

[IMAGE]

The Hidden Benefits of Exercise

Most people exercise to lose weight and get in better shape. For teenagers, however, evidence suggests there's considerably more to regular exercise than weight control. In fact, a recent survey has found that teenagers who make a habit out of exercise and physical activity are more likely to adapt other positive habits, while avoiding negative ones.

In the survey, researchers asked nearly 12,000 middle- and high-school students to report how often they had participated in various activities in the previous week, including playing sports, using local recreation centers, skating or skateboarding, bicycling, watching television, and playing video games. The students also provided information about their grades, self-esteem, and other behaviors.

Compared to teenagers whose primary activities were watching TV and playing video games, teenagers who exercised five or more times per week were:

- less likely to have sex, including unprotected sex;
- less likely to smoke cigarettes;
- less likely to drink alcohol or to drive while drunk;
- less likely to use illegal drugs other than marijuana;
- less likely to miss time away from school;
- less likely to have low self-esteem;
- more likely to wear a seat belt while driving;
- more likely to get 'A' grades in math and science;
- more likely to get a good night's sleep; and
- more likely to do household chores and to have summer jobs outside the home.

As this survey shows, there are definite benefits to regular exercise that can't be measured on a scale. So, what are you waiting for? Turn off that TV, tell your children to put down the video game, and get them moving! It's in their best interest. Talk to your chiropractor for more information on appropriate exercise guidelines for your family.

Reference:

Newton MC, Gordon-Larsen P. Physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns are associated with selected adolescent risk behaviors. *Pediatrics*, April 2006;117(4):1281-1290.

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