

# WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OCTOBER 10, 2018



## Ways running can transform your body and brain

People are built to run.

Many experts think human bodies are shaped the way they are because we evolved to be extremely effective endurance runners. The shapes of our hips and feet, the length of our legs, our shock-absorbing spinal discs, and our ability to sweat make it possible for us to run mile after mile.

So it's perhaps no surprise that running is strongly associated with a number of benefits for our bodies and brains.

Many experts consider exercise to be the closest thing to a miracle drug. As a form of cardio exercise that's easily accessible, running is one of the most straightforward ways to get the important benefits of exercise.

Since it improves aerobic fitness, running is a great way to help improve cardiovascular health. Plus, it burns calories and can build strength, among other things. There's also a long list of psychological benefits runners gain from their sport.

Getting used to running, if you haven't done it in a while or ever, can be brutal.

But once your body and mind start to acclimate, running can be blissful, meditative, and provide a sense of freedom. As someone who recently completed his first half-marathon, I can confirm that's true. One piece of advice from several experienced runners made a big difference during my race: remember that you're running to have fun.

These are some of the physical and mental health benefits of running.

### Even a 30-minute run can lift symptoms of depression and improve mood

Spending 30 minutes on a treadmill is enough to lift the mood of someone suffering from major depressive disorder, according to a study published in the journal of the American College of Sports Medicine. Even participants who moved at a walking pace to received the same mood-lifting benefit.

This shows that no matter what pace you're going, moving has positive effects and adds to the already significant body of research showing that running and other forms of exercise can improve mood and help fight depression.

Your environment greatly impacts your activity level, but there are ways to nudge yourself to move more if you do not live in a walkable community:

### Contrary to what many people think, running actually seems to improve knee health

Knee pain can quickly sideline a runner. It's often a sign of overtraining or a need to improve one's form or flexibility. But running probably isn't the cause of knee osteoarthritis.

In one eight-year study of 2,637 participants, researchers found that the more people ran, the less likely they were to suffer from knee pain or osteoarthritis. While it's hard to say that running directly caused people to experience less knee pain, researchers think that could be the case since running helps people keep their BMI in check and their leg muscles strong. Running also strengthens bones.

Running helps young people sleep better, improves their mood, and boosts their ability to focus.

In a study of 51 young people with an average age of 18, half were assigned to add running into their routines, while the other half did not (they did get some exercise, but didn't add a regular running regimen). To get the benefits associated with running, the group of runners ran at a moderate pace for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, for three weeks.

Those in that running group were found to sleep better, show signs of improved psychological functioning, and focus better during the day. The same benefits are likely to apply to runners of any age.

Running can significantly improve cardiovascular health.

We know that aerobic activity is good for the heart, so it's no surprise that running can improve cardiovascular fitness. In general, the more people run, the healthier their hearts tend to be. But you can get big benefits without having to do a lot: running just five minutes per day could add years to your life, according to a study in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

There has been some concern that extreme amounts of running – we're talking ultramarathon distances – could stress or scar the heart. But a growing body of research seems to indicate that's not something to worry about. Researchers have found that people who run at least 40 miles per week have healthier hearts than those who run 13 miles a week, for example.

Running can improve your mind at any age and fight age-related cognitive decline.

If you want to keep your mind healthy as you age, research indicates exercising is one of the best things you can do.

A review of research on the cognitive-boosting effect of aerobic exercise (which in many studies was either running, jogging, or brisk walking) found that for children, running improved working memory and focus. For young adults, working memory saw a similar boost – as did task-switching ability.

For older adults, this sort of activity provides a long list of cognitive benefits, including working memory, focus, and task switching.

A number of studies have shown that aerobic exercise can improve people's ability to cope with stress – and many of those studies focus on runners. In a review of research about exercise and stress published in Clinical Psychology Review, author Peter Salmon concludes that this "training recruits a process which confers enduring resilience to stress."

Running changes the brain in ways that make it more resistant to stress.

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Researchers think this may be because aerobic exercise

increases levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and norepinephrine, and causes the brain to generate new neurons.

Kevin Loria, Business Insider

## Blue Zones Recipe of the Week



### Chilled Tomato Avocado Soup

A delicious and refreshing way to enjoy fresh garden tomatoes, this soup is great for hot days and pairs perfectly with good bread (we recommend Ikarian-style sourdough!). You can also enjoy this hot if you prefer.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE RECIPE](#)

## RUNNING CLUB

COME JOIN YOUR FELLOW EXPLORER FAMILIES EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY AT 7:45AM FOR RUN CLUB ON THE WASHINGTON FIELD! MEET NEW FAMILIES, ENGAGE IN A HEALTHY ACTIVITY, AND SET PERSONAL GOALS!

## Upcoming Events in the Community

YOGA ON THE PIER  
10.13.18

10:00AM-11:00 AM  
REDONDO BEACH PIER

FREE YOGA ON THE PIER.  
BRING YOUR YOGA MAT, TOWEL AND WATER  
ALL LEVELS WELCOME

LOVINGONEBYONE 5K  
10.13.18

8:30AM-10:00 AM  
SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN,

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO PURCHASING MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, STAFFING, AND RUNNING THE NEW HOPE MEDICAL CENTRE IN UGANDA. FOR MORE INFO ON LOVING ONE BY ONE MINISTRIES VISIT: [WWW.LOVINGONEBYONE.ORG](http://WWW.LOVINGONEBYONE.ORG)

DAY OF THE GIRL CHALLENGE  
10.11.18

RUN RAGNAR IS HOSTING AN CHALLENGE ON OCT. 11, 2018 THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL. THIS CHALLENGE SUPPORTS GIRLS GOTTA RUN - THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO THESE GIRLS IN BEKOJI TO USE RUNNING AND EDUCATION TO EMPOWER THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THE FUNDS RAISED FOR THE DAY OF THE GIRL CHALLENGE WILL BE USED TO HELP THE BEKOJI GIRLS HOST THEIR OWN RELAY IN EARLY 2019.

A good laugh and a long run are the two best cures for anything."

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