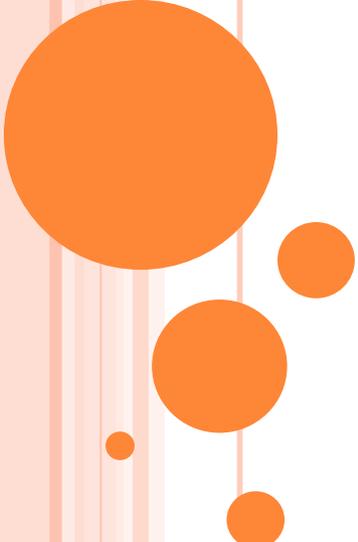


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Physical activity as a therapeutic instrument against depression



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Clinical evidence shows that physical activity is one of the most affordable ways to improve the overall well-being and the link between physical activity and mood is relevant. Treatment approaches such as psychotherapy and medication are effective in treating depression, but research over the last years shows that interventions like exercise can also reduce depressive symptoms.

Although not an official cure for depression, exercise plays an important role in managing symptoms, along with medical treatment and psychotherapy. Reserchers found that resistance exercise like lifting weights reduced significantly the symptomps of depressions after only 3 months. In case of an intensive training program, the symptomps can be reduced of 50%. Also, different meta analysis studies conducted over the last decades found that moderate-intensity aerobic exercise can be an evidenced- based part of treatment for depression, anxiety and stress. Physical activity improve the efficacy of other treatment such as antidepressants and psychological therapy. Some pilot findings indicate a strong relationship between exercise and depression, demonstrating that a proper training program is enough to fight mood disorders, without getting any medicine.

Exercise improves self confidence, distracts the mind by focusing in positive thoughts and projects, promotes social interaction through the new environmental enforcement, gives optional copy strategies to avoid isolation or other common unhealthy ways to face emotional dysregulation

Except the psychological mechanism, also the neurobiological approach is involved in the relation between physical activity and depression. During exercise, the body releases neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and increase the level of neurotrophic factors by preventing neuronal death. Also, exercise contributes to solve eventual problems of high mental function, in order to better manage emotional responses. This is a clear example of the link between exercise and cortical cerebral activity.

According to several findings, aerobic exercise such as jogging, walking, footing or swimming are more efficient comparing to anaerobic activity for facing mental health disorders. Adults should aim for a minimum of 3 times per week for approximately 30-45 minutes a day. For persons with a depression diagnosis, it is advisable to follow a training module made by a specialist in this field.