



Beverly H. Rohman

## *How Exercise improves Creativity .... and Attention!!*

Did you know that as little as twenty minutes of aerobic exercise can send enough endorphins to the brain (think “runner’s high”) to help you focus, concentrate, and remain calm throughout your entire day? Exercise is an important component in functioning at your best, and is even more important if you are easily distracted or struggle with getting everything done.

I’ve had many clients tell me how stressed out they were at work, or how locked up their brains were, and how little they could function. They’d tell me they barely had enough time to survive in the day, let alone go to the gym or workout. It’s at times like this you can least afford not to exercise. The chemicals released in the brain through aerobic exercise help you to be more productive throughout the entire day. They help you to focus your thoughts, to stay on task, and relax your body so you’re less fidgety and can concentrate.

Not only do you relax and stay on task, but you can THINK. How often are you stuck staring off into space or at a computer screen --- a blank look on your face because you can’t think, can’t put the ideas to paper, or can’t remember what you were trying to do? When you feel stuck or experience “writer’s block” .....**exercise!** Go for a run, or a swim, or just take a walk. You will see how your mind will clear, the clouds would lift, and you’ll be free to think. Many people say that some of the best ideas and creative thoughts occur during exercise or soon thereafter.

In addition to greater relaxation, increased focus, and brain power, frequent exercise helps you get or stay in shape. This can have huge benefits for everyone. When you’re out of shape, your normal challenges seem more daunting. It takes more energy to focus, concentrate, get things done, and to do the daily work you need to do. Exercise helps you stay in shape and maintain your fitness, which increases your energy level and stamina throughout the day. It also helps give you a positive outlet if you are prone to excess energy and stress.

The easiest way to use exercise to your advantage is to put it in a routine. That way you won't have to worry about how or if it'll get done, which would defeat the whole purpose. By putting it in a routine you're not only more likely to do it, but you'll get the best benefits from it...it'll invigorate, energize, and help you to focus, throughout your entire day.

Anything that gets your heart rate up and your blood pumping for as little as twenty minutes can help. You can use a stair-stepper, treadmill, swim, take the dogs for a brisk walk, try an aerobics class, Tae Bo, and much, much more. Dr. Ned Hallowell says that "exercise also stimulates the production of brain-derived neurotropic factor, which is important in stimulating the growth of new neurons. We think of exercise as not only giving our hearts a good workout but also giving the brain an equally useful dose of nourishment.....It enhances cognitive function --- which is to say it makes you smarter. ...Exercise is one of the true "smart pills" we have."

With that said, start planning today for some fun and exercise in your future. Improve your creativity, focus and well being. With only 15-20 minutes a day, you'll add years to your brain, life to your body and pay better attention to your day. As Dr. Hallowell writes in *Delivered from Distraction*, "A quick burst of exercise is like pushing the reset button on your brain. It totally changes your brain's chemistry and leaves you feeling refreshed and focused." So the next time someone tells you to "take a hike" ..... take them up on it, and see how much better you feel!

Send your questions to ASK TLC, 101 Bay Street, Suite 6, Easton, MD 21601, or write to [info@thelearningconnections.net](mailto:info@thelearningconnections.net) and look for answers in our upcoming columns.

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