



Learn More – Module 7

Exercise: What's in it for You

Source: MayoClinic.com

1. Exercise strengthens your cardiovascular and respiratory systems

Regular exercise helps increase the "good" cholesterol and decrease the "bad" cholesterol in your blood. If you're at risk of developing high blood pressure, exercise can help prevent it. If you already have high blood pressure, exercise can help lower it.

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. Exercise keeps bones and muscles strong

Regular exercise helps prevent osteoporosis, a disease that weakens the bones. Strength training exercises – such as lifting weights or working with resistance tubes – are particularly helpful. Also important are exercises that bear your body's weight, such as walking and jogging. By strengthening your muscles and bones, you can improve your balance and coordination, reducing your risk of falls.

3. Exercise keeps your weight under control

Exercise helps you achieve or maintain a healthy weight by burning calories. Even after you stop exercising, your body continues to burn calories at a modestly increased rate for a few hours. The more intensely you exercise, the more calories you burn. Burning more calories than you take in reduces body fat, so you'll look and feel better and have a reduced risk of obesity. Maintaining a healthy body weight eases pressure on your bones and joints, which can help prevent conditions such as arthritis. *Can we add in about obesity induced diabetes?*

4. Exercise helps you prevent and manage diabetes

More than 20 million Americans have diabetes, and nearly 1/3 of them *don't even know it*. Type 2 diabetes, the most common form, can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, blindness, nerve damage, and kidney damage. Regular exercise, coupled with a healthy diet, is an important way to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes (the most common form of diabetes).

5. Exercise eases depression and soothes pain and stress

Exercise fights depression by activating serotonin and norepinephrine, two brain chemicals that make you feel good and happy (neurotransmitters). Exercise also stimulates the production of endorphins, other neurotransmitters that work like natural painkillers and produce feelings of well-being. That's why a brisk walk or workout is a great way to blow off steam.

6. Exercise reduces your risk of certain types of cancer

Regular exercise helps lower the risk of cancers of the colon, prostate, breast and uterus. There's also growing evidence that exercise helps combat colon cancer, by helping digested food move through the colon more quickly.

7. Exercise helps you get good Zzzzzzzzzzs

Moderate exercise at least three hours before bedtime can help you relax and sleep better – a boost to both your physical and mental health. Bonus: getting enough sleep has been linked to more successful weight control.

Find out more at [Seven Great Reasons to Exercise](#).