

Burn the Calories, Burn the Stress

“Rest and relaxation” is a chestnut phrase. However, is it only rest that can be relaxing? The aforesaid phrase has created an excused vacuum for general public to overlook the fact that exercise can also be relaxing. Research has found that physical activity and specific relaxation exercises too can be relaxing.

Exercising results in physical stress. People have been splitting hairs over years doubting whether physical stress relieves mental stress. Alexander Pope stated that strength of mind is exercise, not rest. Plato concurred in expressing that exercise would cure a guilty conscience.

Magic in Aerobics

Aerobics' magic for the heart has been long stated. However, nothing much was talked about the magic the aerobic exercises can have on the brain. Nonetheless, today it has been identified that aerobics can have magic not only on the heart but also on the brain.

Start the habit of exercising

First step is to rely on and believe in the turn of phrase “Try and try, one day you can fly”. Remember, nothing comes free of charge and without effort. As always, the first steps are the hardest. You may not agree at first. With time, patience and endurance, you surely will. At first, exercising will be cumbersome. It will be more work than fun. However, once you get at tuned, you will be more comfortable with the exercises and even begin to enjoy your every move. Finally, you will depend on it.

What can exercises offer you?

Exercising, specially doing regular aerobic exercises can bring about promising changes to your body. Bodily metabolism and heart will be tuned. Most importantly, your spirits will be uplifted. The exhilaration and relaxation, which are integral characteristics of aerobics, provide stimulation followed by calmness which induces the capacity to counteract depression and dispel stress directly. This phenomenon has been established in clinical trials that successfully incorporated exercises to treat clinical depression and anxiety disorders. This is commonly observed among endurance athletes. So, as patients and athletes, you can also witness benefits from exercising.

The underlying process

How exercising can dispel depression and anxiety is explained both chemically and behaviorally. Exercising reduces levels of stress hormones in the body; for instance epinephrine, norepinephrine and cortisol. It also induces production and secretion of body's natural pain killers and mood elevators, endorphins. Endorphins account for the “Runner's high” and the optimism and pleasant feelings of relaxation we experience after a hard workout.

That's not the end. Perhaps the emotional benefits from the behavioural factors count for more. The waistline shrinks, body gets its shapes and curves and stamina increases. All this contribute to body image or self image which thus rapidly improves. You get a sense of pride and self confidence in addition to a sense of mastery and control. Energy and vigor will be gained, promoting success in many tasks. The ability to self regulate which is manifested in the form of regular exercising will promote and aid the achievement of important life style goals.

Exercising and Sports

Exercises and sports go hand in hand. They also serve some additional functions. It creates either a forum to make friends and build networks, or bestows an invaluable opportunity to get away from others and enjoy some solitude. St. Thomas Aquinas once stated “Exercise is play and recreation; when your body is busy; your mind will be distracted from worries of daily life and will be free to think creatively”.

All you have to do is exercising

Any type of exercise can offer much. Many people believe that exercises like walking and jogging work best. Such exercises involve using large muscle groups in rhythmic, repetitive patterns referred to as “muscle meditation”. A simple 20 minutes of leisurely walk can reduce stress and result in clarity of mind. However, people prefer dynamic workouts because they not only prefer to burn stress but also to burn some calories. In the meantime, stretching exercises that help to relax muscles after a hard workout also helps in relaxing the mind as well.

In addition to what exercising offers to the mental health of an individual, regular exercising also prevents illnesses by enhancing immunity. Regular physical activity lowers blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, and reduces blood sugar. Exercise also reduces the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, colon and breast cancers, osteoporosis and fractures, obesity and even dementia (memory loss). Exercise slows the aging process, increases energy and prolongs life.



For everything exercises offer, what you have to do is to exercise nearly every day except during the days of illness. To keep you both physically and mentally fit, you necessarily need not hit the gym or train for a marathon, however, as a minimum, engage in moderate exercises for 30-40 minutes or a hard work out for 15-20 minutes. If you ever thought, exercising and relaxing don't always go together, it is time to comprehend that exercise can show the path toward taking the edge off stress and anxiety and helping you relax. Popular belief notwithstanding; exercising is relaxing!!!

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