

Exercise and Mental Health

Our physical health and mental health go hand in hand.
Exercise has many benefits!

By taking care of your body and getting active, you can:

- Sleep better and feel more relaxed
- Have more energy
- Get fitter and stronger, and
- Get rid of negative feelings such as anger, sadness, and stress



But did you know that exercise can also help with mental health conditions such as depression, stress, and anxiety?

What is Exercise?

Exercise means being physically active and moving your body around. Any activity that gets you breathing a little bit harder is exercise!

For example, you might enjoy playing tennis with your friends, running around in the park, or being part of a sports team at school.

Why Exercise Helps You Feel Good	
	When you get active, your heart and lungs work harder. This makes your organs, bones, and muscles grow stronger.
	You feel good when you exercise because it releases 'brain chemicals' called <i>endorphins</i> . Endorphins help you fight pain and boost your mood!
	When you exercise, your brain also releases two more chemicals: <i>serotonin</i> and <i>dopamine</i> . Having healthy levels of dopamine and serotonin can help you manage feelings of sadness and anxiety.
	Exercising is a good way to feel in control when you are anxious or worried.
	You can also meet new friends when you exercise, especially by joining a team or club!

Exercising for 40 minutes, 5 times a week can help you stay in great mental health!

Getting more exercise doesn't have to be hard! There are many things you can do to become more active, like:

- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Riding your bike or walking to a friend's house instead of catching a ride.
- Playing sports after school, or during your breaks.
- Walking with a pet or a friend on the weekends.
- Joining a dance class or a sports team in your area.

What exercise do you think you might enjoy doing?