

[IMAGE]

Exercise Improves More Than Just Your Physical Health

By Editorial Staff

We all know about the profound physical health benefits consistent exercise brings, but let's not overlook the mental side of things. Exercise in moderation also has mental benefits, a point emphasized by findings in a study appearing in a recent issue of *The Lancet Psychiatry*.

Researchers analyzed data provided by 1.2 million U.S. adults as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys conducted in 2011, 2013 and 2015. The telephone surveys are used to collect information on "health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and use of preventive services." With more than 400,000 interviews each years, the BRFSS is the world's largest continuously conducted health survey, according to the CDC.

In analyzing three years of data, the researchers determined that U.S. adults who reported exercising also reported experiencing 43 percent fewer "poor mental health" days in the previous month compared to non-exercisers. A "poor mental health" day was defined as a day in which the person experienced stress, depression and/or difficulty with emotions.

Now here's where it gets interesting. Researchers also found that the best mental health was achieved with 45-minute exercise sessions, three to five times a week; but exercising for more than three hours a day actually worsened mental health status. What's more, the strongest association between exercise and mental health was noted for people who played team sports (22 percent lower burden), cycling (22 percent) and other aerobic and gym activities (20 percent). And the exercise didn't need to be at a gym or on a team; even doing chores around the house reduced "poor mental health" days by 10 percent compared to non-exercisers.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=2545&no_paginate=true&no_b=true