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Healthy People
2020

Improving the health of Durham
& NC communities since 1989

January 2018

Healthy Sunday Topic: Exercise Makes You Feel Better

Exercise is good for your mind as well as your body. Exercise is not only good for your physical fitness; it is also good for your emotional and brain health. It helps improve your sleep, self-esteem, mood and ability to concentrate. Many studies show that exercise helps reduce anxiety and depression symptoms as well. And getting exercise for just 20 minutes, lifts your mood for 2 hours! Exercise helps the brain by increasing blood flow, thus increasing the supply of nutrients and oxygen to your body. The improved blood flow associated with exercise helps reduce inflammation, improves hormone balance and affects the chemical and hormonal messengers in the brain. Even after major surgery, getting out of bed sooner helps promote earlier recovery.



Mary Fox Braithwaite, MD

Mary Fox Braithwaite, MD., a pediatrician at Chapel Hill Pediatrics & Adolescents says, “Remember to choose exercise that is fun and enjoyable. This way, you are more likely to continue doing it. Any exercise that gets your heart pumping will do, such as dancing, jogging, walking, mowing the lawn, roller-skating and swimming. It is also good to incorporate more activity into your daily routine – take the stairs instead of the elevator, take a walk with someone at lunchtime, pick up your pace and walk a bit faster, play basketball instead of video games, or choose a video game that requires you to move.”

Let's aim for 30-60 minutes of heart pumping physical activity 5 or more days a week, or 20 minutes of vigorous to intense activity 3 days a week (based on recommendations by the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association). If you have not exercised in a while or have a heart condition, check with your doctor before choosing an exercise plan.

Reference: Kemper, K. *Mental Health, Naturally: The Family Guide to Holistic Care for a Healthy Mind and Body*. 2010. Chapter 3. Exercise.

An important component of a healthy lifestyle includes exercise

Avoiding the temptation to sit and do nothing may add years to your life expectancy. As we get older there is always something that hurts. On the other hand, a little exercise yields big benefits.



George Brothers, MD

George Brothers, a retired rheumatologist says, *“Don’t give up on exercise as you get older; adjust how you exercise instead.”* Instead of walking 30 minutes at one time, walk 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening. Add a day of light 2.5-5 pound resistance exercises with weights for the upper body. If you have access to a pool, try water walking. Simple stretching exercises can be useful in maintaining flexibility as we age.”

Exercise also can improve mental health. Brain chemicals that control mood and relaxation, known as endorphins are released with exercise.

Several small studies have also shown exercise effective in modulating mild depression. *In the new year exercise could be the key to an improved mental state.*

REMEMBER

Always exercise regularly, **B**e active as a family, and **C**hildren need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day

Duke Energy Safety Tips

- Keep anything flammable away from the space heater front, including paper, drapes, pillows, blankets.
- Don’t use space heaters in rooms where children are unsupervised
- Heating appliances should never be left unattended or used while sleeping

For More Information:

- <https://blackdoctor.org/>
- <https://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/nutrition-and-physical-activity/physical-activity>

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REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!