

Exercise



The Importance of Exercise

Purpose

To understand why we need to exercise and the importance of keeping healthy.

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'The Importance of Exercise' for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes).

Introduction

The Importance of Exercise

If I was to explain to you that one tablet could have the following health benefits that will make your life better in so many ways – you might find it hard to believe me.

The tablet would:

- Strengthen your heart muscle and make it a better organ for pumping blood around the body.
- Improve the functioning of your lungs ensuring that oxygen was sent round your body successfully.
- Make your arms and legs stronger.
- Improve your balance and core strength of your body.
- Reduce the likelihood of aches and pains.
- Protect you against many diseases.
- Improve your capacity to concentrate, remember and learn, significantly.
- Make your mental health substantially better.
- Improve your mood and sense of happiness

And many other benefits—many, many other benefits – some long term and some felt immediately.

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It's hard to believe that such a tablet exists isn't it. Sadly – it isn't true that such a tablet exists though - there is something which, given a mere 30 minutes a day of your life and my life, without having to go out of your way – you can achieve.

You still don't believe this is possible – too good to be true – too hard to believe?

This time it is true!

Benefits of Exercising

You can experience all of these health benefits and so much more by giving up 25 - 30 minutes each day for four to five days per week. That's incredible isn't it?



You can feel immediately happier, fitter, stronger, more resilient and have long term health benefits like guarding you against some forms of cancer, type 2 diabetes, help your immune system fight off infections and also help your immune system get rid of infections if you have already succumbed to one.

You need to be prepared to do light to moderate exercise 25 to 30 minutes per day for five days per week. It can make your life hugely better. Actually - vastly better!

The reaction of some people is likely to be, "I haven't got what it takes to lift heavy weights and go to the expensive gym and get up at 5am to run through dark streets."

Well that's no problem – because-you actually don't need to!

The thing is – that very many people confuse the exercise that some dedicated sports people put in to make their muscles huge and improve their lifting ability or their cycling ability or their running ability to near Olympic sports athlete standards. That's great for those people but that is absolutely **not** what I'm talking about.

We can all have huge respect for competitive weightlifters, middle distance athletes, sprinters who can run 100 metres in just about 10 seconds, cyclists who can whizz round velodromes at mesmerizing speeds.



They may well be very healthy people too – but put that image out of your mind. I'm not talking about a commitment to give up hours of your day to expensive gym membership, running through busy streets in the driving rain in the early hours or spending thousands on the latest road bikes.

I'm talking about something completely different.

Light to Moderate Exercise



Light to moderate exercise for 25 to 30 minutes a day ideally combined within that thirty minutes with some gentle strengthening exercise is quite sufficient to achieve the benefits. This is exercise that is accessible and achievable by older members of our society including pensioners – that's how easy it is!

Light to moderate exercise means – doing something which makes you slightly out of breath and makes your heart beat a little faster. This can be walking a little longer, walking a little faster. It can be swimming a number of lengths or widths if you have access to a pool. It can be riding a bicycle at a gentle speed of 5 – 9 miles per hour.

It can be playing sports – eg football, netball, hockey and other team sports – where you do that without even realising it.

It's not even something you need to set up to do separately from your everyday life – though you can should you choose to.

You might be able to get your family to agree to walking to school or walking part way to school.



You might try to carry out the jobs you have to do at home with a little extra vigour and speed – so that your heart beat goes up a little.

You might have a games console that has an exercise facility.

At break time in school you can walk around at a slightly faster rate – you can still chat with your friends.

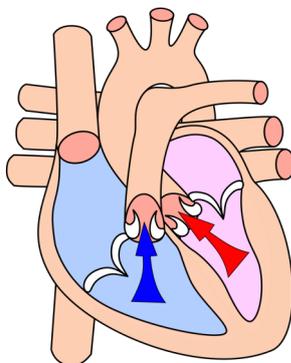
What does this do to your body then and why is this beneficial?

Cardio Vascular Exercise

This kind of exercise is called Cardio Vascular Exercise – often shortened to Cardio. “Cardio” is a part of a word relating to the heart – so it's got an impact on your heart – and this is what happens.

When you walk, swim, cycle a little faster or play some light to moderate sport – your heart beat increases. This means your heart is being given some gentle increased exercise and work to do – which, like any other muscle in your body, makes it stronger, better, tougher.

The muscle walls of your heart improve increasing their reliability and this makes your heart a stronger and longer lasting muscle.



In the meantime, because your heart is pumping more powerfully – it's sending the blood around your body faster, stronger, too.

Your lungs have to work a little harder too – which improves their functioning. They take oxygen out of the air and put it into the bloodstream more quickly – and get the carbon dioxide out of your used bloodstream and out into the environment more efficiently. In short – your lungs get better at doing what your lungs are supposed to do.



Straight away – two of the most important parts of your body are working better and becoming stronger and more effective. That's a huge win - a great benefit for your body.

It doesn't just end there though.

Your blood – with which your heart and lungs are most closely linked – is being pushed around your body faster. Exercise encourages the production of higher numbers of red blood cells. Your blood carries nutrients to your body's extremes. It is critical to getting oxygen to the muscles of your body – so that it improves them – but also – it's a vital part of your defense against infection and disease – so your protection against that infection and that disease improves too.

These give long term improvements to your body. Over time – you **will** notice the difference – but – it's also well recognised that it's really hard to commit to something which gives you long term benefits. It's hard to keep up the motivation for such a long term plan.

Mental Health and Well Being

What everyone would **really** like – is a benefit to exercise which can be achieved immediately.

Thankfully – there's good news with regard to this.

These days – there is a much healthier understanding in society that we need to be careful to look after our mental health just as much as our physical health.

One of the best things you can do to improve your mental health? No doubt you've guessed it – light to moderate exercise 5 days per week.

When the heart is pumping blood round more strongly, the lungs are working more efficiently. Not only are they sending blood, oxygen and nutrients to the key organs of the body, not only are they feeding the muscles in the arms and legs and other muscle structures – they are sending the nutrient rich blood to the brain more quickly too.

Unsurprisingly – a well fed brain is a happy brain!

This gentle exercise routine has an immediate benefit because it helps concentration. You will find you are more alert when trying to do your work. You are more creative – you can think more clearly.

You enjoy improvements in memory. Information is received by the brain – and it tries its best to make memories of what it's seen and heard. It does this by literally creating connections - called synapses in the brain tissue.



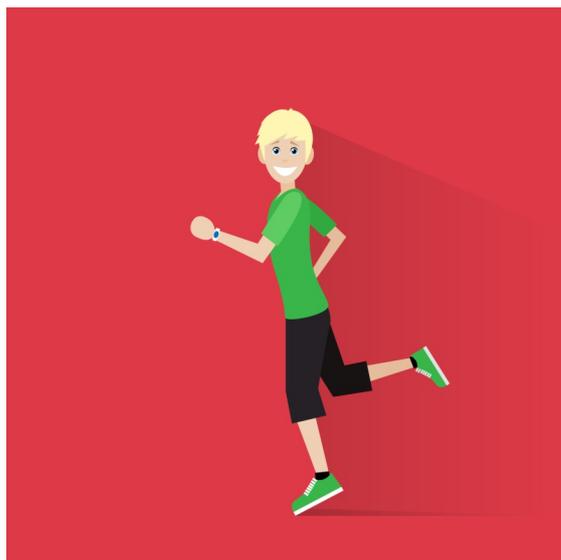
Exercise not only speeds up and improves the process of making memories – it also improves the brain’s ability to access the memories.

You will be able to listen better (your concentration helps this.) You will be able to think more clearly – your creativity and ability to respond to tasks is **so** much better and you will be able to make and retrieve better quality memories.

When you exercise – your body creates a particular chemical which is of huge importance to your mental health. It’s called **dopamine**. It’s a chemical which has a strange effect on the body – or more particularly on the brain.

When you exercise – you create dopamine straight away. Your cardiovascular system is pumping nutrients such as oxygen – round the body and generates key chemicals in your brain called endorphins and dopamine.

Here’s the great thing. The dopamine has the effect of making you feel happier, pretty well straight away - and the feeling lasts for a good length of time. **Endorphins** also have a positive effect on you and help stop your sense of pain - a natural painkiller. **Serotonin** - another key chemical is released too - which counters negative reactions to stress and anxiety.



Very quickly after starting exercise – your brain gets a blast of dopamine and you feel so much better for it. It’s almost , though not quite, instant. It makes you feel better, improves mood, decreases anxiety and eases sense of depression and sadness.

In short – exercise is one of the best things you can do to help yourself now and in the future . It’s easy to access ,and starting at any age (but best started now), it will change your life for the better.



Quotation

Professor Wendy Suzuki is a Professor of Neuroscience with vast experience of study into the science of memory. She states:



“Exercise is the most transformative thing you can do for your body today!”

The Bible says

‘ A wise man is full of strength and a man of knowledge enhances his might.’

Proverbs 24:5

Let’s Pray:

Dear God

Help me to find the energy to do a little extra exercise today and avoid the temptation of yet another video game, television programme or sitting in the chair. Help me to help myself.

Amen

Putting it into Practice

Today, take 20 minutes to go outside and have a short walk enjoying the fresh air whatever weather there is. Focus on how quickly you can feel a sense of well being and appreciation for what is around you.

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of ‘The Importance of Exercise’ for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes).



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

Day 2

Dear God

You gave us wonderful and complex bodies and minds with which we can do so many amazing things.

Help us to remember that we have a duty to look after these gifts so that we can live a full and healthy life.

Amen

Design a health and well being calendar for the month.

Each day, plan one thing to do that pushes you a little in terms of cardio-vascular exercise.

Try to keep to your calendar for the whole month. Tick off each day as you achieve the goal set.

Day 3

Dear God

Thank you for my health and well being. I so often simply take it for granted.

Let me do something to help those less fortunate than myself .

Amen

It's always good to combine doing something for yourself, with helping others at the same time. In your class, plan a sponsored walk. You may decide to have a fancy dress theme for this or even do a before school sponsored walk in your favourite pajamas!



Day 4

Dear God

Help us to set aside 10 minutes each day to focus only on good things in our lives and in our world. It is important for our mental, emotional health and well being to focus on the positive rather than being tempted into the negative.

Amen

As a class, build a 'wellbeing' or 'thankfulness' wall.

Each member of the class can put a sticky note up to remind them and others of what they are thankful for.

Day 5

Dear God

Like all complicated machines, our bodies do not always function perfectly and we, or those near to us, may experience periods of illness or injury.

Send help to all those who are suffering at the moment and give them the strength to try to fight back to fitness and the courage to face their difficulties with positivity.

Amen

Think of someone you know who has a long term illness or injury. Take a few minutes to send a card or a message to them to express your thoughts and care about them.

