

# Nontraditional Benefits of Exercise

Ask many people why they choose to exercise and you will get some fairly consistent answers: lose weight, look better, or get stronger. While all of these are possible benefits of exercise, they involve an extremely large time commitment and are highly dependent on other factors, such as nutritional habits, sleep, stress levels, genetics, and more. Given the complexities around losing weight and gaining strength many individuals stop exercising out of frustration in meeting their goals. Today's flyer is all about the range of benefits we can expect from exercise beyond weight loss. Most of them are immediate benefits after a single bout of exercise!

## Better Sleep



Ever struggled to fall asleep, stay asleep, or feel rested after what seemed to be a full night's sleep? Exercise has been linked to improving all three variables. While it is important to note sleep is extremely complex, it is really encouraging that as little as a 30 minute bout of exercise or sitting less than eight hours of day can improve one's sleep!

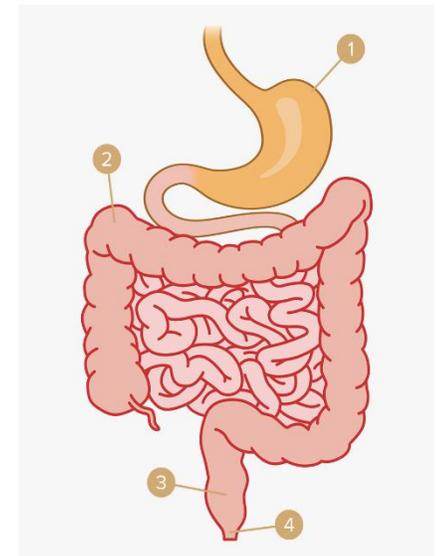
## More Energy



## Charging

Do you have a time throughout the day where you feel fatigued? What is your "go to" to keep moving? A study completed back in 1987 compared a group who ate a chocolate bar vs. taking a 10 minute walk on 12 different days. After two hours the walking group had significantly higher self-reported energy levels and less tension compared to the chocolate bar group.

## Digestive Health

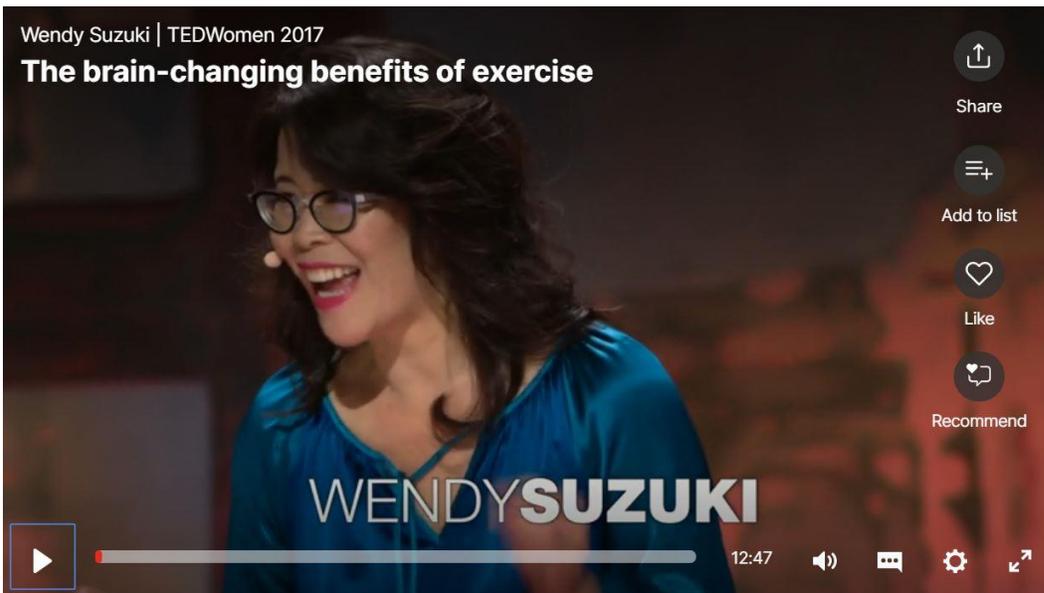


The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines highlight that regular activity has been shown to decrease the risk of colon cancer. Furthermore, recent research (in animals) has shown that exercise can have a positive effect on bacterial composition of the digestive system. As highlighted in past flyers, our digestive system is linked to many other mind and body functions.



We have all probably heard of smart goals, but do we implement them when we go to make a lifestyle change? After reading through this flyer and learning and refreshing up on some of the non-traditional benefits of exercise, can you implement some of these benefits into your SMART goals? For example, before taking a sugar snack break I will take a 10 minute walk!

Outcome	Population	Benefit	Acute	Habitual
Cognition	Children ages 6 to 13 years	Improved cognition (performance on academic achievement tests, executive function, processing speed, memory)	●	●
	Adults	Reduced risk of dementia (including Alzheimer's disease)		●
	Adults older than age 50 years	Improved cognition (executive function, attention, memory, crystallized intelligence,* processing speed)		●
Quality of life	Adults	Improved quality of life		●
Depressed mood and depression	Children ages 6 to 17 years and adults	Reduced risk of depression Reduced depressed mood		●
Anxiety	Adults	Reduced short-term feelings of anxiety (state anxiety)	●	
	Adults	Reduced long-term feelings and signs of anxiety (trait anxiety) for people with and without anxiety disorders		●



The body of research on the positive effects exercise has on mental health is large and growing! The above graph highlights a range of benefits exercise has on measures of mental health from acute (singular) and habitual (long term/consistent) exercise. The video to the left does an amazing job highlighting the ways exercise actually changes our brain!

Not convinced yet? Don't know where to start? Click on the picture to the right and browse our group exercise classes. We offer 14 different classes each week. Research has found that exercising with a group provides a number of benefits, including improved social skills, confidence, accountability, benefits from instruction, varied workouts, and a sense of shared accomplishment. Come join us as we work together!

