

Exercise - Does it Help Reduce Stress?

Yes! There are not many better pursuits than exercise for stress reduction.

Here is what exercise can do to help reduce stress:

- ◇ Relax tense muscles
- ◇ Help you sleep
- ◇ Reduce depression, enhance self-esteem and relieve anxiety
- ◇ Produce a relaxation effect that can last for up to four hours after a workout
- ◇ Improve blood flow to your brain, bringing additional sugars and oxygen that may be needed when you are thinking intensely

And regular exercisers report:

- ◇ More energy and better ability to concentrate
- ◇ An improved quality of sleep
- ◇ They don't get as stressed out about things as they usually do
- ◇ Improved mood compared with those who didn't exercise

Unfortunately, when we get stressed, the things that keep us healthy (i.e. eating right, exercise, etc.) tend to fall off our schedule.

Here are some little things you can do to help reduce stress:

- ◇ Take breaks from high stress studying
- ◇ Walk around outside
- ◇ Take a little bit more time for lunch
- ◇ Take a few breathers during the day
- ◇ When you run errands (grocery store, mall, etc.) park a little bit farther away
- ◇ Ride your bike to work, class or the store, instead of driving
- ◇ Set your alarm 10 minutes early and wake up with stretching
- ◇ Instead of taking the elevator, walk the stairs
- ◇ When you take a break from studying, take a walk
- ◇ Read or study while walking/running on the treadmill
- ◇ When you make plans with friends, do something physical (i.e. go to the park, go for a hike, play Frisbee)
- ◇ If you take the bus, get off a stop too early and walk to your destination