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In This Issue

How is your physical health affecting you mentally?

- o Look above your shoulders.

Tips for Healthy Summer Living

Online Resources may be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

How is your physical health affecting you mentally?



Often we think of physical health and mental health as totally separate entities, but in actuality they are quite closely related. When our bodies are hurt, malnourished, or have any compromised health issue, our mental health typically suffers as well. This also works the other way, affecting our bodies physically when we are not mentally fit. In this newsletter we will discuss why our physical and mental health affects one another and give some tips on healthy summer living.

Trying to be physically healthy requires looking above the shoulders.¹

As most of us all strive to be physically healthy, we must take a good look at our mental health as well. Often times we don't think of physical and mental health going together, but in order to achieve one you must help to make the other healthy as well. Many studies have found that mental illness can often lead to some physical health issues. Stress has been linked to many different disease such as heart disease, cancer and cirrhosis of the liver.³ Too much stress affects the immune system which can weaken its fight against coughs and colds, as well as flare-ups of arthritis and asthma. It has also been found that people with anger and aggravation problems were more likely to be at risk for heart arrhythmias, than those without such anger problems.

But this isn't just a one sided issue, your physical health can affect your mental health as well. Many studies have shown that physically ill patients have a higher prevalence of developing major depressive illnesses.⁴ This is another reason as to why staying physically fit is important. Often people who are physically fit tend to be happier.⁵ While this may not be true for everyone, good physical health can certainly increase the chances of better mental health.

As both mental and physical health often play off one another, it is very important that you take care of yourself in both aspects. Keeping physically

and mentally fit is important in trying to keep a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Below we offer you some summer tips on how to stay healthy.



Tips for Healthy Summer Living²

1. Give Your Diet a Berry Boost

Load up on berries this summer to help enrich your antioxidants, which may help prevent damage to tissues and reduce the risks of age-related illnesses. Plus a berry smoothie can help to cool you down!

2. Stress Less by Getting Dirty in the Garden

Help reduce your stress level by planting a small garden or even just a few flower pots. Then enjoy your hard work by taking a nap or reading a book out by your new beautiful garden.

3. Get Outside to Exercise

If you're cooped up in a gym you're not able to enjoy the sun's rays, which can help to increase serotonin. Get outside and enjoy a hike or a swim in the pool. Also take your family with you, outdoor adventures are a great way to bond!

4. Hydrate

Staying hydrated is an important part of enjoying summer. Often times you are losing water when you don't even know it! Drink two cups of water before exercising or being outside and continue to drink 4-6 ounces every 15-20 minutes during the activity.

5. Take an Afternoon Nap

Everyone enjoys a midday nap, so now feel good about taking one! Stretch out in the hammock or chair and take an afternoon siesta. This may help to lower your stress level and recharge your energy. But beware, don't sleep too long, as this can just make your sluggish and more tired.

6. Wear Sunscreen (and Protect your Eyes)

Wearing sunscreen is critical during the summer! A sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater should always be used. Also be sure to protect your eyes with sunglasses (ones that block at least 99% of ultraviolet A and B rays) and even think about wearing a hat to avoid the sun's rays.

7. Exercise your Mind

Keeping your brain sharp can help you to stay mentally health. Try simple tricks like solving a riddle, writing a story, or reading a book on a new subject.

Contact Us


Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30-5:00pm. Evening hours are available on a limited basis.

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Nights and weekends call RESPOND:

(540) 776-1100 or 800-541-9992

Advantage EAP does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned.



While these tips are not exclusive or guaranteed they may help to improve your summer. If you find that you are still overwhelmed with stress, anxiety or depression, consult a professional immediately. Psychological Health-Roanoke provides comprehensive mental health services in psychology, counseling and social work.

For more information please visit:
<http://www.psychhealthroanoke.com/>

And be sure to check out our blog that's updated frequently at:
<http://psychhealthroanoke.blogspot.com/>

Resources:

- 1) <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/02/25/the-connection-between-mental-physical-health/>
 - 2) <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/10-summer-tips-healthy-living>
 - 3) <http://helping.apa.org/work/stress2.html>
 - 4) <http://www.wehealthunit.org/workplace-health/health-topics/keep-health-in-mind/mental-health-and-physical-health-exploring-the-connection>
 - 5) <http://ezinearticles.com/?How-Does-Physical-Health-Affect-Mental-Health?&id=1439770>
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