



THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Despite being stuck inside as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, there is no reason we should let it stop us keeping fit. As we all know, staying active is vital for our physical and mental health and general well-being. With so much uncertainty and anxiety about the future, exercise is a fantastic and important way to decrease stress, improve sleep and help with our self-esteem, as well as the numerous physical health benefits.

A 'GOOD' WORKOUT:

It is difficult to adjust from the ways we are used to exercising, particularly if we normally go to the gym or play sport with our friends. But there are countless ways to ensure we can get the heart pumping, and as you may be aware, 30 minutes a day spent working up a sweat is enough to help keep us fit. This could include going for a run, riding your bike or just having a dance in the living room. So long as you're moving and your heart rate is increased, your body (and mind) will thank you! Make sure you adhere to the social distancing rules and government guidelines if you're out and about.

HAVING A ROUTINE:

When and how you workout is entirely up to you. Routine and structure can help keep life as 'normal' as possible, so if you're home learning or have other activities timetabled into your day, simply build exercise into your schedule. Working out first thing in the morning can help get your day off to a great start, or a lunchtime run can break up the day. Whatever you choose, it needs to work for you personally and be sustainable over the next few weeks. Better still, this could help us all realise the importance of regular exercise long after this pandemic is over!

IMPROVISING:

There's a saying that 'necessity is the mother of invention'. When we really need to, we can get creative in order to solve a problem. You could use baked bean cans for weight resistance, or use the sofa for pushups (check with your parents first!). Look around for things you could use to build into your workout or create an assault course. The Joe Wicks' daily PE class on YouTube is excellent (9am Monday-Friday), and there are others to choose from too. Key players from the fitness industry and even Olympic athletes are posting amazing workouts, as well as those sharing their best efforts at the 5k challenge.

FEELING RUBBISH?

There will, of course, be days when you don't fancy exercising. If you're feeling poorly or aching, listen to your body and ensure you allow yourself to rest. If you're mentally struggling, never underestimate the power of exercise. It can transform our mood and lift anxiety by releasing endorphins in the brain to help us see things in a more positive light. Sometimes it's worth forcing yourself to go for a walk or run, or dancing around to your favourite songs for half an hour.

Essentially the message is this; pretty much any kind exercise is good for you and will help as part of your tool kit to get you get through this challenging time.