

**DID YOU KNOW** regular physical activity can help every part of your body, even your brain?

No matter your age, shape or ability level, you should be physically active every day! Regular physical activity includes daily participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity that promotes cardiovascular endurance and muscular strength. Children and adolescents should be physically active for 60 minutes (1 hour) or more each day, and adults should be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week. Why? In addition to helping tone your body, physical activity strengthens your muscles and bones, improves your skin, helps to put you in a better mood, helps you sleep better, boosts your brainpower and more!

#### Physical benefits of physical activity

Studies show that regular physical activity has many benefits for your body. The benefits of physical activity on cardiorespiratory health are some of the most extensively documented of all the health benefits. Cardiorespiratory health involves the health of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. People who exercise at moderate or vigorous intensity have a significantly lower risk of heart disease and stroke than inactive people. Since physical activity burns calories, being physically active can also help you maintain a healthy weight, reduce body fat, tone your body, and even improve your self-image. Regular, moderate exercise – particularly weight-bearing exercises like walking, running, jogging, and dancing – also keep your bones strong. Exercise also boosts circulation and the delivery of nutrients to your skin. Your skin color is also improved after exercise because of the increase in blood flow.

#### Mental benefits of physical activity

Regular physical activity can also help your brain and state of mind! Exercise boosts blood flow to the brain and helps it receive oxygen and nutrients. It also optimizes your mindset to improve alertness, attention and motivation, and encourages nerve cells to bind to one another, which is the cellular basis for logging in new information. Research also shows that regular exercise reduces symptoms of moderate depression and enhances psychological fitness. Exercise can even produce changes in certain chemical levels in the body, which can have an effect on your psychological state. During exercise the brain produces endorphins, which are hormones that are associated with positive, healthy and happy feelings. This means regular activity can help to ease symptoms of depression and put you in a better mood!

#### Social benefits of physical activity

There are also social benefits related to physical activity. Many forms of physical activity including team sports and group activities can help you meet new people and widen your social network. Even for individual activities, like rollerblading or hiking, it's often easy to join a group or simply find others who like to do the same things you like to do. Regular activity can also help you increase self-esteem and reduce stress. And many activities can help with problem solving and learning how to get along with others.

Regular physical activity is a key part of the Energy Balance equation and one of the most important things you can do for your health. No matter your age or ability level, staying active can contribute to your physical, mental and social health throughout your life!