



Exercise for Mood and Anxiety: Proven Strategies for Overcoming Depression and Enhancing Well-Being

Michael W. Otto , Jasper A.J. Smits

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Exercise has long been touted anecdotally as an effective tool for mood improvement, but only recently has rigorous science caught up with these claims. There is now overwhelming evidence that regular exercise can help relieve low mood-from feelings of stress and anxiety to full depressive episodes.

With *Exercise for Mood and Anxiety*, Michael Otto and Jasper Smits, well-known authorities on cognitive behavioral therapy, take their empirically-based mood regulation strategy from the clinic to the general public. Written for those with diagnosed mood disorders as well as those who simply need a new strategy for managing the low mood and stress that is an everyday part of life, this book provides readers with step-by-step guidance on how to start and maintain an exercise program geared towards improving mood, with a particular emphasis on understanding the relationship between mood and motivation. Readers learn to attend carefully to mood states prior to and following physical activity in order to leverage the full benefits of exercise, and that the trick to maintaining an exercise program is not in applying more effort, but in arranging one's environment so that less effort is needed. As a result readers not only acquire effective strategies for adopting a successful program, but are introduced to a broader philosophy for enhancing overall well-being. Providing patient vignettes, rich examples, and extensive step-by-step guidance on overcoming the obstacles that prevent adoption of regular exercise for mood, *Exercise for Mood and Anxiety* is a unique translation of scientific principles of clinical and social psychology into an action-based strategy for mood change.

Exercise for Mood and Anxiety: Proven Strategies for Overcoming Depression and Enhancing Well-Being Details

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Selina Delimini says

Loved this read. Read it in two days, as someone who is passionate about fitness and works in the mental health field, I found this approach very interesting. Lots of practical advice for anyone looking to improve their well-being or mental health.

Kbrown says

This was an amazing book. As someone who suffers from both depression and anxiety, I didn't realize how effective exercise could be in treating me. The book talks about how exercise is similar to anti-depressants and therapy in treating anxiety and depression (studies cited). It then details a bunch of different strategies for keeping yourself on track with your exercise program. I thought to myself "I know how to exercise," but this book totally changed how I do it. It helps you be more successful in doing it. I can't recommend it enough for people who suffer from low energy and mood disruptions. This tells you how to think about exercise, when to exercise, how to arrange your environment to support exercise, etc., which are helpful to someone who doesn't always feel like they have the energy to do it.

Dawn says

Epically usable. Explains why but mostly how.

Elizabeth says

My reason for reading this book was to get a little more insight into my own anxiety and stress problems. I have no problems at all with exercise. I know first hand the benefits of exercise on mood, although this book did give me a few tips on how to cope with my anxiety. Initially thought this would be an interesting read, though.

The author's of this book give much attention to one's motivation for exercise. In particular, they focus on the idea that although it will take time to fully address symptoms of mood problems, exercise can provide immediate mood benefits. The author's also address motivational factors, including preparing for low motivation and directing one's enjoyment during exercise via using mindfulness-based strategies and rewarding oneself after exercise.

Another chapter centers around planning one's exercise routine. Here the author's discuss the benefits and challenges of exercising in the morning, mid-day, and in the evening. In addition they review some common excuses not to engage in physical activity, such as being too stressed, depressed, or too bored. Also includes particulars of how to set up an exercise program; including how to choose a fitness activity, determining appropriate level of intensity, and keeping an exercise log. Furthermore they encourage readers to change up

their routines on a regular basis in order to remain interested and engaged in exercise. The final chapter deals with living an overall healthy lifestyle, such as being active in general, eating well and more.

I am a nutritionist(and daily exerciser)myself. Overall, I found this book to be a useful tool that I would recommend my patients to read. I found the motivational information and mindfulness techniques, was the most beneficial part of the book, although I also thought it could have been better organized (e.g. it is broken up into several chapters including some earlier in the book and some later).

I did have a few issues with this book however: First the authors overlooked the most common excuse I hear from patients "there is not enough time for exercise". Yes, they talk about the time of day which is best to work out, but their not addressing the specific issue of being over-scheduled. Also, they're not giving variety in the types of exercise the authors suggested: running was far and above the dominant activity and only a few others (e.g.calisthenics, boot camp programs)are even mentioned. The authors would have better served their audience by providing wider range of options like martial arts, dance classes, and fitness DVDs and these options are only the tip of the iceberg. Finally, the last chapter, as well-meaning as it may have been, began to feel quite preachy to me. They go from talking about exercise to improve mood and decrease anxiety to discussing obesity preventing and advocating the Mediterranean-type diet. I agree these issues are important, but they didn't belong in this book.

Soozie Bea says

Not just intellectually linking exercise with the treatment of depression and anxiety - this has strategies, good strategies for getting out and about - AND you can use these techniques for other parts of your life.

I like how it's written, not too academic, not too informal. A good read for those looking for a practical way out of the debilitation of anxiety and depression and for those who counsel them.

Michael Reed Davison says

Exercise makes you happy, so make it easy to exercise, and then enjoy it! This wonderful evidence-centered book has made a difference in my life and is the best resource I know of on how exercise lifts your mood.

My only criticism is that, in spite of its effort not to do so, the book occasionally assumes you want to lose weight, like advising you to avoid eating more to compensate for the calories burned during exercise. As someone who wants to maintain weight, of course I should eat more if I exercise more!

Jordana says

Very helpful, included a number of practical tips. Well-sourced, though the listed website (www.exercise4mood.com) appears to be defunct.

Barbara says

Great book for anyone who wants to exercise more. Regardless of whether or not you experience depression and/or anxiety, exercise provides great mood benefits - something everyone can benefit from! The authors explain and provide empirical support for how exercise impacts our moods. The best part of this book, by far, were the strategies provided for sticking to an exercise plan. The authors go over common reasons people fail to maintain an exercise plan and provide concrete ways to combat these obstacles. An easy and informative read!

Blackbird Pie says

Not quite what I was looking for. A lot of the book was focused on creating and sustaining motivation to exercise. I already exercise regularly, but was interested in what kinds of exercise are most effective at promoting good moods.

Palak says

Even as someone that doesn't really need motivation to exercise, this book was really great. It is making me rethink the way I approach exercise- e.g. by not using words like "should" or guiltting myself into it. It also made some really great points about the linkage between the physiological response during exercise and the physiological response during panic attacks. I had never thought about panic attack symptoms that way. The book provided a ton of great tools for tracking your actual exercise, your moods as related to exercise, and even some tools for general well-being. I also enjoyed the authors' tone, especially as I've discovered that many self-help books can be disparaging of methods other than their own.

There are sections on exercising with your family/children, overeating, dieting that I skimmed/skipped over bc I did not find them relevant to me, but I can understand how they would be valuable to others.

Overall the book was a quick read and really practical and easy to understand. I have already recommended it to many of my friends.

Sinead says

Would be a useful book for personal trainers to read so they can help serve their clients who may suffer with depression and anxiety.

Alexandra Amaya says

I started reading this book to get a better handle on my anxiety while on my weight loss journey. It was actually very helpful. It gives the reader a few tips on how to approach exercise even when motivation is low

that day. During exercise the book tells what positive things to think about. What I love about this book is it gives several worksheets to assess where someone is at with a given concept.

Emily says

Some of this was not relevant to me but there were many great suggestions and some helpful reassurance. I especially like the tips on keeping exercise interesting (music, audiobooks, group exercise, focusing on different physical feelings or nature around you) and the reminder to think back on the positive feelings exercise created - yay endorphins!

Hali says

The authors do a good job of talking about simple steps to help people to begin to exercise. As I was reading I felt like they were reading my mind with some of the common excuses they described they themselves & participants of their studies have used. I think this book can be a helpful influence to myself & will help me implement healthy thinking and activities in my practice! (hopefully)!

Katrina Sark says

p.10 – A number of possible accounts explain why exercise might reduce a person’s vulnerability to depression and anxiety. First it appears that exercise whips your body into better shape to handle stressors. Exercise in itself is a stressor – it requires effort, and it forces the body to adapt to the demands placed on it. This sort of regular, planned stress may help your body be better at handling stress more generally.
