

Moving for Health Lesson Series Active Aging

Moving for Your Mind

In addition to a healthy body, regular physical activity leads to a healthy mind. The many mental benefits of physical activity become important as the mind and body age.

Much of the improvement in mental health due to physical activity is immediate and can be seen soon after an activity session. These can include:

- Feelings of relaxation.
- Reduced stress and anxiety.
- Improved mood.



Being active is a valuable tool to manage stress. You can quickly feel more relaxed and develop a refreshed attitude just by taking a break and moving.

Over time, the benefits only get better. The long-term benefits of regular physical activity can include:

- Improved cognitive ability.
- Improved motor control.

Cognitive abilities are the things our mind does everyday. It includes making judgments, reasoning, and committing thoughts and ideas to our memory. Our ability to learn and comprehend is also included. Motor control allows the body to perform tasks or activities. Maintaining motor control might help you to continue with the physical activities you enjoy, even some sports like golf or tennis. It will also help you to function in daily activities which allows you to live independently or without requiring assistance for things such as cooking, cleaning, and personal hygiene.



Feelings of personal control also increase when healthy changes, such as being physically active, begin. By taking advantage of the control you have over your activity levels, it can produce the feeling that you are taking control of your health. This is a very empowering feeling. As a result it might lead to the desire to become more involved in the community through social and cultural activities. In addition, this accompanies feelings of improved self-esteem and self-worth.

Finally, all of these changes can lead to a decrease in depression symptoms and behaviors. When you work to reduce stress and anxiety, this can lead to an improved mood and a relaxed, positive attitude. The ability to be independent by keeping the mind healthy can also lead to a more positive attitude. Feelings of personal control, improved self-esteem, and self-worth can combat negative feelings.

It is clear that regular physical activity is as important for the mind as it is for the body. Mental health plays an equally important role as physical health in the aging process. Regular physical activity can improve the mental changes that can occur with aging.



Sources

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