

Oughton Health

Oughton Primary School Health & Well-Being Newsletter

Edition 3 May 2019

Welcome to the third edition of our newsletter, Oughton Health, our very own newsletter with a focus on promoting good health, both physical and mental, as well as general good well-being. In this edition, we focus on the importance of exercise on our bodies.

We all know that being physically active is good for our bodies. But our physical health and mental health are closely linked – so physical activity can be very beneficial for our mental health and wellbeing too.

Not only is exercise an important key to reducing our risk of major illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer but research also shows that regular physical activity can boost our self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, making us less prone to stress, depression and dementia (further details overleaf).

Unfortunately, our modern lifestyles and an increasing addiction to technology, has resulted in many of us leading less active lives than in the past, both as adults and as children. Increasingly, research is indicating that inactive children are likely to become inactive adults, putting our young people at risk of developing life-threatening conditions as those highlighted above. This is why it is so important for all of us to encourage physical activity and exercise from a young age. Many families find that doing this together is the best way to plan for this and to keep themselves motivated.

RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

We all know how hard it can be to motivate ourselves to exercise. However, if we can change our mind set into thinking of it as physical activity instead, it can be easier to motivate ourselves and build time into our lives. Below is the amount recommended by Public Health England:

Physical activity guidelines

Children 5-18



60 mins of physical activity every day

Adults 19-64



150 mins of moderate aerobic activity per week

Adults 65 +



150 mins of moderate aerobic exercise p/w and strength exercises two days a week

Source: Public Health England



IN THIS ISSUE:

- The importance of exercise on our mental health

Watch out for our next issue:

- The importance of positivity of our mental health

True enjoyment comes from activity of the mind and exercise of the body; the two are ever united

Regular exercise/physical activity has many health benefits for children and young people, such as:

- *Improving fitness*
- *Building a stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles*
- *Encouraging healthy growth and development*
- *Improving posture and balance*
- *An opportunity to socialise*
- *Increasing concentration*
- *Improving academic scores*
- *Improving self-esteem*
- *Lowering stress*
- *Encouraging a better night's sleep*



WHICH ACTIVITY IS BEST FOR ME?

Having a clear idea about what you want to achieve should help you to make a decision about which activity to choose. For example, you could think about which of these factors are most important for your child/you:

- *Meeting new people and making friends*
- *Learning a new skill*
- *Managing their/your weight*
- *Making their/your lifestyle more active or improving physical fitness*
- *Giving their/your mental health a boost*
- *Playing a team sport or exercising on your own*
- *Being in an outdoor or indoor space*
- *Ease of access – for example if you have limited physical mobility, or can't afford certain classes or equipment*

DOING SOMETHING YOU ENJOY - KEEPING IT FUN!

It's important to find activities they/you enjoy. This way your child/you will not find the exercise a chore and are more likely to stick at it. The type of activity depends on the individual. Exercise can be

- Team-led such as football or basketball
- Learning a skill through joining a club or having lessons such as tennis, dance or golf
- More family and friend activities such as a bike ride, trampolining, going for a walk or swimming.

Physical activity has a wide range of health benefits – for your mind and body, and for your social and emotional wellbeing.

Physical health benefits:

As well as improving your overall physical fitness, being more active can have the following physical benefits:

- Reduced risk of some diseases. For example, health experts suggest that being more active can reduce your risk of developing a stroke or heart disease by 10%, and type 2 diabetes by 30–40%.
- Reduced risk of physical health problems as our bodies adapt to stress. As we become fitter, our bodies can better regulate our cortisol levels. Cortisol is a 'stress hormone' that our bodies release in response to anxiety; over prolonged periods, higher cortisol levels have been linked to a wide range of health problems including heart disease, high blood pressure, a lowered immune response, as well as depression and anxiety.
- Healthier organs. When you're active your body is working more, which is good for your organs. For example, a stronger heart will help you have lower cholesterol and lower blood pressure.
- Healthier bones. Weight-bearing exercises will strengthen your bones and build your muscle, which can reduce your chances of developing osteoporosis.
- Healthier weight. If you're overweight, becoming more active can help you start to reduce body fat as your stamina and fitness levels improve.
- More energy. As your body adapts to increased activity levels you get a natural energy boost, which can make you feel less tired. Researchers say that even low intensity levels of activity can be beneficial if you usually feel very fatigued.
- Improved sleep. Many people find they are able to sleep better at night after having been more active during the day.

Mental health benefits:

- Reduced anxiety and happier moods. When you exercise, your brain chemistry changes through the release of endorphins (sometimes called 'feel good' hormones), which can calm anxiety and lift your mood.
- Reduced feelings of stress. You may experience reductions in feelings of stress and tension as your body is better able to control cortisol levels.
- Clearer thinking. Some people find that exercise helps to break up racing thoughts. As your body tires so does your mind, leaving you calmer and better able to think clearly.
- A greater sense of calm. Simply taking time out to exercise can give you space to think things over and help your mind feel calmer.
- Increased self-esteem. When you start to see your fitness levels increase and your body improve, it can give your self-esteem a big boost. The sense of achievement you get from learning new skills and achieving your goals can also help you feel better about yourself and lift your mood. Improved self-esteem also has a protective effect that increases life satisfaction and can make you more resilient to feeling stressed.
- Reduced risk of depression. If you're more active there's good evidence to suggest that at most ages, for both men and women, there's a trend towards lower rates of depression. In fact one study has found that by increasing your activity levels from doing nothing to exercising at least three times a week, you can reduce your risk of depression by almost 20%.

So with so many clear benefits to your mind and body, what's stopping you??? Remember, any physical activity is better than no physical activity!

*I'm tired
It's too cold
It's too hot
It's raining
It's too late
Let's go*