

## **Benefits of Exercise In Addiction Recovery**

Along with helping strengthen the body physically, exercise offers a variety of other benefits in recovery including:

### **Stress Relief**

Exercise has an amazing ability to reduce levels of stress that build up during daily life. And, by reducing the stress, the desire for using drugs or alcohol is often greatly diminished. When combined with the [benefits of breathing exercises for addiction recovery](#), chronic stress and anxiety are much easier to manage which can help minimize the chance of relapse.

### **Greater Clarity**

Exercise provides many of the same psychological and emotional benefits of meditation by enabling the individual to focus on well-being and not on life's challenges and stresses that occupy thoughts throughout the day. Many people in recovery find that exercise enables them to have clearer thoughts while also feeling more focused.

### **Improved Outlook**

Exercise also jumpstarts feelings of confidence and optimism. In fact, research has shown that exercise can help many individuals with addiction and even co-

occurring disorders overcome feelings of depression and anxiety. This is due to both physiological changes that happen as a result of exercise, as well as the feelings of pride and self-worth that stem from achieving fitness goals.

### **Better Brain Chemistry**

While drugs and alcohol alter the brain in an unnatural way, exercise releases feel-good endorphins to create a natural high. Yes, these are the same endorphins that are released while taking substances. The difference is that drugs and alcohol ultimately cause an imbalance in the brain that affects the ability to feel happiness and pleasure. Through regular exercise, the brain can once again produce natural levels of endorphins which help regulate brain chemistry and prevent mood swings and cravings.

### **Healthier Sleep Patterns**

Drugs and alcohol interfere with the normal sleep cycle. This can lead to chronic fatigue, insomnia, and other sleep issues that can greatly reduce energy and cognitive thinking. Exercise has the opposite effect! With a daily exercise routine, individuals are often surprised to discover that they can once again sleep soundly through the night and wake up refreshed.

*Excerpt from Summit Behavioral Health*