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4 Reasons to Exercise During Addiction Recovery

In After Treatment, All Articles, During Treatment

 exercise in treatment

Exercise can be anything from running to playing ping-pong, washing dishes to ice skating

Many who abuse drugs or alcohol neglect important components of daily health, wreaking havoc on both emotional and physical well being. It is important to repair the psychological and physical damage of chemical dependency as well as the damaged mind-body connection. Exercise in chemical dependency treatment serves many purposes, but there are some primary benefits one can get from exercise during substance abuse treatment and recovery.

1. Exercise relieves and reduces stress. Exercise has been shown to alleviate both physical and psychological stress. Tension builds in our bodies when we're at work, during everyday interactions, and even when we're watching television. This tension can come from having poor posture at work or having a bad interaction with a co-worker. Moving your body alleviates this tension, and allows you to get rid of any negative emotions you have been keeping in. Focused exercise uses both physical and emotional energy, that might otherwise find unhealthy ways of escaping.

2. Exercise naturally and positively alters your brain chemistry. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins which create a natural high. These are the same endorphins your body released while you abused substances. Drugs and alcohol causes an imbalance that interferes with a person's ability to feel pleasure, happiness, and satisfaction. Dedicated physical activity



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recovery will help you reintroduce natural levels of endorphins in your system. This not only helps you feel better, but reteaches your body that it is capable of regulating your own brain chemistry and mood in healthy, natural ways.

3. “Exercise is meditation in motion.” The Mayo Clinic has described exercise as “meditation in motion,” meaning by concentrating on the physical we can experience the psychological and emotional benefits of meditation. Through movement, we can refocus our thoughts on our own well-being and forget, at least briefly, all that is going on in our lives. You may leave your work-out with a clearer mind, feeling more rejuvenated and optimistic. Finding this clarity within chaos can make recovery much more manageable.

4. Exercise improves your outlook. Those who exercise regularly report increased feelings of self-confidence and optimism and reduced feelings of depression and anxiety. This is in part has to do with the body regulating and calibrating itself during exercise, but it also has to do with feelings of accomplishment, pride, and self worth as you see your body transform and your goals reached. As you reach certain benchmarks you feel more accomplished, and reinforces the goal of continued sobriety as attainable.

In addition, regular exercise fosters improved sleep, greater energy, and enhanced feelings of well being, all which make life much more manageable and enjoyable and recovery that much more possible and sustainable.



