

The Power of Movement for Mental Well-Being



Physical activity is a powerful tool for self-regulation and well-being, especially for students struggling to stay focused. Regular physical activity helps release energy, reduce stress, and boost concentration, helping them focus and learn. It also triggers endorphins, enhancing mood.

Educators can create a holistic approach to student well-being by acknowledging the link between physical and mental health, laying the foundation for healthier lifestyles and positive attitudes toward mental well-being.

Brain Activity Composite of 20 Students Taking the Same Test

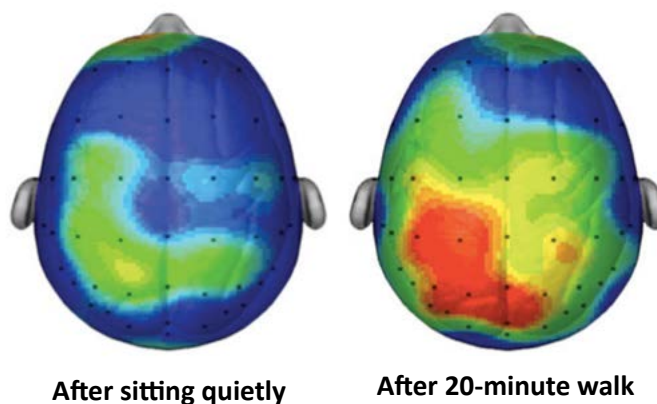


Image from [Active Living Research's "Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance,"](#) based on research by Dr. Charles Hillman, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Cognitive Benefits

Regular physical activity enhances brain function by increasing blood flow to the brain. This boost in circulation improves concentration, attention span, and overall cognitive abilities, helping students' academic performance.

Stress Reduction

Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, often called "feel-good" hormones. These endorphins help reduce stress and anxiety levels, offering students a natural and healthy way to cope with the pressures of school life.

Enhanced Mood

Engaging in regular physical activity is linked to improved mood regulation. It can alleviate feelings of sadness, depression, and mood swings by promoting the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which stabilize mood.

Increased Self-Esteem

Setting and achieving fitness goals and improving physical skills can boost a child's self-esteem and self-confidence. Successes in sports or other physical pursuits contribute to a positive self-image and a sense of accomplishment.

Social Interaction

Physical activities often involve teamwork, cooperation, and competition. Students interacting in these activities make new friends and develop essential social skills, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.

Emotional Regulation

Physical activities teach valuable skills in emotional regulation, impulse control, and managing feelings effectively as students channel their energy constructively.

Mind-Body Connection

Encouraging physical activity introduces children to the concept of the mind-body connection, teaching them that taking care of their physical well-being positively impacts their mental and emotional health.

Improved Sleep

Regular physical activity is linked to better sleep quality. Sleep is crucial for cognitive function, emotional well-being, and overall health. Physical activities help students establish healthy sleep routines.

Coping Skills

Through physical activities, students learn life skills such as perseverance, determination, resilience, and the ability to handle challenges. These skills empower them to cope effectively with stressors and setbacks.

Healthy Outlet for Energy

Elementary school students often have high energy levels that need to be channeled appropriately. Engaging in physical activities provides a healthy outlet for excess energy, preventing restlessness and promoting better focus in the classroom.

Visit **schoolpapl.ca** for more helpful resources!



References:

- <https://www.albertakinesiology.ca/en/page-news-1/mental-health-benefits-of-movement>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-simply-moving-benefits-your-mental-health-201603289350>
- <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/10-benefits-of-physical-activity-for-students-301414560.html>