



# BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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## Get Moving to Improve your Mood

Everyone knows that exercise is good for your body, but did you know that it is also good for your mind? The psychological benefits of exercise range from simply improving mood and boosting energy to reducing anxiety and easing depression. The connection between mind and body is very strong, so it makes sense that improving one can lead to positive effects for the other.

Exercise boosts your emotional wellbeing in a variety of ways:

When you are physically active your body releases endorphins, which are brain chemicals that reduce feelings of pain and stress and increase feelings of overall happiness and relaxation. The increased secretion of endorphins directly contributes to decreased feelings of depression and anxiety.

Exercising leads to increased self confidence. Meeting your fitness goals, whether it's going to the gym 3 times a week or taking a walk every day after

dinner, will give you a sense of accomplishment. In addition, getting into shape can make you feel better about your appearance, which can also increase self confidence.

Working out provides people with a distraction that gives them a reprieve from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression.

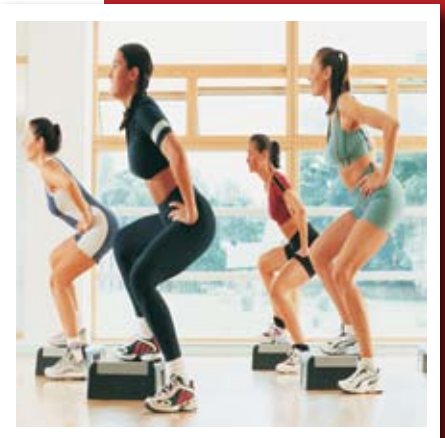
Exercising allows for increased socialization. Joining a sports team or an exercise class allows you to meet new people and widen your social circle. Doing something active **with friends** is a double whammy, as exercise and spending time with people you like both stimulate the release of endorphins.

Physical activity boosts energy by delivering oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. Regular activity actually makes your entire cardiovascular system work more efficiently, which gives you extra energy to do the things you enjoy.

For more information or support on exercise contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

**1.800.327.2255**

eni's BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.





Exercise promotes better sleep as long as you don't do it right before bed. A good night's sleep improves concentration, mood, and productivity.

Participating in any physical activity will gradually increase your sense of mastery over it, which helps people feel more in control of their lives and gives them the confidence to take control of other aspects of their life as well.

Exercise is a healthy outlet for built up stress and frustration.

It only takes 10 to 15 minutes of activity to begin to experience an improvement in your mood and overall state of mind. However, if you want to use exercise to ease depression, research shows that it takes 30 minutes or more of physical activity, 3-5 days per week, to significantly improve depression symptoms. The more regularly you exercise the more likely you are to experience its positive mood lifting benefits.

The concept of exercise can seem intimidating to some people as it is often associated with running, lifting weights, or intense aerobic classes. Of course these are all great ways to get into shape, but the truth is, exercise is any physical activity that gets you up and moving. If you are new to exercise, but are eager to experience the positive effects, just start small. Low impact exercises like gardening, walking around the neighborhood, and doing gentle yoga will all help you de-stress and stimulate the feel good chemicals in your brain. Now that summer has finally arrived, we want to leave you with a few fun ways to get physically active and improve your state of mind.

**Play Sports** – Gather a group of people for a friendly game of basketball, tennis, touch football, soccer, volleyball, baseball, or Frisbee. You could even go back to childhood and start an exciting game of kickball!

**Go Hiking** – Walking through the wilderness provides variety and allows you to take in the scenery while being active.

**Visit an Amusement Park** – Spending the day at a theme park will have you walking several miles. If you head to a water park, you will walk extensively *and* climb countless stairs on your way to the top of those water slides.

**Take a Bike Ride** – This is a great way to cover lots of ground and is an easier on the knees alternative to jogging or running.

**Be a Tourist** – Pick someplace that you want to explore and commit to sightseeing on foot. This will give you several hours to several days of enjoyable exercise.

**Take your Kids to the Park** – Go ahead and get on the jungle gym with them, you will re-discover muscles that you forgot you had!

**Volunteer** – Find a group that plants trees, cleans up parks, or anything else that gets you moving and you will reap the positive effects of physical activity while also giving back to the community.

Remember it doesn't matter how you exercise. As long as you commit to some form of physical activity most days of the week, your body and mind will begin to feel the effects!

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