

Health In Progress

Lesson 3

Benefits of Exercise



QUESTION 3:

TRUE OR FALSE

Exercise can help your body and your mind.

Answer: True

The Mayo Clinic website lists ways exercise can have a positive impact on your health.

1. Strengthen your cardiovascular and respiratory systems

The term "cardiovascular system" refers to the circulation of your blood through your heart and blood vessels. Exercise strengthens your heart and lungs. Your blood travels more efficiently, bringing much-needed oxygen from your lungs and nutrients to the rest of your body. This is one of the reasons why you generally feel refreshed and more energetic after exercise.

2. Keep bones and muscles strong

Strength training and weight-bearing exercises help preserve bone mass and may even increase bone density. This means your bones may grow stronger. By strengthening your muscles and bones, you can improve your balance and coordination. Also important are exercises that bear your body's weight, such as walking and jogging.

3. Manage your weight

Exercise helps you achieve or maintain a healthy weight by burning calories. By burning more calories than you take in, you can reduce body fat. Losing body fat can make you look and feel better and can reduce your risk of obesity.

4. Ease depression and manage pain and stress

Exercise fights depression by activating the neurotransmitters — chemicals used by your nerve cells to communicate with one another — associated with avoiding depression. These neurotransmitters and their balance with each other play a role in how you react to daily events. When you experience depression, the level of serotonin, norepinephrine or both may be out of sync. Exercise also stimulates endorphins, which produce feelings of well-being, provide for "natural" pain relief, and help you relax.

5. Reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer

Regular exercise, coupled with a healthy diet, is an important way to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes, a condition that affects the way your body uses blood sugar.

6. Sleep better

A good night's sleep helps maintain your physical and mental health. Moderate exercise can help you relax and sleep better at night. (Complete exercise at least 3 hours before going to bed.)

(For more information visit the Mayo Clinic Website at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676>)