FITNESS AND YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Physical activity can help optimize the body's defenses against infection. And in the age of novel corona virus, to many people, that's more important than ever. Fortunately, research provides keen insights on how exercise affects the immune system and how to approach exercise for the best results. According to a 2019 review published in the Journal of Sport and Health Science, exercise mobilizes pathogen and inflammation fighting immune cells throughout the body and helps slow the effects of aging on immune strength. "Physical activity can also flush bacteria out of lungs and airways and causes changes in antibodies or white blood cells to help fight infections," explains Dr. Purvi Parikh, a New York City-based allergist-immunologist affiliated with NYU Lagone Health. Exercise is also effective in reducing the risk and severity of chronic health conditions that can increase levels of inflammation in the body. "This inflammation leads to worse outcomes when your immune system is trying to fight an infection"

https://health.usnews.com/wellness/fitness/articles/strategies-for-strengthening-your-immune-system-with-exercise

FOCUS ON CONSISTENCY

- The regularity of your exercise routine may be the most important factor in ensuring the immune benefits of activity
- A study that tracked 1,000 adults found that those who engaged in exercise five or more times per week reported 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised less often.
- We are going for a summation effect, in which each workout adds to the benefits of the prior one.

DON'T SHY AWAY FROM INTENSITY

- High-intensity exercise that increases your heart rate to more than 85% of its max (220 minus your age), can be part of any exercise routine that's aimed at improving your immune health.
- Options include running, cycling and rowing sprints as well as fast-paced plyometric strength training.

MAKE TIME FOR RECOVERY

- Illness following high-intensity exercise is typically related to inadequate recovery.
- As exercise intensity, frequency and duration increase, so does the amount of rest your body needs to recover from the stressors of exercise and grow back stronger.
- Signs that you may need more recovery include fatigue, post-workout muscle soreness that's intense or lasts for more than three days and decreased workout performance.

DO CARDIO AND STRENGTH TRAINING

- While past research has focused on the impact of aerobic exercise on immune health, a 2018 study in the Journal of Immunology Research shows that a single bout of resistance training affects the body's immunity on a cellular level. What's more, maintaining healthy levels of muscle may strengthen immunity.
- Strength training can include bodyweight exercises (such as squats and pushups) as well as exercises such as rows and shoulder presses that use free weights, resistance bands or other equipment.

GO OUTDOORS

- Being outside increases the body's levels of immune-system-supporting vitamin D.
- Taking your exercise outdoors may strengthen the immune system by activating the body's parasympathetic "rest and digest" system. This system works in opposition with your sympathetic "fight or flight" system to reduce physiological stress levels and lower excess inflammation that can inhibit healthy immunity.

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