



THE POWER OF EXERCISE

This strategy is suggested in the following BrainWaves lessons:

14-16 My teenage brain

16-18 Recap on the teenage brain

About the power of exercise

There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health. For example, it can help with better sleep by making you feel more tired at the end of the day, and happier moods, as physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy.

The scientific evidence behind the power of exercise

Review articles highlight the benefits of physical activity on mental health in adolescents, including the benefits on sleep quality and duration; brain structure and function; hormone release, leading to improved mood and energy levels; reduced stress; self-image and self-esteem; satisfaction with life; socialisation, and physical health:

- Rodriguez-Ayllon, M. et al. (2019) The Role Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior in the Mental Health of Preschoolers, Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 49, 1383-110, DOI:10.1007/s40279-019-01099-5
- Pascoe, M. et al. (2020) Physical activity and exercise in youth mental health promotion: a scoping review. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 6, e000677 doi:10.1136/ bmjsem-2019-000677

Further reading on the power of exercise

This article by Royal College of Psychiatrists outlines why and how exercise is important, what kind of exercise is useful, and overcoming barriers to exercise in adolescence:

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/physical-activity-exercise-and-mental-health-for-young-people>