

Family Chiropractic

*Courtesy of Harbourfront Family Chiropractic
by Dr. Warren Gage*



Lower BP, increase endorphins, lose weight, anti-age, with exercise

Ask a daily runner why she runs and you're likely to hear, "It makes me feel good." Those of us who aren't fond of exercise of any type might find this really hard to understand. How can something that makes you sweat and pant actually make you feel good? Can exercise really affect your mood?

Simple answer – absolutely. Some might run when they feel stressed out. Others might run after an argument with a spouse. Why? Because they feel better after a run. They may feel stronger, calmer or happier.

It's a known fact that exercise releases certain chemicals in the brain, including endorphins and dopamine, which affect mood. Endorphins are the body's natural pain killers – in fact endorphins are more powerful than morphine. They help an athlete to stay in the game and push past their pain after injury or exhaustion.

Some scientists claim that endorphins improve immune system function and lower blood pressure. They also have anti-aging effects because they attack *superoxides*, molecules that threaten living tissue and are responsible for illness and aging. They can also reduce anxiety and feelings of depression and raise self-esteem. Frequent exercise has a direct effect on endorphin release – the more you exercise, the more endorphins you produce each time you exercise!

Exercise also raises dopamine levels in the brain. Low dopamine levels cause you to feel mentally foggy and sluggish. Dopamine levels increase in response to a low or moderate amount of exercise. Dopamine can also help you to get a good night's sleep - unless you engage in too strenuous a workout; then it has the opposite effect of causing sleeplessness.

So aside from the major health benefits of exercise, including weight control and cardiovascular health, exercise also aides in boosting your mood, increasing pleasure and minimizing pain. And when you add regular chiropractic care, adequate sleep and a healthy diet – you have all the makings of a lifestyle that supports optimal wellness and wellbeing!