



Exercise and Happiness



Feeling good through exercise

With the advent of new technology people are finding less time to devote to exercise. Some people view exercise as a waste of time and a burden on their already busy lifestyles. Interestingly, however, as more and more people live sedentary lifestyles and technology takes over the most basic forms of activities we once took for granted, such as getting up to change the channel on a television set, the incidents of obesity and overweight people within the population have increased astronomically and continue to do so.



Not only has technology made people too lethargic to get up and 'move' it has created anti-social behaviours that can only lead to poor social skills in the future. For instance, the creation of emails, although great time savers, have in fact created a culture where people can feel too shy to talk to someone face to face, but confident to speak their minds over the computer. This may seem harmless and positive on some levels, however, when people start sending emails to people who work two corrals away from them, or begin intimate email relationships and then feel awkward with the same person once they begin to talk face-to-face, there has to be something wrong. An study cited in the MX newspaper in Melbourne on 25th February 2004 found many children had developed 'relationships' with their computers to the extent that in some cases the bond between children and their PCs had threatened other relationships. The researchers concluded that by the year 2020 some children would describe their PCs to be as important as family members and friends¹.

Further, we take technology for granted and are constantly searching for new and improved products that promise to 'save us time or physical effort'. It is interesting to note that this desire for more time/effort saving devices has coincided with our social attitudes that the more appliances we have and the less things we have to do for ourselves (note the increased number of households who now employ a cleaner for household chores) the more affluent we appear to be².

As everyday physical activity decreases, apathy can increase, to the extent that people can find the mere thought of walking to a shop, washing dishes by hand, or standing up to change a channel on a television screen too much trouble. Instead people will catch a tram, or drive to the shop, leave dirty dishes piling up while they wait until the dishwasher is empty to add the additional items, or wait until someone finds the remote. All these little segments of physical activity, however, used to have a compounding effect on increasing your general health. It just takes small amounts of activity to reap the benefits.

Happiness and Exercise

Exercise has been shown to release endorphins that result in increased mood, so it's important to make an effort to not become a slave to technology. Take advantage of all the incidental activity you could be performing throughout the day. It only take three 10 minute blocks of physical activity per day to have health benefits, so take that next step and use exercise to lift your mood and bring you closer to achieving your health and fitness goals.

References

1. MX (25th February 2004), *Children log on to their best friend*, The Herald and Weekly Times, Port Melbourne, Victoria, p.4
2. Active Australia (1999), *National physical activity guidelines for Australian*, Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government, Canberra

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