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Media Release – Happy Body & Happy Mind – Move for Mood and Mental Health
From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Happy Body & Happy Mind - Move for Mood and Mental Health

While the benefit of exercise on our bodies is the hot topic of advertising and articles across the internet, exercise is also one of the best things we can do for our brain function and our mental health.

Exercising, even at a moderate level, can improve mood and create a sense of wellbeing in everyone. For those living with depression or mental health concerns, the benefits of regular exercise can play a significant role in improving mood and sense of wellbeing.

In New Zealand more than half a million adults (16%) have been diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder and/or anxiety disorder in their lifetime. This included 14% of adults who have ever been diagnosed with depression, 6% with anxiety disorder, and 1% with bipolar disorder.

Little or no physical exercise can increase the risk of depression, and a poor diet can decrease your sense of wellbeing, so taking care of yourself needs to be part of any wellness or mental health plan.

There is a good reason why exercise is recommended for improving mood. Endorphins are the 'happy hormones' that the body releases when moving. Endorphins contribute to a feeling of wellness post exercise, and are released most effectively during long, continuous workouts of moderate to high intensity.

The New Zealand Mental Health Foundation tells us there are 3 main ways exercise and physical activity positively contributes to our mental health:

- Biochemically through endorphins.
- Physiologically by improving muscle strength and heart function, increasing blood flow to the brain improving your sleep.
- Psychologically by improving self-esteem and giving you a sense of positive achievement.

It's often hard to get motivated to exercise and be active when you are feeling low, but the benefits far outweigh the effort.

Take these steps to make getting active easier:

- Exercise with a friend
- Try a group exercise class. You can disappear into the group and share the energy of those around you
- Talk to a registered exercise professional who will be able to give you the right advice about how to fit exercise into your life.
- Plan ahead and set up a routine so you know what you are going to do each day, even if it's just a walk around the block.
- Start gently and build up as you start to feel the benefits on your mood and physical fitness and activity levels.
- Do activities you enjoy. There are so many exercise options so you will be able to find one that suits you.

If you would like more information about the benefits of using exercise to improve your mood, then ask your local REPs registered exercise professional for an information brochure titled 'Move for mood and mental health'.

Useful links:

<http://www.depression.org.nz>

<https://www.ranzcp.org>

This fact sheet supports using a gym, worth a direct link:

<https://depression.org.nz/get-better/self-help/physical-health/>

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

