

# Healthy Habits

## from Prime of Life Fitness

### Exercise IS Better Than Prozac!

Researchers have known for a long time that exercise can be as effective as drugs for treating depression. This [study](#), now 12 years old, found that regular brisk exercise three times a week was as effective as drugs in treating major depression. And a more recent [study](#) found that exercise was as effective as a second medication for depressed patients who didn't achieve relief from a single drug therapy.

Even if you are not clinically depressed, you can benefit from exercise's mood-boosting abilities. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins in your brain that act like analgesics, lessening pain and increasing feelings of well-being or even euphoria. And it turns out you don't have to be a runner to get a "runner's high."

#### Regular exercise

- offers a healthy alternative to alcohol abuse, binge eating and other unhealthy coping mechanisms
- provides a distraction from daily worries
- may provide beneficial social interaction if you exercise with a partner or in a group
- can increase feelings of confidence as you meet successive fitness goals (even small ones)
- can [improve your body image](#) and sense of self.
- can [improve sleep](#) and reduce levels of stress hormones in your bloodstream.



Now *that's* powerful stuff!

**Action Item:** If you think you might be clinically depressed, please see a physician or counselor right away. If you just need a little stress relief and mood boost, put on your sneakers and go for a walk. Try keeping an exercise and mood journal, where you log your workouts (even non-traditional ones like gardening or square dancing) and your mood before the workout and in the hours after. And, please, drop me a line and tell me how your mood improved after 90 days of consistent moderate exercise!



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