

# Five great reasons to stop the excuses and get moving



Being physically active can calm your mind and relieve stress – allowing you precious mental time to hurdle the obstacles life throws your way.

Exercise promotes:

- Stamina
- Resistance to disease
- A healthier lifestyle
- Mental strength and agility
- Relaxation
- Self-esteem
- Overall physical energy
- Coordination
- Circulation

We've heard them all before... "I don't have time", "Treadmills are boring", "I just got my hair done." Enough is enough. Your body is a temple and it's your responsibility to take better care of it.

Exercise can help you lose weight, shape your body, and increase your energy level. But did you know that exercise also can help to make you smarter?

**About 27 percent of African American men and about 34 percent of African American women are not physically active.**

Source: American Heart Association, 2006.

## 1. A beautiful body leads to a sharper mind

Interestingly enough, mental agility scores can improve when testing is conducted on a treadmill. That's because exercise increases the blood flow throughout your body and to your brain. The blood carries oxygen that is essential to brain function. More blood and oxygen mean more fuel for your brain.

## 2. Healthier means happier

It's hard not to smile while taking a walk out in fresh air, running down a fly ball or splashing around in a cool pool. The happiness factor increases when you find a sport or activity that you truly love.

Doctors at the National Institutes of Health say that physical activity also decreases your appetite in general, and may have a significant impact on cravings for sweets.

## 3. Keep the doctor away

Exercise can combat serious ailments like osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer. There's even evidence to suggest that physical activity cuts the duration and severity of the common cold.

Regular workouts also increase stamina, energy levels and endurance. You'll notice an increase in your agility, coordination and balance.

**Regular exercise is at least as effective as medication for helping people with mild to moderate depression.**

Source: [www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression-and-exercise/MH00043](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression-and-exercise/MH00043), 2007.



Check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program or diet.

Exercise fights:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stroke
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Poor health habits

Sources:

Exercise and Overall Well Being. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001941.htm> (2006)

#### 4. Sleep and stress relief

Have you heard of the “runner’s high”? It’s that feeling of peaceful euphoria that can come from prolonged periods of physical exertion. When you work out at a moderate to high rate of intensity for at least 30 minutes, your pituitary gland releases endorphins and your brain increases its output of serotonin, resulting in a feeling of blissful tranquility.

Also, people who regularly engage in exercise have fewer episodes of sleeplessness. Exercise promotes improved sleep quality by allowing smoother and more regular transition between the cycles and phases of sleep and increased time in the deepest Stage 4 sleep. For some, just working out is sufficient to overcome their sleep problems.

#### 5. Boost your self-confidence

Experts at the Mayo Clinic have found that even small amounts of exercise can reshape the way you think about your appearance and your own self-worth. Doing something healthy for yourself means you grant yourself more value.



For more detailed information about Generations of Wellness<sup>SM</sup>, visit [www.uhcgenerations.com](http://www.uhcgenerations.com)