



Exercise—It Goes to Your Head

Session Guide and Review Notes

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5 min **Welcome and Introduction**

PowerPoint Presentation: Short (10-15 min.) or Long (30 min.) version

Summary: Exercise—It Goes to Your Head

- God blessed man with exercise as an antidote to many mental and physical maladies.
- The story of Hulda Crooks demonstrates that age does not have to be a barrier to start making healthy choices.
- Movement creates powerful positive changes in physical, mental, and mood states.
- Daily exercise:
 - ✓ Improves mental processing, learning and memory
 - ✓ Stimulates blood flow, neuron growth and repair
 - ✓ Sharpens focus and the ability to filter out distractions
 - ✓ Improves planning, judgment, initiative, and creativity
- “The more fit you are, the more resilient your brain becomes and the better it functions both cognitively and psychologically. If you get your body in shape, your mind will follow.” John Ratey, MD. Spark, p. 247.

10 min **Discussion Time 1: What are your thoughts?**

- ✓ Exercise improves blood sugar and sleep quality. How would these improvements affect mental function?
- ✓ What are some practical steps for developing an exercise program?

5 min **Discussion Time 2: What is your story?**

- ✓ You or someone in the group may have a “delivered story” that pertains to the session topic. Take a few minutes for you or a guest to share.

5 min **Freedom Journey:** Present the following thoughts for reflection prior to next discussion periods to encourage positive discussion for change.

- **Reflect:** Exercise is not about training for an event—it's about training for life. Exercise increases the energy and stamina you need to get through each day's challenges.
- **Recalculate:** The question is not: "Am I going to exercise", but "When and where will I find time to exercise today?"
- **Reframe:** The areas of the brain linked to creativity and planning share the same areas of the brain that govern movement. Exercise brings joy and strength, not misery and weakness.
- **Remember:** Work with your healthcare provider or trainer to adopt a plan that works for you. Have a plan for every season!

10 min Discussion Time 3: What have you learned?

- ✓ What did you hear that deeply moved you?
- ✓ What did you learn that makes you stronger in your resolve?

Lifestyle Links: Lifestyle links for building physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength.

Reboot and Rebound: Daily choices build a better brain, body, and habits.

- **Create a Lifestyle:** Walk briskly for 10 minutes after each meal for better blood sugar control. Exercise controls cravings and appetite.
- **Create an Environment:** What are you telling yourself about daily exercise? Use a pedometer or your **Better Way Journal** to track progress. Challenge yourself to improve.
- **Create Connections:** Join a fitness club, exercise class, or create a neighborhood walking group. Play games, ride bikes, invite your friends.

10 min Discussion Time 4: What will you do?

- ✓ What is your reason for hope today?
- ✓ Which of the **Lifestyle Links** are your focus right now?
- ✓ What is your first step?

5 min Group Promise, Affirmation, and Prayer to Close Session

Pray and Say: Divine power and daily practice change the brain.

- **Prayer:** "Dear God, thank you that by your power and strength, I am Living Free!"
- **Promise:** "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13.
- **Affirmation:** "Thank you God for my freedom journey to better physical, mental, and spiritual health!"
- **Encourage** participants to review their handout.
- **Close** with prayer.

Handout: Balanced Living Tract: Exercise—It Goes to Your Head

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