**EXERCISE AND FITNESS**

Of all the different ways to improve your physical and mental health, exercise is one of the easiest and safest methods. Regular to moderate exercise can help improve your life by easing stress and anxiety, lifting your mood, sharpening your brainpower, improving self-esteem, and boosting your energy. This is because exercise helps your brain release endorphins, a neurotransmitter that plays a role in mood, pain reduction, concentration, and pleasure enhancement. There is more than one way to exercise too! You can try aerobics (strengthens endurance and the heart), strength training (helps muscle, toning, and balance), or flexibility (reduces chance of injury, stiffness, and decreases aches/pains).

**TIP 1: MOVE MORE!**
- **In and around your home.** Clean the house, wash the car, and tend to the yard and garden.
- **At work and on the go.** Banish all elevators and use the stairs, briskly walk to the bus stop then get off one stop early, park at the back of the lot and walk into the store or office.
- **With friends or family.** Bike around your neighborhood, play tag with your children in the yard, walk the dog, or play exercise video games.
- **While watching TV.** Gently stretch while watching your favorite show, do push-ups, sit-ups or lift light weights during the commercial breaks. Better still, once a week turn off the TV and take a walk outside instead.

**TIP 2: START SLOW**
- **Take it slow.** Start with an activity you feel comfortable doing and go at your own pace.
- **Focus on short-term goals,** such as improving your mood and energy levels and reducing stress.
- **Make exercise a priority.** Consider exercise an important appointment with yourself and mark it on your daily calendar.
- **Go easy on yourself.** Accomplishing even the smallest fitness goals will help you gain body confidence.
- **Expect ups and downs.** Don’t be discouraged if you skip a few days or even a few weeks. It happens. Just get started again.

**TIP 3: MAKE IT FUN**
- **Take a dance or yoga class.**
- **Blast some favorite music and dance with your kids.**
- **Make a deal with yourself to watch your favorite TV shows while on the treadmill or stationary bike.**
- **Workout with a buddy, and afterwards enjoy coffee or a movie.**
- **Enjoy outdoor activities like playing Frisbee or even yard work.**
- **The most important part here is that you find some way to motivate yourself to want to exercise. If you don’t want to do something, you’re that much less likely to do it.**

**TIP 4: STAY INSPIRED!**
- **Be consistent.** Exercise at the same time every day, if possible. Eventually you will get to the point where you feel worse if you don’t exercise. Most people find that routine helps them to stay on track with their goals, so long as they...
- **Keep it interesting!** Enjoy this exercise time by listening to music, chatting with friends, and varying locations. Avoid workout boredom by mixing it up and trying new routines. If you find yourself getting bored, it’ll be harder to keep yourself motivated.
- **Find new inspirations.** Visit an exercise website or a kinesiology activity class to perhaps motivate you to move your body. Sometimes getting involved with something outside of your day-to-day life can help you find new ways to get up and go!