



Activity 5.1 – Exercise makes us happy



1 Read the following:

Our brain releases endorphins, sometimes known as ‘feel-good’ chemicals, during physical exercise which improve our energy levels, mood and help us to sleep better. When we feel energised, happy and have had plenty of sleep our self-confidence increases and our resilience improves when faced with challenges.

Super Snoozing

Regular exercise is important for high-quality night-time **sleep**. Exercise also helps keep your **circadian rhythm** regular. This is our body clock - an internal process that recognises night and day and determines when you feel tired and awake. When your circadian rhythm is regular, you'll sleep soundly. Good sleep is extremely important for our mental **wellbeing**, making us feel more **confident**, positive, and **resilient**.

Awesome Friendships

Exercise can help you develop friendships, which are crucial for mental wellbeing. Having good connections with people increases our sense of **belonging** and improves **self-confidence**. Physical exercise is far more fun with friends - whether it is sports, walking or cycling to school with your buddies or any active game outdoors. Belonging to a sports team is not only good for your physical health, but also your mental wellbeing. Teamwork helps us connect with each other and develop lasting friendships. Walking, **cycling** or **scootering** to school is a great **opportunity** to **connect** with **friends**. It's a fun way to start your school day and gets your brain ready for learning.

Brain Boost for Learning

Exercise boosts our **brainpower**. It helps build our intelligence and strengthens our memory. Scientists have proven that cardiovascular exercise (exercise that increases the **heart rate**) helps to create new **brain** cells and improves overall brain performance. They also found that exercise strengthens the brain's **hippocampus** which is responsible for **memory** and learning. Exercise also improves your motor skills such as hand-eye coordination, problem-solving skills, and concentration. Studies show that children who play active games outside with their friends perform better when they sit tests and school assignments.

Stress Busting

Exercise can put the '**smile on your dial**' and the '**pep in your step!**' When your heart rate increases, it stimulates the production of feel-good chemicals called **endorphins**, which not only improve a bad **mood**, but also help you to think **clearly** to solve **problems** that you previously found challenging. This is why exercise is a great **stress** buster. It is healthy for both the mind and body to go for a run or a bike ride or play outdoors with friends.

2 Complete the summary by filling in the missing words:

The four main benefits of exercise for mental wellbeing include high-quality night-time **S**....., a boost in **b**..... which helps our learning, an opportunity to connect with people and make **f**..... and it is a great **S**..... buster.

Exercise helps our internal 'clock' stay regular ensuring that we sleep soundly at night and feel energised during the day. This process is called the **C**..... **r**..... Sleep is extremely important for our mental **w**..... because it makes us feel more **C**....., positive and more **r**.....

Scientists have proven that (cardiovascular) exercise which increases the **h**..... **r**..... helps make new **b**..... cells and improves brain performance. Exercise also helps strengthen the **h**..... which is the part of the brain that is responsible for **m**..... and learning.

Making connections with people and having good friendships increases our sense of **b**..... and it improves our **S**..... - **C**..... Walking, **C**..... or **S**..... to school is a great **O**..... to **C**..... with friends.

Exercise stimulates the production of feel-good chemicals called **e**..... These chemicals improve our **m**..... and help us to think **C**..... to solve **p**.....

Exercise is good for our wellbeing and it helps put the '**S**..... on your dial' and the '**p**..... in your step'.



3 Using a BLUE pen, circle the words that best describe your current feelings and emotions **BEFORE** you do some exercise and a RED pen to describe how you feel **AFTER** exercise.

accepting	chilly / makariri	elated	jolly	sad
active / ngangahau	comfortable	energetic / hihiko	joyful	shy
amazed	confident	excited / manaha	lazy	sleepy / hiamoe
angry	contented	focussed / rotahi	lively	stressed / pōraruraru
awful	cool	free	mad	tearful
blissful	delightful	glad	merry	terrible
bold	depressed	gloomy	miserable	tense
bored	distracted / manawarau	glum	moody	tired / ngenge
brave	distressed	grumpy	nervous	upbeat
calm	dreadful	happy / hari	optimistic	warm / mahana
cautious	easy-going	indifferent	pessimistic	weak
cheerful		intelligent	proud	wonderful
		interested / whakahiihi	relaxed / whakatā	
		irritated		

Did you feel differently after exercise? Explain your answer.

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