

Top Ten Reasons to Exercise and Be Physically Active

1. Feel more energized
2. Burn more calories at rest
3. Improve overall appearance
4. Be able to withstand stress
5. Decrease risk of illness
6. Speed up recovery from injury or surgery
7. Keep focused
8. Build up cardiovascular endurance
9. Improve flexibility
10. Increase lean body mass

Feel more energized

When engaging in physical activity, the blood vessels that go to your muscles dilate, causing an increase in blood flow and oxygen to the working muscles. This, along with a temporary increase in your metabolic rate, causes you to feel more energized. This “burst of energy” not only occurs during exercise, but also after you exercise. For example, working out in the morning or afternoon will cause you to feel energized throughout the day. Even if you are an evening exerciser, you will still burn just as many calories and feel better!



Burn more calories at rest

Cardiovascular and resistance exercises are equally important when it comes to making a workout plan and burning calories. Doing cardiovascular work such as running, walking, or biking results in a temporary rise in your metabolic rate. Thus, compared to being in a resting state, you will burn more calories per minute when performing cardiovascular work. Furthermore, by doing resistance exercises such as weight machines or free-weights, you will increase your muscle mass. Muscle burns far more calories at rest than fat does, so by becoming more muscular, you are increasing your resting metabolic rate.



Improve overall appearance

Not only can exercise help you feel better, but it will help you look better as well. Along with eating a healthy diet and utilizing effective stress management, you can look your best by becoming toned and defined. However, you need to remember that genetics play a major part in what we look like. For example, a person can be a healthy eater, exercise daily, be a non-smoker and a non-drinker, and STILL have high cholesterol because it is in their genetic makeup. The same goes for how a person looks. Some individuals are born into a family with genetically larger “frames.” These people are sometimes called “big boned.” If your parents happen to be short and small-framed, more than likely you will be, too. There is little we can change about our genetics, but we can make healthy and happy choices with the bodies we have.



Be able to withstand stress

Recent research has shown exercise to be a stress reliever. There are many reasons to explain why. One includes the fact that exercise increases the hormone epinephrine, another name for adrenaline. This hormone is responsible for an increase in blood flow, which carries more oxygen to the brain, thus making you more alert. Being more alert and aware of your surroundings helps you to deal with stress effectively. Also, exercise stimulates the release of other hormones called endorphins, or the “feel good hormones.” These help to improve mood and feelings. Many people find that they feel better after a stressful day if they exercise.



Decrease risk of illness

Exercise builds up and improves circulation of our white blood cells, which we need to fend off harmful bacteria that cause us to get sick. This helps to prevent us from getting

sick. However, after we become ill, our improved circulation due to regular exercise can help us become well again.



Speed up recovery from injury or surgery

By exercising daily and living a healthy lifestyle, your body can better repair itself from damage done by injury or surgery. When you increase muscle tissue and white blood cells by exercising, your body is better able to reduce inflammation that occurs from injury and surgery.



Keep focused

Being able to stay focused when engaged in everyday life activities is very important in order for your day to go as planned. By exercising regularly and eating healthfully, blood flow is improved and your hormones are at optimum levels, thus increasing your ability to concentrate.



Build up cardiovascular endurance

Everyone knows that if you study hard for a test, you will more than likely do well. The same concept applies when we say we are “getting into shape.” You have to build up your cardiovascular system through endurance activity in order to have an efficient circulatory system. Regular physical activity not only strengthens your heart muscle and

improves your blood's oxygen carrying capacity, but also improves your breathing and muscular contractions.



Improve flexibility

By stretching before and after exercise your muscles become more elastic, improving your overall range of motion or flexibility. Another way to improve flexibility is to engage in a yoga or Pilates class.



Increase lean body mass

Increasing lean mass is important because it reduces your body fat and increases your metabolic rate. If you perform cardiovascular exercise most days of the week and resistance exercises 2-4 days of the week, you will increase muscle mass while decreasing fat mass!

