Exercise – It Goes to your Head

We hear a lot about the benefits of regular exercise on physical health. But what about mental health? Think about this: Your best exercise machine may be your dog! Just taking the dog for a daily walk can yield some surprising benefits—for you, as well as Bowser!

Reduces Stress

Even a single bout of exercise can be a valuable short-term therapy for reducing tension, depression, anger, and confusion.¹,²

A ten-minute brisk walk will yield one hour of increased energy and reduced tension, whereas a sugary snack will ultimately result in fatigue and tension.³

Moderate-intensity exercise is even more beneficial than high-intensity exercise for anxiety reduction.⁴

Regular exercise increases the ability to handle stress by causing fewer stress hormones to be released when stress does occur.⁵

Improves Mood

Students who regularly exercise show lower levels of anxiety, shyness, loneliness, and hopelessness than their less-active peers.⁶

Moderate, regular exercise has a positive impact on mood, vigor, psychological well-being, creativity, and self-esteem in all age groups.⁷,⁸,⁹,¹⁰

Animal studies show that regular exercise can reduce symptoms of depression and may alleviate some major depression.¹¹,¹²
Boosts Brain Power

Exercise increases cerebral blood flow, increases neurotransmitter availability and efficiency, and affects brain structure.13

Small increases in aerobic fitness improve mental fitness, particularly executive control functions of the brain, which have to do with planning, coordinating, and filtering out distracting information.14

Animal and human studies show that repeated physical activity triggers chemical changes in the brain that enhance learning and memory.15,16

Children learn better when the brain is stimulated by exercising.17

People over age 60 who walk rapidly for 45 minutes 3 times a week can significantly improve mental-processing abilities that would normally decline with age.18

Helps You Sleep

Exercise can help alleviate sleep problems in older adults.19

Exercise can be effective in improving reported sleep quality, depression, strength, and quality of life.20

Treating chronic fatigue with appropriate exercise can improve sleep and mood.21

Exercising in the evening does not disturb sleep.22
