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Media Release – Exercise for Your Body and Mind

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Exercise for Your Body and Mind

With the upcoming World Mental Health day on 10th October raising the profile of mental health, it's worth reflecting on how the relationship with how moving your body can have an impact on your mind.

We all know that exercising, at an appropriate level can improve mood, and create a sense of wellbeing. For those living with depression or mental health concerns, the benefits of regular exercise can contribute by improving mood and the sense of wellbeing.

In New Zealand, more than half a million adults (16%) will experience a diagnosis of depression, bipolar disorder and/or anxiety disorder in their lifetime. This includes 14% of adults who have ever been diagnosed with depression, and 6% with anxiety disorder in a short term or long-term way.

Countless studies show that little or no physical exercise can increase the risk of depression, and a poor diet can decrease your sense of wellbeing. There are measured benefits in including these components in a wellness or mental health plan.

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.

Mental health in young people is an area that has gained more attention in recent years with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues amongst children and teens are becoming more common, and solutions more necessary. One of the recognised causes of youth mental health issues is the growth of social media use that combines access to images and information that can amplify concern. The other part of social media use is that it encourages less active behaviour, leading to sedentary practices at a younger age.

Dementia is a term that describes a set of diseases that affect how the brain works. While there is not usually a cure for dementia, there are medications and lifestyle or dietary changes that may slow down the onset of the symptoms. Embarking on a gentle exercise programme is part of these changes. Dementia is one of New Zealand's most significant and growing healthcare challenges. Almost 70,000 Kiwis have dementia, and that number is expected to almost triple by 2050.

If you are looking at using physical activity as a way of managing your mental health, it's ok to ask for support and start slowly. Any activity brings benefits, so there is no need for an all or nothing approach to physical activity and exercise and the many benefits it brings.

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.*

