



A ZINE BY oTR

EXERCISE

***A BOOKLET ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
EXERCISE FOR MIND AND BODY***

GETTING STARTED WITH EXERCISE

It'll be no news to you that exercising is good for our physical health. However, have you ever stopped to think about the benefits it can have for us mentally? When we're feeling low, going back to basics can be really useful - including looking at our sleep, diet and how much physical activity we're getting.

Starting off when you haven't exercised for a while can feel pretty daunting. How can we get started and hold ourselves to account? Take a look at our suggestions below and add your own too!

- ✱ Make small, realistic goals - anything too big can feel overwhelming and unachievable.
- ✱ Tell someone about your intentions and check in with them regularly - we get a sense of accomplishment from telling others what we've achieved and their encouragement can help keep us motivated!
- ✱ Reward yourself for sticking to your new routine - like cooking yourself your favourite meal. You'll build a positive association between exercise and reward, making you more likely to exercise again.
- ✱ Create a playlist to get you motivated

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BIOLOGICAL STUFF

So we know that exercise is good for our physical and mental health, but do you know why? Let's take a look at the benefits of keeping fit on our body and brain.



Exercise can improve brain and memory function by increasing our brain cell growth.



When we exercise, our brain releases dopamine and endorphins, which boost our mood!



Physical activity reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50%, and lowers the risk of early death by up to 30%.



Being active also reduces the release of stress hormones like cortisol, leading us to feel less stressed overall.

This definitely isn't all! Have a think about other ways that exercise is good for us and jot them down. Do a Google search if you get stuck! Are these things that you would like to benefit from?

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

When we think of the term 'exercise', we tend to think about bigger, more formal activities such as running or joining a sports team. This can feel like a big step that we're sometimes not ready for. We often forget that walking is a great form of exercise that's free and easy to do!

Things to consider:

- * **Where?** Do you want to keep your walk local, or have a look at nice walks that are further away?
- * **When?** What time of day will you be able to fit this in?
- * **Who?** Will you be going solo or could you take a family member, friend or a pet?
- * **What to bring?** Remember comfy clothes and shoes, some water, a charged phone and a good playlist!

Think of three ways that you can incorporate more walking into your routine. This could be taking the stairs rather than the lift, getting off the bus a stop early - anything that introduces more movement into your day.

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YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH EXERCISE

Although exercising is generally great for us, it can be easy for our habits to sometimes become unhealthy without us realising. Like everything, it's important that physical activity is done in moderation. We know that too little is bad for us, but too much can also be detrimental to our health.

Signs we have an unhealthy relationship with exercise:

- ✱ Our feelings of happiness, success and productivity revolve purely around how much we've exercised.
- ✱ We push ourselves to exercise when we are ill or ache from previous workouts - rest days are important!
- ✱ Life starts to revolve around exercise (e.g. you miss social events, isolate yourself etc.)
- ✱ We punish ourselves for having a day off, resulting in anxiety, shame and overexercising.
- ✱ We lie to others about how much we are exercising, suggesting that deep down we know we're doing too much!

Jot down some ideas for what you may do if you notice your relationship with exercise has become unhealthy (e.g. speak to a family member, go to the GP)



EXERCISE AND MOOD TRACKER

So we've learned that physical activity is good for our brains as well as our bodies. It can be interesting to see how exercise impacts our mood in the real world, and we can do this through journalling! Use the tracker below to keep a record of your exercise and your mood both before and after.

<i>DATE</i>	<i>TYPE OF EXERCISE</i>	<i>MOOD BEFORE /10</i>	<i>MOOD AFTER /10</i>

Do you notice anything from doing this?
Does exercise have a positive effect, negative effect or no effect at all on your mood?



SIGNPOSTING

Looking for some opportunities to try a new activity or exercise with others for your wellbeing? Here are some organisations that allow you to do just that!



riseyouthdance.com



empirefightingchance.org



freeyourinstinct.org



lifecycleuk.org.uk

NOTES

This booklet was created by OTR, a mental health social movement by and for young people aged 11-25 in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

You can view our whole collection of zines over on our website.

Looking for some support? For more information about what we do, drop in to one of our Hubs:

MONDAYS 4-7PM

8-10 West Street, Old Market, Bristol, BS2 0BH

WEDNESDAYS 3:30-5:30PM

Armadillo, Station Road, Yate, BS37 4FW
North Somerset Hub, Whorle at Castle Batch Childrens Centre BS22 7PQ

SATURDAYS 10AM-1PM

8-10 West Street, Old Market, Bristol, BS2 0BH

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