

Cup of Sunshine - Exercise

This is Cup of Sunshine – your Friday Podcast brought to you by the Phoenix Centre Team of the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg.

Welcome! I'm Fiona Schaefer, the Coordinator for Inclusion. Over the next few weeks my colleagues and I are going to share some helpful hints and tips for managing life during the uncertain times of Covid-19. Today I would like to speak about **the importance of exercise**.

Regular exercise has been proven to be very beneficial for our body and mind - especially when it comes to children.

Let's start with some benefits for our **body**:

Physical activity helps us build muscles and strong bones. It is essential to reduce the risk of chronic disease and helps maintain a strong heart and strong lungs. Additionally, it will keep our veins clear and helps the body to balance its blood sugar levels.

But there are many benefits for our **mind** too:

Exercise can improve brain function and protect memory and thinking skills. It can also stimulate the production of hormones that can enhance the growth of brain cells.

Exercise has been shown to improve our mood and decrease feelings of depression, anxiety and stress. It fosters changes in the parts of the brain that regulate stress and anxiety. It can also increase brain sensitivity for the relieve of feelings of depression.

Additionally, exercise can increase the production of endorphins, which are known to help produce positive feelings and reduce the perception of pain.

If we exercise regularly, we also sleep better and feel more energized during the day. Engaging in regular physical activity can increase our overall energy levels. This allows us to be more active, and reduces the likelihood that we'll tire during the day.

Interestingly, it doesn't matter how intense your workout is. It seems that your mood can benefit from exercise no matter the intensity of the physical activity.

Also let's keep it **realistic** here: sometimes we feel too tired and simply too exhausted from life to get up and get started with a workout or run. Don't stress yourself about it and start with a small step. You don't have to run a half marathon on day 1. Rather set your long term goal and break it down into little and more realistic goals. Start with a walk or run for only 5 minutes today. Every step is a step in the right direction.

As much as it is important to engage in regular physical activity ourselves, it is for our **children**. There is a variety of positive effects on their wellbeing from it.

- Feel less stressed
- Built up self esteem
- Feel more ready to learn in or for school
- Sleep better at night and are more focused during the day
- develop neuromuscular awareness (i.e. coordination and movement control)
- Keep a healthy weight
- Build and keep healthy bones, muscles and joints



The **World Health Organisation** suggests the following times to engage in physical exercise per day for children at different ages:

- **Children aged 1 to 5 should be physically active for** at least 3 hours, spread throughout the day
- Children and youth aged 5–17 should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to high-intensity physical activity daily.
- Amounts of physical activity greater than 60 minutes provide additional health benefits.
- Most of the daily physical activity should be aerobic. High-intensity activities should be incorporated at least 3 times per week.

The following tips will help you to **include more** physical activity in your everyday life with your child:

- Set a regular schedule for physical activity.
- Make being active a part of daily life, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Embrace a healthier lifestyle yourself, so you'll be a positive role model for your family.
- Be active together as a family.
- Keep it fun, so your kids will come back for more.

That's all for today. I hope you'll join us next week for more helpful hints and tips for managing life during the times of Covid-19.