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Media Release – The Health Benefits of Mind and Body Exercise

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



The Health Benefits of Mind and Body Exercise

The concept of mind body refers to a state where interactions and connections are made between your mind, your body and the world.

Generally speaking, a mind body exercise form is one in which the pace is slow enough for this connection to be focused on. That's not to say there isn't a sense of being connected on a run or during a gym session, but this is not the main focus of the activity.

Mind body exercise practices have been around for a long time; in fact Yoga can be dated back over 5000 years. While originally not part of mainstream health and exercise, mind body classes are now front and centre in most exercise facilities. There has been a rise in dedicated mind body studios, with offerings now embracing all settings.

There is an understanding that different styles of physical activity offer different benefits. While simply 'getting moving' is still a good message, we know now that there's not just one way of doing this. There is plenty of research to indicate that getting your heart rate up and working with heavier weights and intensities is beneficial at all ages and stages. Equally, there is understanding on the other side that inclusion of more gentle, mindful exercise practices can also have positive effect on health and exercise levels.

When injury, ability or life stage prevents high intensity activity, mind body activity is essential to staying active. There is also an increased understanding that physical movement is important for mental health. The focused, slower practice of mind body exercise allows space to reflect and relax. Those who enjoy an all-out workout are also finding the addition of a more focused workout amongst their higher session intensity adds to their exercise enjoyment, and their results.

The benefits of mind body exercise go beyond the physical, although this is one of its attractions as part of an exercise routine. The physical benefits include reduced muscle tension, improved range of movement in the joints, better muscular coordination, and increased blood circulation.

While the injury and health risks associated with more gentle mind body practices are lower than those of higher intensity activity, keeping safe and exercising at a level that is suitable for you is just as important.

Some of the popular forms of mind body exercise include:

Yoga

Yoga has its roots in India, with over 5000 years of individuals practising yoga. Yoga has a range of formats from slow, through to more dynamic movement. Where Yoga really becomes the star of the show is in its stress reducing and relaxation benefits. With people living more busy lives, constantly connected to stimulation and data even during down time, the need for consciously created mindfulness becomes more important. It's an opportunity to slow down and connect, with mind and body.

Tai Chi

Sometimes described as 'meditation in motion', Tai Chi, originated in China as a martial art and has spread across the globe. Tai Chi is a form of mind body exercise that is very suitable for a range of age groups including older adults, and is very popular amongst this group.

Involving slow movement sequences, Tai chi encourages circular movements, has a controlled range of movement and can be adapted easily for those with a range of health or mobility conditions.

- Can improve body strength
- Improves flexibility
- Mental health benefits

So, if you want to do something to help both your mind and physical body, it is worth trying one of these activities to enjoy the many benefits they offer.

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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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