



The Benefits of Exercise

- **Oxygen.** Muscle and all other tissue in the body require oxygen for healthy function. It's stored in our blood to be carried through our bodies. Exercise increases the amount of oxygen we intake, making our blood oxygen "rich". It also increases blood flow, delivering more oxygen to the tissue, making it healthier tissue.
- **Endorphins and Serotonin.** These are natural pain and stress fighting chemicals, known as neurotransmitters, which serve as messengers of electrical signals within the nervous system as they "talk" to receptors in the brain. Both of these are released during exercise helping to reduce pain, improve mood, regulate appetite, and improve immune function.
- **Muscle Elasticity.** This is our muscles ability to stretch and contract. Elasticity affects many areas of our lives, such as; joint range of motion, rigidity, risk of injury and falls, and susceptibility to muscle micro-traumas. Regular exercise helps the muscle retain its ability to function properly over time, while decreasing the risk of injury.
- **Brain Plasticity & Neurogenesis.** Our brains have neurons and pathways that directly impact our ability to learn and store information. Exercise has the ability to actually generate new neurons (neurogenesis) and more pathways (plasticity). We lose nerve tissue as we age, making exercise imperative in the fight against aging and diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.
- **Neutralize Blood Sugar Levels.** Insulin is released from the pancreas when levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood are elevated. Our muscles are stimulated by insulin to take in the excess glucose and use it for fuel during exercise. Both aerobic and anaerobic exercise has been shown to decrease blood sugar levels.
- **Cholesterol.** Low-density Lipoproteins (LDL) are considered the "bad" cholesterol. Exercise stimulates the enzyme that helps remove LDL from the blood, and also increases the size of the lipoprotein making it harder for them to get lodged and stored in small crevasses.
- **Bone Density.** Bone density measures the mineral content of the bone reflecting its structural strength. Osteoporosis and Osteopenia indicate that the bone density is too low. Bone growth takes place when there is a stress applied to the bone causing bone cells to travel to the stressed area, those cells then release the proteins needed to help build more bone. Correct exercise selection and progression are vital in improving bone density, focusing on the magnitude, rate, and frequency of the stress applied. We must be very careful working on this as we want to add enough stress to stimulate bone growth but not so much that we force an injury.
- **Weight Control & Disease Prevention.** Obesity is without a doubt a major health issue in the U.S., along with many secondary conditions that develop as a result of excess fat. Heart disease, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, breathing problems, gout, and stroke... just to name a few. Exercise, nutrition, and life style all play a role in maintaining a healthy weight and preventing those secondary conditions. Movement burns calories, and certain types of exercise can even continue to burn calories after the workout is done. Incorporating movement into your daily routine is necessary to your health; limitations only force us to be more creative.

Note: The content of this page is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.