

# more exercise, less anxiety 23

## for you to know

Participating in almost any kind of physical exercise can help lower your anxiety level. Exercising on a regular basis can prevent anxiety. Exercising at the time you feel anxious can release tension right at that moment.

Megan was having a hard time getting along with her family. It felt like her parents were constantly nagging her and her brother and sister were constantly bothering her. It made her so anxious that sometimes she felt she would explode. One afternoon at home, everyone seemed to be irritating her at once. She knew she had to get away from them before she said or did something impulsive that would get her into trouble. Megan walked out the front door of her house and started jogging down the street. By the time she got around the block, she noticed that she felt better. Her anxiety had decreased. She was breathing more deeply, and her mind was clearing. Megan continued to jog for ten more minutes until she felt completely calm. As she walked the last block home, she realized that she felt more peaceful than she had in a long time. Her whole body was relaxed, she felt healthy and strong, and her irritation had subsided. She went back into the house and was then able to talk calmly with her family. She even shared with them how much better she felt after her run.

Megan's mom was a physical education teacher. She explained to Megan that when we feel anxious, our glands send a hormone called adrenaline into our bodies. Adrenaline is what makes our muscles tense and our heart beat faster. When we exercise, the adrenaline is expelled, our muscles relax, and our heart rate slows down again. She explained to Megan that regular exercise was one of the best ways to keep daily anxiety at a lower, manageable level.

Megan started running three times a week, whether she was feeling anxious at the time or not. She noticed that she always felt great for a few hours after her run and that it was then easier for her to feel peaceful for the rest of the day.

activity 23 \* more exercise, less anxiety

directions

A wide variety of physical activities are listed below. Put a star next to any activity that you know you really enjoy. Put a "T" next to any activity you have never done but would really like to try.

baseball	basketball	skiing	swimming
hiking	tennis	biking	snow boarding
football	karate	running	bowling
gymnastics	wrestling	archery	golf
paintball	laser tag	dance	race walking
volleyball	badminton	judo	waterskiing
tubing	lacrosse	soccer	bocce ball
lifting weights	aerobic dance	kickboxing	racquetball
diving	rappelling	surfing	wind surfing

Looking at the activities you starred, write down those that would be easiest for you to do on a regular basis. What time of day and where would be most realistic for you to do these?

---

---

Write down one or two times and days over the next week when you can exercise. Write them in your schedule book or on your calendar, and then follow through on your plan.

---

---

Notice your anxiety level both before and after you exercise. Describe what you notice.

---

---

---

## more to do

Which exercises from the list might you be able to do right at the moment you are feeling anxious?

---

---

Describe a recent situation that made you anxious and tell how you could have performed some exercise at that time to relieve your anxiety.

---

---

---

---

From the list of activities you put a "T" next to, choose one or two you could try in the next couple of weeks. Write your plan here for how you can realistically make it happen.

---

---

---

---

activity 23 \* more exercise, less anxiety

After you try these new activities, write about your experience and whether or not you would like to do these activities again.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---