

Psychological Benefits of a Healthy Lifestyle

The physical benefits of living a healthy life are well-known but a healthy lifestyle can also be beneficial for one's mental health.

Decreased Mental Illness

Research indicates that eating a nutrient rich diet can reduce depression and anxiety levels. In addition, these foods can decrease the likelihood of bipolar episodes as well as decrease the negative symptoms associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A nutrient rich diet activates and releases the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, both of which improve mood. Exercise is another great way to improve mood because it releases endorphins. When these are released, we are likely to feel contentment, pleasure, and euphoria. The great thing is that these pleasant feelings can last all day, especially if we keep them topped up by incorporating exercise throughout the day.

Increased Ability to Handle Problems

Engaging in regular exercise and eating real food that nourishes the body can increase ability to handle problems efficiently. Part of a healthy lifestyle is learning to think positively. Instead of dwelling on negative emotions, focusing on the positive can increase our performance, psychological resilience, and assist us in developing various coping mechanisms. What's more, these positive emotions can boost motivation and inspiration.

Increased Self-confidence and Self-Esteem

Living a healthy lifestyle can increase self-confidence. It means that you will feel sure about your abilities. When you get a personal best in your workout, walk past the cookie jar at work, or sleep for a solid eight hours, you feel a sense of pride at your accomplishment. When you are confident in your abilities, you can push yourself to continue to grow and improve. By accomplishing your goals you prove to yourself that you can do what you set your mind to through discipline, determination, motivation, and inner strength. Each of these traits can foster improvements in self-esteem.

Cognitive Benefits

Exercising and eating nutrient rich food improves brain function and memory, and can help defend against cognitive decline and decreases the likelihood of brain dysfunction and neurodegeneration. The more the brain is used, the stronger it becomes. Living a healthy lifestyle means we are less likely to sit in front of the TV for hours, as we would rather be doing something brain stimulating such as playing board games, completing crosswords or puzzles, or doing physical activity.