Benefits of physical activity

Regular physical activity boosts your physical health, your mental and emotional health, and your social health.

Here are just a few of the benefits:

**Physical health benefits**

- stronger muscles and bones,
- improves your heart health,
- reduces risk of chronic diseases,
- improves chronic disease symptoms, and
- helps to maintain a healthy body weight.

**Mental and emotional health benefits**

- improves your mood,
- helps you cope with stress and anxiety,
- feel better about yourself,
- sleep better, and
- great way to have fun.

**Social health benefits**

- great way to spend time with family,
- good way to see friends more often,
- excellent way to meet new people, and
- positive way to be involved in your community.

This handout for adults will help you to understand some of the benefits of physical activity.
Can you think of any other benefits that are important to you?

How would being more physically active improve your life? List your ideas:

Physical activity is a great way to meet new people and spend time with friends.
Health benefits timeline

We can see some of the benefits of physical activity right away! Other benefits may take more time and patience.

The boxes below provide a timeline of some health benefits.

Short-term (a single session of physical activity)
- ↑ mood & energy
- ↑ self-esteem
- ↑ sleep
- ↑ concentration
- ↑ good cholesterol
- ↑ calories used
- ↓ stress
- ↓ depression
- ↓ high blood sugar
- ↓ bad cholesterol
- ↓ blood pressure

= improve/increase

Medium-term (4–8 weeks of regular physical activity)
- ↑ muscle strength
- ↑ bone & joint strength
- ↑ balance & posture
- ↑ heart health
- ↑ insulin sensitivity
- ↓ body weight & body fat
- ↓ joint pain & swelling
- ↓ falls
- ↓ bad cholesterol

Long-term (months to years of regular physical activity)
- ↑ quality of life and overall well-being
- ↑ your independence
- ↑ how long you live
- ↓ heart disease
- ↓ osteoporosis (bone disease)
- ↓ dementia (such as Alzheimer's)
- ↓ certain cancers (such as colon & breast cancer)

Action Step: Circle the benefits listed in the boxes above that are important to you.
What is one thing you can do today to start being more physically active?

Physical activity helps you cope with stress and anxiety and can help you feel good about yourself.