

The Lexington Group Employee Assistance Program

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Information and tips to help you live healthier and happier

Exercise To Boost Your Mood

A survey of more than 300 adults ranked exercise as the best way out of a bad mood. According to psychologist Robert Thayer, Ph.D., a bad mood has two major components, feelings of tension and low energy. Exercise can boost your mood by relieving tension, raising energy and increasing optimism. Researchers report that even a short brisk walk can energize, cut tension and increase optimism.

Physical activity also works as well against moderate depression as any other treatment, say researchers. A study at Duke University tested the effect of aerobic exercise in people diagnosed with moderate to severe depression. Their response was compared with that of similarly depressed patients who received either the antidepressant drug Zoloft, or Zoloft and exercise combined. According to James Blumenthal, Ph.D., professor of medical psychology at Duke University, patients in all three groups experienced equally significant reductions in depression symptoms.

How much do you need to exercise to treat depression?

“Our data shows that 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week is sufficient for reducing depressive symptoms,” says Blumenthal. “Additionally, we found an inverse relationship between exercise and the risk of relapsing. The more one exercised, the less likely one would see their depressive symptoms return.”

Dr. Blumenthal recommends aerobic activities such as walking or jogging to fight depression. To get started, keep the following in mind:

- 1. Start slowly.** If walking or jogging is a new activity for you, begin walking/jogging at an easy, low-intensity pace and gradually increase your duration and intensity. Always stop before you reach the point of exhaustion.
- 2. How fast should you walk/jog?** Use the “talk test.” You must walk/jog fast enough so that you are breathing harder, but not so fast that you cannot carry on a conversation.
- 3. How often and far should you walk/jog?** Researchers recommend walking/jogging for at least 30 minutes, a minimum of three days a week.

NOTE: It is recommended that you see a physician prior to starting any new exercise program.

Your EAP is here to help

Remember, your EAP is available to help you or your dependents with any personal, family or work-related concern, including issues related to mood and depression. If you or a family member needs help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help.



The Lexington Group EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.
For confidential services 24 hours every day, call us toll free at:

United States 1-800-676-HELP (4357)
Canada 1-800-567-4343
England 0-800-169-6706
Grand Cayman 1-855-328-1185
Ireland 1-800-812-411

Marshall Islands 1-800-676-4357
Mexico 001-888-819-7162
Puerto Rico 1-800-676-4357
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