

## A LONG TERM FEEL GOOD FIX

The benefits of exercise are massive in so many areas and go way beyond big muscles and an improved cardio system. For those who take part in any workout you will know the post workout endorphins have a huge impact on your mental health immediately. But working out does more than a short term feel good fix it can help you beat stress in the long term too.

Stats from the 2018 Mental Health Foundation show that 74% of adults have felt so stressed at some point over the last year they felt overwhelmed. This is before the impact of the coronavirus, therefore you would assume these figures will have jumped up even higher over the past two years.

### How can exercise combat stress?

- Regular exercise is associated with levels of reduced tension, elevated mood, better sleep, and improved self esteem which all impact how you perceive and manage stress.
- Exercise stimulates serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin, all of which will have positive effects on the brain and make you feel happy and act as natural painkillers.

We should all make time for regular exercise to reduce stress, as well as use it as an instant happiness booster. While one off sessions have been linked with a reduction in stress, it's regular exercise that has shown to be the most beneficial at reducing stress levels.

Regular exercise helps lower adrenaline and cortisol, which are released from our adrenal glands. These have a negative effect on the body as well as our mind, including physical effects such as increasing the risk of high blood pressure or diabetes.

We also need to think about the social and psychological reasons why exercise is good for stress reduction. It's the perfect way



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to spend time outdoors and around other people with similar interests and it's this interaction that gives you a real sense of community, positivity and self worth.

The good news is that any exercise for any length of time can help reduce stress, therefore pick something you enjoy and add it to your weekly lifestyle.

It is much more important to do something you enjoy, rather than just doing something that's been prescribed for you.

If you don't enjoy what you're doing, it is probably going to increase your stress levels rather than reduce them.

### MAKING TIME FOR EXERCISE

If you feel you are under a huge amount of pressure and are already finding it hard to cope, slotting in time for training might feel too much to take on. But, along with managing stress, it's about managing time. We can all find 15 to 30 minutes a few times a week to exercise, especially when you know how important it is for your wellbeing moving forward.

[www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk](http://www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk)

## DAVID'S SUMMING UP

*Once exercise has become a habit, it should be easier to maintain the benefits, even during times of increased stress.*