

A space for expert health and fitness advice and tips from our instructors and news from the fitness world.....

## EXERCISE AS A STRESS RELIEVER

As our society becomes more health-conscious, there importance of exercise. Many people exercise to physical condition to become more healthy or stress management are also closely linked. Exercise reliever for several reasons:

### Outlet for Frustrations:

When life's annoyances or frustrating situations build experience low-grade anger. More high-energy forms weight training can also provide an effective release these otherwise potentially unhealthy emotions into well-being.

### Exercise and Stress Hormones:

Exercise can decrease 'stress hormones' like cortisol, and increase endorphins, your body's 'feel-good' chemicals, giving your mood a natural boost. (This is the chemistry behind a 'runner's high'.)

### Distraction:

Physical activity itself can take your mind off of your problems and either redirect it on the activity at hand or get you into a zen-like state. Exercise usually involves a change of scenery as well, either taking you to a gym, a dojo, a boxing ring, a park, a scenic mountain, a biking trail or a neighborhood sidewalk, all of which can be pleasant, low-stress places.

### Lookin' Good:

I have to include this possibly superficial, but significant, benefit of exercise: it helps you lose weight, tone your body, and maintain a healthy glow and a smile. You may feel a subtle but significant boost as your clothes look more flattering on, and you project an aura of increased confidence and strength. Call me shallow, but this does impact many people, and can relieve stress for those who are concerned with their appearance and worry that they don't look as healthy as they could.

### Social Support:

The benefits of social support are well-documented and manifold. Because exercise and physical activity can often involve others, you can enjoy a double dose of stress-relief with the combined benefits of exercise and fun with friends. Whether you're in a class with others, working out in the gym with a buddy, playing softball in a league or taking a walk or hike with a friend, having others work out with you can make you feel good as well as help motivate you to push harder to get a better workout without it feeling so much like 'work'.

### Increased Health:

While stress can cause illness, illness can also cause stress, with the physical pain, missed activities, feelings of isolation and other costs that come with it. So improving your overall health and longevity with exercise can also save you a great deal of stress in the short run (by strengthening your immunity to colds, the flu and other minor illnesses) and the long run (by helping you stay healthier longer, and enjoy life more because of it).

### Resilience To Stress:

That's right; research suggests that physical activity may be linked to lower physiological reactivity toward stress. Simply put, those who get more exercise may become less affected by the stress they face. So, in addition to all the other benefits, exercise may supply some immunity toward future stress as well as a way to cope with current stress. If that's not a great reason to get more active, I don't know what is!



has been an increased focus on the control weight and get in better physically attractive, but exercise and can be an extremely effective stress

up, you can feel stressed or of exercise like boxing, martial arts or of these negative emotions, turning motivation for increased health and

