Blue Cross®
VIRTUAL WELL-BEING

Being Mindful of Physical Health, Part 2

When you exercise, you'll see benefits to your mental health.

- It reduces depression: A recent study published in *JAMA Psychiatry* confirmed that physical activity can help prevent depression and found solid evidence that the lack of exercise can cause depression.
- It reduces anxiety: Researchers found people who regularly exercise were 25 percent less likely to develop an anxiety disorder over the next five years.
- It lowers stress hormones: Researchers at Harvard Medical School found that exercise lowers adrenaline and cortisol and stimulates the production of endorphins, which elevate the mood.

When you exercise, you're changing your brain for the better. Exercise:

- Grows new nerves and synapses in the brain
- Births new brain cells
- Improves executive function
- Lengthens attention span
- Reduces word retrieval issues
- Lowers the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease

The best exercises for the brain are:

- Aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, running and biking
- Strength training, such as weight lifting
- Yoga

Generally, moderate exercise is advised for 30 minutes a day five days a week.

About half the people who resolve to exercise have stopped within the first month. To best ensure your success, you should set SMART goals. SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time based

Sources: **nytimes.com*, ncbi.nlm.nih.gov***, **adaa.org***, **mayoclinic.org***, **health.harvard.edu***, **chicagointernalcleansing.com***, **forbes.com***, **fastcompany.com***, **consumer.healthday.com***, **healthimaging.com***, **bjsm.bmj.com***, **unh.edu***, **redorbit.com***, **alz.org***, **bustle.com***, **brainblogger.com***, **waldenu.edu*, med.monash.edu***, **cnn.com***, **webmd.com***

Join us for our next weekly meditation session on your computer or mobile device:

Topic: Relieving Stress Meditation
Wednesday, March 13, 2019
8 to 8:10 a.m. Eastern time
Register today.

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