

The Power of Movement for our Minds



It has been proven that movement and mood are directly connected. This quote helps to prove that this is the case:

“While it is obvious that your feelings can influence your movement, it is not as obvious that your movement can impact your feelings too. For example, when you feel tired and sad, you may move more slowly. When you feel anxious, you may either rush around or become completely paralyzed. But recent studies show that the connection between your brain and your body is a “two-way street” and that means movement can change your brain, too!”

Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-simply-moving-benefits-your-mental-health-201603289350>

However, when we’re feeling low, it can be difficult to participate in really exhausting or difficult physical activity. It can be hard to even get out of bed! Supporting our mental health when it’s at its lowest can mean taking small steps to get our bodies moving.

Sometimes physical activity isn’t about pushing our bodies, or getting stronger or more flexible. Sometimes it’s about connecting our minds and bodies together, or releasing emotion, or getting grounded and present when our minds are racing. It can be about getting anxious energy out of our bodies or the reason to get out of bed in the morning.

If your mental health is suffering and you want to try some movement to support your mental wellbeing but don’t know where to start, this resource will provide you with some suggestions of activities you can try!

All of the activities listed below are intended to not only support your body, but your mind as well. This mind-body connection can be very beneficial when you are going through something challenging or even just to support your wellbeing when you’re feeling mentally healthy.



Here are five movement ideas to try to support your mind:

1. **Going for a walk** - This one might seem almost too simple to work, but it has many benefits. One of which is moving your body, which definitely improves mental health. Another is getting outside, which can also greatly impact your mental wellbeing in a positive way!
2. **Yoga** - Yoga is a way to slowly and mindfully move your body. There are so many great YouTube videos where you can do yoga from the comfort of your own home for free! You can also support a local yoga studio by attending a class online or in person.
3. **Stretching** - Similar to yoga, stretching is a slow way to engage your body in movement. Where in yoga you might focus on deep breathing and various postures, simply stretching is a great way to relax and refocus your body.
4. **Swimming** - This one definitely depends on temperature and access to water, but swimming is another gentle physical activity that can be great for your body and mind. Especially if you're swimming in a lake or ocean or somewhere outside where you can connect with nature while moving your body.
5. **Running or jogging** - These can be a bit more straining on your body, and not something everyone enjoys. However, they are great for your cardiovascular health and can help you regulate your breathing and get out anxious energy. Also, like walking and swimming, they get you outside!

Consider trying some of these movement ideas the next time you're feeling like you need to do something that will benefit both your body and your mind.

You can also make any of these activities social by inviting someone to join you, which can also boost your mental health and overall wellbeing! Ask a family member or friend to try these movement activities with you. It will benefit their mental and physical health as well as yours and means you have someone to be accountable to, which might make you more likely to follow through!

Get out there and move your body to support your mind!