress.



1) Increases 'Happy Hormones' in brain

Dopamine & **Endorphins** are potent chemicals that – when released into the brain – create a feeling of pleasure and make you generally feel **happier**.

Exercise can be even more effective at making you feel happier through the release of pleasure chemicals into the brain, both during exercise and continuing afterward. As you give your body a **workout**, you can improve your **mind** by creating a deep feeling of **satisfaction** that will make you feel content and put you in a good mood.

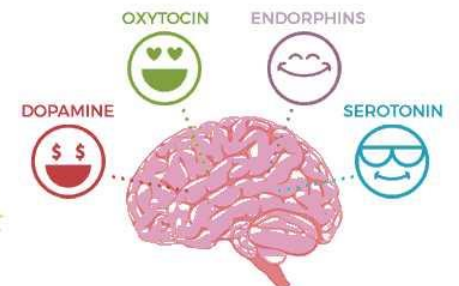
Happy HORMONES

1. **Dopamine** - The Reward Hormone

2. **Oxytocin** - The Love Hormone

3. **Endorphins** - The Calm Hormone

4. **Serotonin** - The Will-Power Hormone



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2) Lowers Anxiety & Depression

Feeling **anxious** or **depressed** can hinder your **motivation** to exercise, however, the benefits make the effort worthwhile.

By understanding the desired outcome and being aware that anxiety and depression can be improved **without** the need for **medication**, you can become motivated to begin regular exercise. The increased level of **endorphins** that flood your brain can help to **significantly reduce** anxiety and depression.

The effect can be powerful enough to mimic anti-depressants and negate the need for any medication. Starting with **only one** thirty minute exercise session a week is **sufficient** to have a positive effect.

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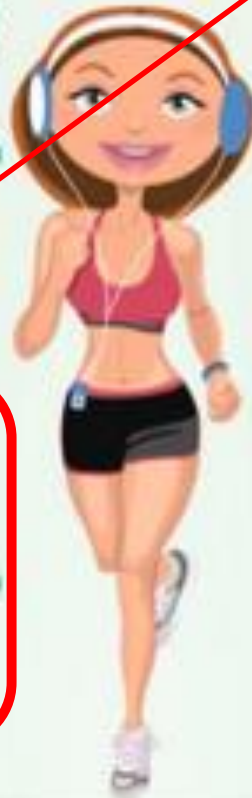


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3) It gives you more energy

Regardless of the type of activity being undertaken on any given day – whether strolling to the corner shop or taking part in some sporting activity – the heart rate and muscles will play an essential part in enabling you to undertake these tasks.

Exercise increases your heart rate and the blood flow (and by association, the oxygen) to the muscles, which is necessary to keep the heart and muscles working as they should. Though it seems illogical, the process of physical exercise will result in you feeling more energetic. Try doing a 10-20 minute workout soon after waking in the morning to set yourself up for a productive day.

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4) It reduces stress

The **trials** and **tribulations** of everyday life can result in varying degrees of **stress** that can have a damaging effect on the **body** and **mind**. Undertaking exercise serves to reduce stress on a number of different levels. The process of **focusing** on an exercise routine and completing it correctly can help **alleviate** trivial **worries** in the short term.

To achieve longer-term **benefits**, the process of putting your body through the physical exertion of exercise will force it to deal with a **different type** of stress. Though this will only be a minor amount, it will be sufficient to create chemical changes in the body that will make **stress easier** to handle in the future.

5. SLOW DOWN COGNITIVE DECLINE



Unfortunately, the older we get, the less capable our brain functioning becomes. Studies have shown that regular exercise can help slow down that cognitive decline, aiding memory and learning in the process.

6. MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE



There's nothing quite like having an awesome workout and then feeling a great sense of accomplishment. Exercising boosts your confidence by seeing your body transforming for the better.

7. BE MORE SOCIAL



While all types of exercise are great for us, working out in groups is even better. Some studies have shown that people do better on aerobic tests when working out with a partner, and working out and being around our friends generally makes us a happier bunch.

8. GET BETTER SLEEP



Having sleep issues? Regular exercise has been shown to improve the sleep quality of people with sleeping disorders, and we all know that better sleep equals a much happier you.



5) It slows down cognitive decline

Unfortunately, as all of us get **older**, we suffer from a **decline** in brain function that can show up in a number of different ways.

Examples of this degeneration can range from minor **memory loss** to serious degenerative illness like **Alzheimer's**, as the ability of the brain cells reduce as they get smaller.

The process of **exercising** helps to increase the chemicals in the brain that lessen the weakening of the brain cells, help to **maintain effective** brain function and reduce the risk of developing a degenerative brain illness. Even a small amount of exercise every week will prove beneficial in **reducing cognitive decline**.

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6) Increases Self-Confidence

For many, the main reason to **exercise** is to **improve** their health and alter their physique. This achievement alone is enough to **increase** the **confidence** of many people; however, this is not the only way that exercise leads to a **boost in confidence**.

Simply **taking** that first **step** in beginning a new exercise regime will create heightened confidence, which is a **feeling** that will only **increase** as your ability improves. Imagine first getting onto a treadmill and running for ten minutes before feeling as though your lungs might burst, but then gradually working harder until you can run for thirty minutes. That **accomplishment** will make you feel good.

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7) It makes you more social

Though it is possible to exercise alone, the ability to work out with **other people** can prove to be a great **motivation**. Not only can working out with others be enough to encourage you to start the exercise regime, but it will also make it easier to **stick to** and continue to your goal.

The **social** aspect of exercising with one or many other people will create a **camaraderie** that makes exercise **easier**, whether as a result of friendly competition or the **support** of a friend-in-exercise who understands what you are trying to achieve. **Meeting** up with a **group** of friends in order to exercise can make it easier.

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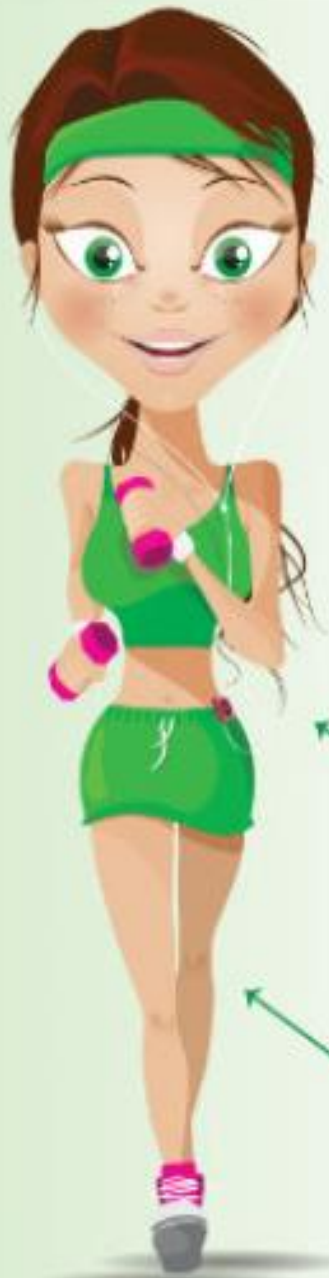
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8) It helps you sleep better

By exercising at the right time of day, you can help to ensure that you will be able to get a **good night's sleep**. Even for those who suffer from insomnia are likely to find that their ability to **sleep is improved** as a result of regular bouts of exercise.

In order to achieve this benefit, it is best to make sure that you **complete your exercise session at least six hours before** your scheduled bedtime. This will ensure that **adrenaline** has the chance to **dissipate** and the body temperature reduces back to normal, which aids restful sleep.



9. BE MORE CREATIVE



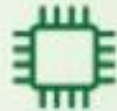
We're all in a better mood when our creative juices are flowing, and nothing boosts creativity quite like a great workout.

10. A MORE PRODUCTIVE YOU



One study showed that people who make time for regular exercise are more productive at work than those who don't, and when you're doing well on the job, you're generally a happier person too.

11. MEMORY BOOSTER



Various research has linked exercise with increased memory capabilities, so get in a great workout and start remembering those happy memories with even more clarity.

12. BE MORE RELAXED



We know that exercise can help you sleep better, but it can also let you unwind after a hard day and be more relaxed, too.

9) It increases your creativity

When a little **creativity** is needed for work or play, you should put on your sneakers and undertake your **favourite** form of exercise. The **physical exertion** not only benefits the body but also the **mind**. It gives the **brain** a chance to **focus** on something other than the necessary task, which can help to trigger **creativity**.

Furthermore, taking the opportunity to exercise in a **new location**, such as the park you only ever drive past, or those hills at the edge of town that is perfect for hiking, can be a great **source of inspiration**. Refresh your mind in a new environment.



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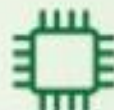
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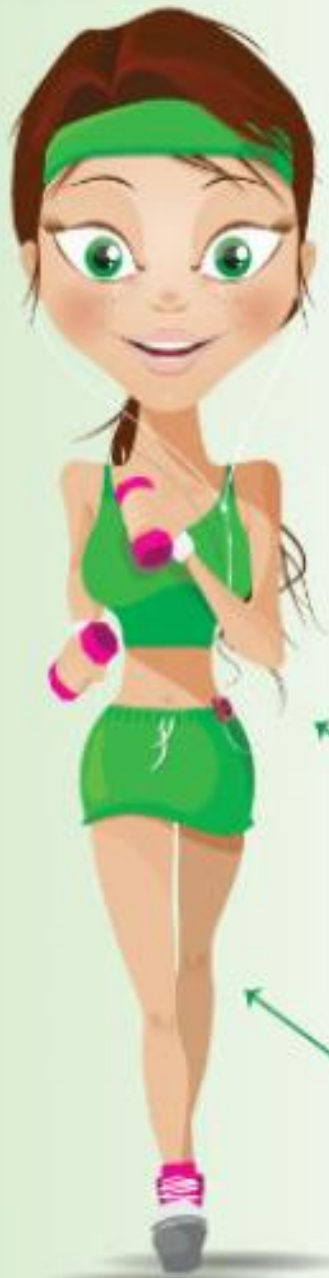


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10) It increases productivity

Related to both the increase in energy and creativity, exercise can **improve** your level of **productivity**. To test this theory, try a simple experiment: for one week, make the effort to exercise before you go about your daily business - at least ten minutes of cardiovascular exercise that makes your heart beat faster.

For the next week, refrain from doing any form of exercise. Over both weeks, take note of the **amount** of **work** you complete, your ability to **concentrate** and whether you **suffer** that mid-afternoon **slump** that makes you want to reach for candy or caffeine. Compare each week and determine which is best.



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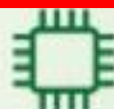
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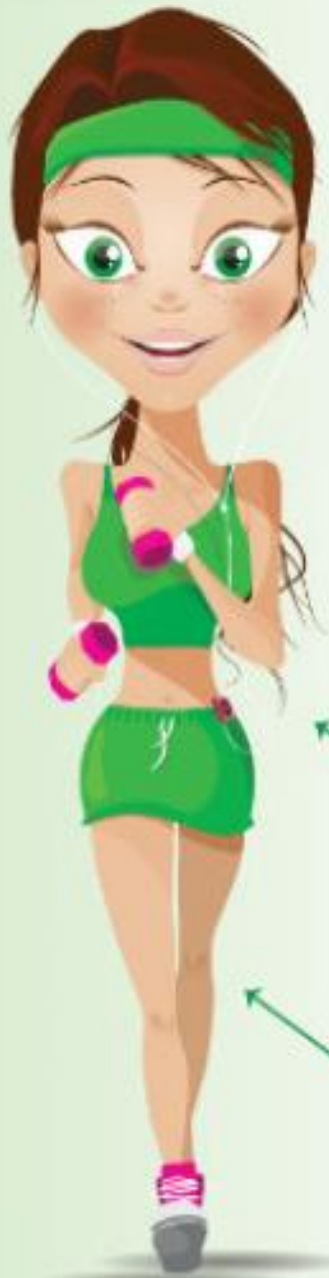
11) It improves your memory

“Cardiovascular health is more important than any other single factor in preserving and improving learning and memory.”

Thomas Crook Ph.D. (clinical psychologist & memory expert)

There are several parts of the brain that deal with our **ability** to **remember** things, including the hippocampus. The cells in this part of the brain are improved with exercise, allowing new **brain cells** to develop that makes it easier to store long-term memories.

Regular exercise ensures that you will be able to maintain good **long-term memory** and even helps the brain to make the connections necessary to be able to **learn** new things. Ensuring you undertake regular exercise **before** specific tasks, such as examinations, will prove **useful** in helping you to **remember** what you have learned.



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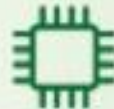
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12) It makes you more relaxed

You would be forgiven for thinking that using exercise to relax did not seem like the most sensible option, maybe believing that a glass of wine or a warm bath to be more beneficial. However, you would be mistaken.

After a long day at work, compare your ability to turn your brain off or the time it takes you to fall asleep both when you have and have not exercised and note the difference. Feeding your brain and body with endorphins and oxygen respectively creates the perfect scenario to enable you to relax later when necessary.

13. BETTER COPING SKILLS



When faced with difficult challenges in our life, some people turn to drugs and alcohol — while others turn to exercise, which can help you cope with your problems in a healthy & happy way.

14. GETS ADDICTION UNDER CONTROL



It's been studied that exercise bursts can help in addiction recovery, and can distract people who have drug or drinking problems.

15. ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

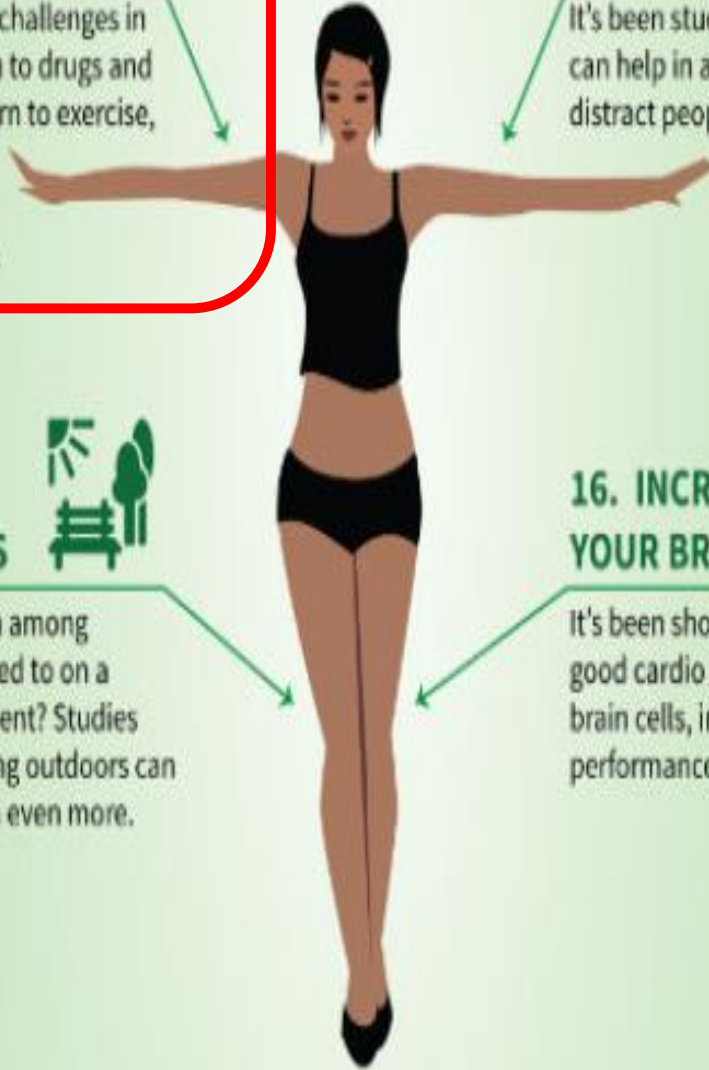


Who wouldn't enjoy a run among nature's beauty as opposed to on a treadmill in a gym basement? Studies have shown that exercising outdoors can increase your self-esteem even more.

16. INCREASE YOUR BRAIN POWER



It's been shown that getting in some good cardio can help to create new brain cells, improving your overall brain performance.



13) Gives you better coping skills

Related to the reduction in anxiety and stress that exercise can offer, a **regular workout** can also make it **easier** to **cope** with situations that would usually result in negative emotions, such as **panic** or **anger**.

The minor amount of stress that you subject your mind and body to while exercising is actually a good thing; it aids your ability to cope when negative stress arises as your body **learns** to **cope** with it during exercise. With a regular workout, this ability to cope with problems can prove to be a long-term benefit.

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14) Gets addiction under control


The reason why some people become **addicted** to a certain substance, such as tobacco, alcohol or illicit drugs, is that they will usually **stimulate** the **pleasure** centre of the **brain** to a powerful extent, by flooding it with **dopamine**.

The body and mind can begin to **crave** this potent **pleasurable** feeling, which makes people repeatedly seek it by taking more and more of the relevant substance. Fortunately, **exercise** can offer the same feeling of pleasure by flooding the brain the chemical that creates pleasure **without** any of the **negative** effects that come with illicit or damaging substances.

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15) Allows you to be outdoors

Try to determine the percentage of time you spend outside. Maybe you go from your home to your car before driving to work or walk to the bus stop or subway? Perhaps you leave your workplace to get lunch to eat at your desk? For many people, the average day involves going from one building to another with the only time spent outside being the time it takes to get from A to B.

Take the time to exercise in a park and take in some fresh air, power walk, jog or run around your neighbourhood to discover aspects you have never noticed before, or hike up that hill and take in the view.

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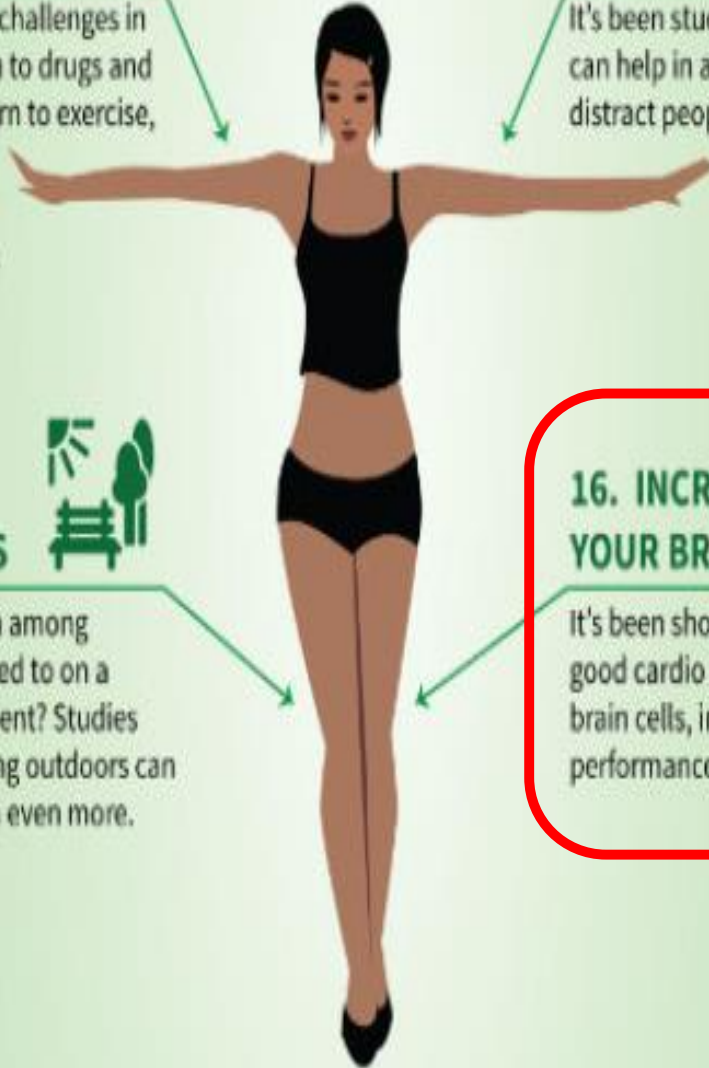


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16) It increases your brainpower

“Exercise improves attention, memory, accuracy, and how quickly you process information, all of which helps you make smarter decisions”.

Charles H. Hillman Ph.D.

(professor of kinesiology and community health)

When you are keen to **improve** your **mental ability**, you should start by taking part in the regular exercise as this helps new brain cells to **develop**. Regular exercise works to make the **connections** necessary to make it easier to **learn** new things, make it easier to **reach** decisions and generally improve the ability of the workings of the brain.

While logic dictates that education will increase brainpower, by maintaining a **regular** exercise regime, the information obtained through study will be easier to **retain** and recall when necessary. Make sure you hit the gym before hitting the books.