

[IMAGE]

Get Fit, Stay Happy

By Editorial Staff

Depression is a significant health issue for several different reasons. First is the impact the symptoms have on people's lives: low mood, low self-esteem, and loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities. Evidence also suggests that more than half of all people who commit suicide suffer from some form of short-term or permanent depression. And let's not forget that the primary treatment option for depression is anti-depressant medication, which some claim is widely overprescribed and is associated with mild to severe side effects, the worst being – you guessed it – and increased risk of suicidal thoughts.

Now here's some good news: A study published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* suggests physical activity, particularly early in life, may help reduce the risk of depression later.

get fit - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Specifically, the study found that "lower cardiovascular fitness at age 18 was associated with increased risk of serious depression in adulthood." Study participants were followed for up to 40 years, strengthening the study's finding that early cardiovascular fitness can have a long-term impact on depression risk throughout adulthood.

Physical activity has also been associated with a reduced risk of depression in general because exercise encourages the production / release of endorphins, the body's "feel good" chemicals, while reducing production of cortisol and other "stress" hormones. So remember, it's never too early – or too late – to start exercising. Your body and mind will thank you for it.

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