

# In Good Health

ACM JIF WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Created By:  
Jordan Simone  
COTA/L, CHC, RYT-200  
ACM JIF Wellness Director

Q2 2023

## EXERCISE & MOVEMENT



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## EXERCISE & MOVEMENT

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# Bodyweight Exercises: 3 Ways to Build Muscle & Get Stronger Without Weights

## (1) PULL YOUR BODY WEIGHT

Pull-ups are one of the best exercises you can do to strengthen your upper body: back, biceps, triceps, shoulders, core and even grip.

1. With an overhand grip, grasp a pull-up bar with your hands just farther than shoulder-width apart.
2. Let your legs hang straight down towards the floor. Squeeze your glutes and core.
3. Keeping your body as straight as possible, pull your elbows down to your sides to raise your chest to the bar.
4. Pause, then reverse the motion with control.

## (2) DO AIR SQUATS

PAir (aka body-weight) squats and their many variations target your quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, calves and core muscles. Slow down your movements, add a pause at the bottom or try setting up on a single leg for an additional challenge.

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart.
2. Raise your arms out in front of you and slowly bend your knees as you push your hips back to squat down as far as comfortable.
3. Pause, then press through your heels to stand back up. As you stand, lower your arms back to your sides.

## (2) PLANK FOR CORE STRENGTH

One of the most common ways to build core strength at home without equipment, planks target your entire midsection, including your obliques and lower back. They can also work your shoulders and hips.

1. Start on your hands and knees with your shoulders stacked above your wrists and your hips directly above your knees.
2. Step your right foot back and then your left foot to balance on your hands and toes. Your body should form a straight line from the top of your head to your heels. Tuck your tailbone to engage your core and squeeze your glutes.
3. Hold this position while maintaining a neutral spine.

# Pilates vs. Yoga: How They Differ & Which Is Right For You

Pilates and yoga are two types of exercise that can benefit almost everyone. Although many people consider them similar, they have important differences. But either one can be a positive force for your health.

## WHAT IS PILATES?

Both Pilates and yoga are low-impact exercises, but there is one important difference. When practicing yoga, you typically adopt a position and hold it, or flow into a different position. In Pilates, you adopt a position and then challenge your core by moving your arms or legs. Pilates moves require stabilizing your core before going through a series of range-of-motion exercises. Although some Pilates studios use specially designed machines, you can also do Pilates on a mat without special equipment.

Benefits of Pilates:

- Increase core strength to improve stability
- Improve posture
- Increase flexibility
- Ease lower back pain

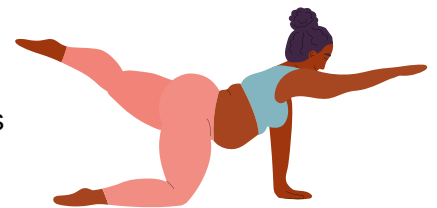


## WHAT IS YOGA?

As a fitness strategy, it blends physical poses (asanas) with breathing techniques (pranayama). Because it has some elements of mindfulness, yoga is sometimes called meditative movement. It is popular in the United States. A 2017 survey showed that one in seven adults had practiced it during the preceding year. About 94% of those who do yoga say they do it to improve their overall wellness.

Benefits of Yoga:

- Ease low-back pain and neck pain
- Improve balance
- Enhance sleep
- Eases stress and stress-related illnesses, such as tension headaches
- Ease the pain of knee osteoarthritis
- Help with weight loss
- Ease some symptoms of menopause



# Benefits of Resistance Training

**Inactive adults experience a 3% to 8% loss of muscle mass per decade, accompanied by resting metabolic rate reduction and fat accumulation.**

**Resistance training is a form of exercise intended to increase muscular strength and endurance. It involves exercising muscles using some form of resistance. This resistance could be weights, bands, or even your own bodyweight working against gravity.**

**When doing resistance training—which is sometimes called strength training or weight training—you can focus on specific results, such as joint stability, muscular endurance, increased muscle size, strength, and power.**

## **BENEFITS OF RESISTANCE TRAINING:**

- Improved physical performance
- Movement control
- Walking speed
- functional independence
- cognitive abilities
- self-esteem
- Resistance training may assist prevention and management of type 2 diabetes by decreasing visceral fat, reducing HbA1c, increasing the density of glucose transporter type 4, and improving insulin sensitivity
- Resistance training may enhance cardiovascular health, by reducing resting blood pressure, decreasing low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and triglycerides, and increasing high-density lipoprotein cholesterol
- Resistance training may promote bone development, with studies showing 1% to 3% increase in bone mineral density
- Resistance training may be effective for reducing low back pain and easing discomfort associated with arthritis and fibromyalgia and has been shown to reverse specific aging factors in skeletal muscle.

## **RESISTANCE TRAINING TIPS**

- Use proper form: If you cannot use proper form, consider lowering the weight or resistance. If this is impossible or you still can't use the appropriate form, consider talking to a professional about trying an altered form of the exercise.
- Exercise safely: Never use more weight or resistance than you can handle at your fitness level. Using weights that are too heavy can lead to improper form and injury.
- Bring water: Drinking water can help you avoid dehydration and fatigue. Not all gyms offer drinking fountains or have water options.
- Find a workout buddy: A workout buddy can help increase motivation and accountability but can also be there to help if you injure yourself or need a spotter.
- Stop if you experience pain: If you feel pain or discomfort, stop working out and talk to a healthcare provider. You also should seek medical attention if you injure yourself during a workout. For example, if you injure your head, stop working out and see a healthcare provider even if you think you are OK. Concussions are dangerous and should not go untreated.

# The Mind Body Connection: How Exercise Impacts Your Brain & Mental Health

People who exercise regularly tend to do so because it gives them an enormous sense of well-being. They feel more energetic throughout the day, sleep better at night, have sharper memories, and feel more relaxed and positive about themselves and their lives. And it's also a powerful medicine for many common mental health challenges.

Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, and ADHD. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts your overall mood. And you don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits. Research indicates that modest amounts of exercise can make a real difference. No matter your age or fitness level, you can learn to use exercise as a powerful tool to deal with mental health problems, improve your energy and outlook, and get more out of life.

## THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- **Depression:** Studies show that exercise can treat mild to moderate depression as effectively as antidepressant medication—but without the side-effects
- **Anxiety:** Exercise is a natural and effective anti-anxiety treatment. It relieves tension and stress, boosts physical and mental energy, and enhances well-being through the release of endorphins.
- **Stress:** As well as releasing endorphins in the brain, physical activity helps to relax the muscles and relieve tension in the body. Since the body and mind are so closely linked, when your body feels better so, too, will your mind.
- **ADHD:** Exercising regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD and improve concentration, motivation, memory, and mood. Physical activity immediately boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels—all of which affect focus and attention.
- **Sharper Memory & Thinking:** The same endorphins that make you feel better also help you concentrate and feel mentally sharp for tasks at hand. Exercise also stimulates the growth of new brain cells and helps prevent age-related decline.
- **Better Sleep:** Even short bursts of exercise in the morning or afternoon can help regulate your sleep patterns. If you prefer to exercise at night, relaxing exercises such as yoga or gentle stretching can help promote sleep.
- **Stronger Resilience:** when faced with mental or emotional challenges in life, exercise can help you build resilience and cope in a healthy way, instead of resorting to alcohol, drugs, or other negative behaviors that ultimately only make your symptoms worse. Regular exercise can also help boost your immune system and reduce the impact of stress.

# Exercise and Aging: How Staying Active Can Help You Live a Longer, Healthier Life

## WHY EXERCISE MATTERS

- Keep your bones, muscles, and joints healthy
- Make you less likely to have things like diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis
- Lower your blood pressure
- Manage stress and improve your mood
- Ease symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Lower your chances of heart disease
- Manage chronic conditions like arthritis or diabetes by helping with things like stamina, joint swelling, pain, and muscle strength
- Help with your balance, so you're less likely to fall and break bones

## HOW MUCH EXERCISE?

The key isn't how or where you get active, it's just to start moving.

Healthy adults should aim for 150 minutes of activity that gets your heart going and your blood pumping every week. Sure, you can do that in exercise classes. But you can also get it by brisk walking. It's also important to do movements that work all your major muscles at least 2 days a week. Also try to do flexibility exercises 2 or 3 days a week to help with your range of motion.

While 150 minutes may sound like a lot, you don't have to do it in big chunks. You can take a 10-minute walk around the block or spend 10 minutes sweeping the porch. It all adds up.

## HOW TO GET MOVING

You don't need fancy clothes or equipment. To get in motion in a less formal way, you can:

- Take a brisk walk or jog
- Take dancing lessons
- Ride a bike
- Rake leaves or push a lawn mower
- Sweep or dust
- Play tennis
- Walk up and down stairs
- Carry groceries

# The Power of Habit: How to Build Consistency and Make Exercise a Part of Your Lifestyle

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO EXERCISING

Whatever your age or fitness level—even if you’ve never exercised a day in your life —there are steps you can take to make exercise less intimidating and painful and more fun and instinctive.

- **Ditch the all-or-nothing attitude.** You don't have to spend hours in a gym or force yourself into monotonous or painful activities you hate to experience the physical and emotional benefits of exercise. A little exercise is better than nothing. In fact, adding just modest amounts of physical activity to your weekly routine can have a profound effect on your mental and emotional health.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Research shows that self-compassion increases the likelihood that you'll succeed in any given endeavor. So, don't beat yourself up about your body, your current fitness level, or your supposed lack of willpower. All that will do is demotivate you. Instead, look at your past mistakes and unhealthy choices as opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Check your expectations.** You didn't get out of shape overnight, and you're not going to instantly transform your body either. Expecting too much, too soon only leads to frustration. Try not to be discouraged by what you can't accomplish or how far you have to go to reach your fitness goals. Instead of obsessing over results, focus on consistency. While the improvements in mood and energy levels may happen quickly, the physical payoff will come in time.





# The Power of Habit: How to Build Consistency and Make Exercise a Part of Your Lifestyle

## BUSTING THE BIGGEST EXERCISE EXCUSES

### **Excuse 1: "I hate exercising."**

**Solution:** Many of us feel the same. If sweating in a gym or pounding a treadmill isn't your idea of a great time, try to find an activity that you do enjoy—such as dancing—or pair physical activity with something more enjoyable. Take a walk at lunchtime through a scenic park, for example, walk laps of an air-conditioned mall while window shopping, walk, run, or bike with a friend, or listen to your favorite music while you move.

### **Excuse 2: "I'm too busy."**

**Solution:** Even the busiest of us can find free time in our day for activities that are important. It's your decision to make exercise a priority. And don't think you need a full hour for a good workout. Short 5-, 10-, or 15-minute bursts of activity can prove very effective—so, too, can squeezing all your exercise into a couple of sessions over the weekend. If you're too busy during the week, get up and get moving during the weekend when you have more time.

### **Excuse 3: "I'm too tired."**

**Solution:** It may sound counterintuitive, but physical activity is a powerful pick-me-up that actually reduces fatigue and boosts energy levels in the long run. With regular exercise, you'll feel much more energized, refreshed, and alert at all times.

# How to Fit Exercise Into a Busy Schedule

## WALK MORE DURING YOUR DAY

Consciously walking more throughout the day will increase your activity level, whether that's taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking farther away at the supermarket. If you're a desk worker, she also suggests standing up for at least a few minutes every hour if possible. Ben Schermerhorn, CPT, a master personal trainer at Life Time, suggests having NEAT meetings (non-exercise activity thermogenesis). "When you're on a remote meeting, try to do it walking instead of sitting at your desk," he says. "This will increase your activity level and get you moving." You can pace the room while on a call, or head out for a stroll around the block. If there's a place in your office or home where you can stand during Zoom meetings, even that can help stretch out the legs.

## ESTABLISH A 5-10 MIN MORNING WORKOUT ROUTINE

Meier suggests establishing a five to 10-minute workout routine that you can do before the rush of the day kicks in. "This can help wake up your muscles and brain so your day starts strong," she says. Her top recommendation to squeeze in an effective workout quickly is high-intensity interval training. "Warm up for a minute or two, then pick two or three exercises and try doing 45 seconds of work followed by 15 seconds of rest. Cycle through the moves for as much time as you have, then stretch for a minute or two to cool down," says Meier.

Quick exercises that improve cardio include running in place, mountain climbers, jumping jacks, squat jumps, and jump rope. If you want to focus on strength training, Schermerhorn suggests basic compound lifts to get the most bang for your buck: "Squats, deadlifts, bench press, and pull-ups will cover all the major muscle groups."

## GIVE YOURSELF MINI EXERCISE "SNACKS"

Whether you're waiting for your coffee to brew, hanging out for a few minutes before a meeting, or watching the kids at the playground, use the time to work in just a quick exercise or two. "Throughout the day, take just a few moments at a time to get some movement in," says Meier. "Knock out 10 air squats and 10 push-ups every hour or two—anything is better than sitting still." New findings show even two minutes of intense activity per day can help you live longer.

