

# The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

Research has shown us that people who exercise regularly tend to be more resistant to many mental illnesses. Exercise can help treat current symptoms, and prevent future episodes.

## What problems can exercise help with?

### Mental Illness

Depression  
Anxiety  
Substance Abuse  
Bulimia  
Alzheimer's Disease

### Other

Sleep Difficulties  
Stress  
Physical Health  
Low Energy  
Self-Esteem

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Beginning an exercise plan doesn't have to be difficult. Walking for as little as 30 minutes, 3 times a week, has been found to be beneficial. Don't worry too much about what exercise you choose. Aerobic and anaerobic exercises are both effective at improving mental health.

### Anaerobic Exercises



Weightlifting  
Sprinting (running, biking, etc.)  
Interval training  
Climbing

### Aerobic Exercises



Walking, jogging, or biking  
Elliptical or ski machines  
Swimming  
Dancing

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If you're crunched for time, you might still be able to squeeze some exercise into your day. Two 15 minute walks work just as well as one 30 minute walk! Here are some tips to help:



Need to make a phone call? Walk and talk.

Get an exercise partner to hold you accountable.

Park at the back of the parking lot and walk.

Do an activity you enjoy, and it won't be a chore.

Skip the elevator and take the stairs.

Head outside for 10 minutes during lunch.

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## What days of the week can you find time to exercise?

Choose a minimum of three days per week to exercise. You should exercise for at least 30 minutes, but the time can be split up throughout the day.

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

## List three types of exercise you would like to try.

The best exercises are activities that you'll genuinely enjoy, without having too many obstacles to get started.

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## What strategies can you use to make sure you remember to exercise?

It's easy to put off exercise, prioritize other things, or simply forget about your plan. Circle the ideas that might help you stick to your plan.

- ❖ Plan to exercise with a friend so you can both hold one another responsible.
- ❖ Set an alarm to remind you when to exercise. If you're using your phone alarm, set it to automatically repeat every day at the same time!
- ❖ Get into a routine by exercising at the same time every day. Try attaching exercise to a particular part of your day, such as walking every evening right after dinner.
- ❖ Reward yourself for a job well done. Treat yourself to something you enjoy when you exercise. However, you have to be honest! No exercise, no reward.