

2.1.2 (a) The Inter-Dependence Between Physical Health and Good Mental Health

Physical health and exercise can have **immediate/short term** and **long term effects**. Health benefits can improve an individual's quality of life.

The physical health benefits

As well as improving overall physical fitness, being more active can have the following physical benefits:

- Reduced risk of some conditions such as heart disease, stroke and type II diabetes.
- Reduced risk of physical health problems as the body adapts to stress including heart disease, high blood pressure, a lowered immune response, as well as depression and anxiety.
- Healthier organs, such as the heart muscle, so that the blood pressure is lowered.
- Stronger bones as any weight bearing exercise will strengthen the bones. This will lower the risk of osteoporosis-brittle bones.
- Builds muscle- hypertrophy of body muscle tissue and so raising metabolic rate.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- More energy.
- Improve sleep quality.
- Maintains mobility.
- Wards off viruses.
- Manages chronic pain.

Monday	20 Jumping Jacks 10 Squats 45 Second Wall Sit 20 Squats
Tuesday	20 High Knees 5 Pushups 20 Situps 20 Toe Touches
Wednesday	15 Sit-ups 10 Sumo Squats 1 Minute Wall Sit 20 Squats
Thursday	20 High Knees 20 Squats 20 Toe Touches 5 Pushups
Friday	20 Jumping Jacks 10 Squats 45 Second Wall Sit 20 Squat

Simple tips to increase your physical fitness:

- increase your physical activity e.g. count your daily steps
- have a fitness goal or a series of little goals
- track your progress
- make simple lifestyle changes.

The social and emotional health benefits

- Inclusion – It helps an individual make new friends and connect with different people. Being around people is good for mental health and social networks.
- Having fun and being happy.
- Individuals feel part of a group which can reduce isolation and promote inclusion.

The mental health benefits

Some of the mental health benefits of being more active includes:

- Reduced anxiety and happier moods because through exercise we release hormones such as endorphins, dopamine and serotonin. (These are sometimes called 'feel good' hormones.) They will alter the brain chemistry which can lift mood and calm anxiety.
- Reduces symptoms of stress.
- Creates a greater sense of calmness and being able to think more clearly.
- Increases self-esteem: when fitness levels increase and the body improves this can increase self-esteem. The sense of achievement of taking part in new/regular physical activity/learning new physical skills can also help individuals feel better about themselves and lift mood. Improved self-esteem can also improve resilience.
- Reduce the risk of depression.
- Boost decision making skills.
- Increases attention span.
- Promotes growth of new nerve cells and blood vessels.
- Improves memory.

What can exercise and physical activity do to my growing brain?

Retain more physical skills-motor memory

**My brain will be able
to act quicker**

Improve my grades

**My brain will be able
to work harder**

**Release the hormone norepinephrine
to boost my memory**