



BONUS ARTICLE

Five keys to using activity to improve mental health

Being physically active helps reduce anxiety, improve mood, provide a sense of accomplishment, and bolster self-esteem. It can also decrease the symptoms of depression or help you sidestep a mild depressive episode.

Despite all these benefits, it can be easy to dismiss physical activity as a way to improve your mental health. It might seem too hard, too boring, or something you're just not into today.

To shift this mindset and enjoy the benefits of exercise:

1 Start slowly. Ease into a routine, perhaps by taking a brief walk a few times a week. If you're concerned about exercise because of medical conditions, ask your doctor for suggestions.

2 Don't judge. Don't think exercise isn't worth it because you're not training for a marathon. The type of activity doesn't matter. Moving does.

3 Do what you enjoy. Head out to the garden after work, play basketball with the kids, go for a swim, or enjoy a walk.



4 Bring a friend. You'll enjoy support and social benefits. In addition, you can encourage each other to keep going.

5 Make adjustments. If you find yourself avoiding exercise, look at what's holding you back. Try a different time of day or a new activity to encourage yourself to get moving. ♦