

Exercise Reduces the Symptoms of Anxiety, Mood, and Attention Disorders

Exercise is effective in treating depression, [anxiety](#), and anger, and can reduce or even eliminate the symptoms of [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#) (ADHD). This makes it easier for both children and adults who suffer from mood, anxiety, or attention disorders to concentrate and absorb new material, which aids the learning process. Many studies have demonstrated the ability of exercise to improve mind-body health, including the following (reported by the Sport Information Resource Center):

- A Finnish study of 3,403 individuals 25-64 years of age found that subjects who exercised at a moderate level two or three times a week felt significantly less sadness, distrust, stress, and anger than participants who exercised little or not at all.
- Individuals suffering from severe depression achieved significant improvements after engaging in an aerobics program. Benefits were similar to those of antidepressant medications, and individuals with a higher aerobic exercise capacity were less likely to suffer relapses than those taking medication.
- Researchers divided 156 women aged 50 and up with serious depressive disorders into three groups: antidepressant medication only, exercise only (30 minutes three times per week at 70-85% of maximum heart rate), and both medication and exercise. After four months, all three groups achieved a significant reduction in depressive symptoms, but when researchers evaluated the groups six months later, those who were still exercising had been less likely to suffer relapses.
- A study of 4,500 teenagers found that participants who engaged in increased physical exercise (undertaken as a leisure activity) suffered fewer depressive symptoms over the course of two years than their less-active peers.
- Older people who engaged in [resistance \(strength\) training](#) several times a week for 24 weeks experienced significant improvements in overall mood and reduced tension, anger, and confusion.