
In addition to building strength, exercise benefits mental health

By E.J. Mundell
HEALTH DAY

What if one therapy could help ward off addiction, depression, stress and even Alzheimer's, all the while keeping you slim and feeling great?

That mental-health "treatment" is as close as your own two feet - exercise.

"Exercise improves blood flow to the brain, it helps the body detoxify, it puts you on a better cycle of physical behavior, and it leads to decreased stress. It also improves thinking and mental function and decreases your tendency toward addiction," said Dr. Marc Siegel, an internist at New York University Medical Center and an associate professor of medicine at the NYU School of Medicine in New York City.

With each new study, experts are getting a better understanding of the intimate connection between health of the body and that of the mind. And exercise - the body's key method of staying healthy - appears to be crucial to mental health, too.



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