

## APRIL NEWSLETTER EXERCISE OR A PILL?

In the sixties the youth of the day were accustomed to hearing the term 'uppers and downers'. It referred to pills that were supposed either to give a lift to the mood and, once the experience of a 'high' was done with, to bring the high flyer back down to earth. The object of the little coloured pills was to give the recipient both the good feelings and then the relaxation that the normal production of dopamine and other chemicals (neurotransmitters) into the brain, including endorphins to control their moods, weren't providing. These pills were considered harmless at the time, like party pills of today; however it's anyone's guess what long-term effects might be attributed to the tiny terrors.

Compare party pills or uppers and downers with exercise in the presence of the average youngster, then or now, and you'd most likely get a sideways look of raised eyebrows and probably a mouthful of expletives. To a certain extent this is understandable because few people are aware of the chemical benefits of physical exercise.

Serotonin is one chemical that is manufactured by the brain through exercise and helps to maintain a 'happy feeling' and helps to keep our moods under control by helping with sleep, calming anxiety, and relieving depression.

Generally it is only aerobic exercise that triggers the release of the endorphins that help to block both stress and pain. Endorphin is the brain's painkiller, and three times more potent than morphine! Examples of aerobic include those that promote deep and heavy breathing such as running, swimming, brisk walking, hiking, even dancing; the human brain is able to continually adapt and rewire itself. Even in what we commonly term 'old age' it can grow fresh neurons. Severe mental decline is usually caused by disease, whereas most age-related losses in memory or motor skills simply result from inactivity and a lack of mental exercise and stimulation.

The point is, we don't need pills to boost our moods – we do, however, benefit from the right kind of exercise on a regular or even semi-regular level. A brisk walk for at least half an hour a minimum of three times each week will generally keep you fit in body and mind.

Backing the myriad forms of life today, the primary edicts remain – movement and change. In fact, the diminished ability to move or change is a good measure of ageing. Inflexibility is the precursor of death, while a supple body and adaptable mind are the characteristics of youth.



## THINK YOUNG, BE YOUNG

For some people it becomes increasingly boring to hear others speaking about 'age' and 'ageing'. If we are to accept the teachers of the powers of positive thinking and their theories that we tend to create physical results from mental thoughts – that positive thought processes beget positive physical actions – we might be forgiven for believing that if we think nothing but young we'll stay 'young' forever.

This outcome may be a little far fetched, but the principle is quite acceptable in that the practice of thinking young and positive places the mind in a better mode to handle the actual process of ageing. At the same time it is quite surprising to observe those who do think young and how young they actually look for their age. In essence it probably isn't so much a case of 'thinking young' on their part, more that these folk don't really think about 'age' very much at all.

This is probably the secret in that by occupying the mind with thoughts of myriad other things to the almost total exclusion of age these fortunate folk find other interests far more positive to keep them active – they've probably done this all their lives without even being aware of it. It's only when someone says to them: "My, you're looking good for your age" that the thought of their own passing years suddenly dawns on them!

In addition to positive thinking here are some tips for staying young in body as well as mind:

- Get plenty of exercise – don't just start when you reach sixty, begin at an early age so that fitness is something that comes natural to you, not something you have to strive for. Exercise strengthens bones, promotes a healthy height to weight ratio and reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Declines in mental faculties can also be offset by exercise
- Question your medications; don't just accept them without knowing not only what they do but what the likely side effects are if you take them – many prescribed medications are actually superfluous to daily needs and can be replaced with a more natural approach to staying healthy
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables – drink plenty of pure water. Fish is good and will supply the Omega 3 the brain needs to remain alert and function efficiently
- Brain exercises should not be forgotten – games and puzzles that encourage the mind to remain supple should be an every day activity.
- Visit your chiropractor regularly and keep your body in a balanced state.

