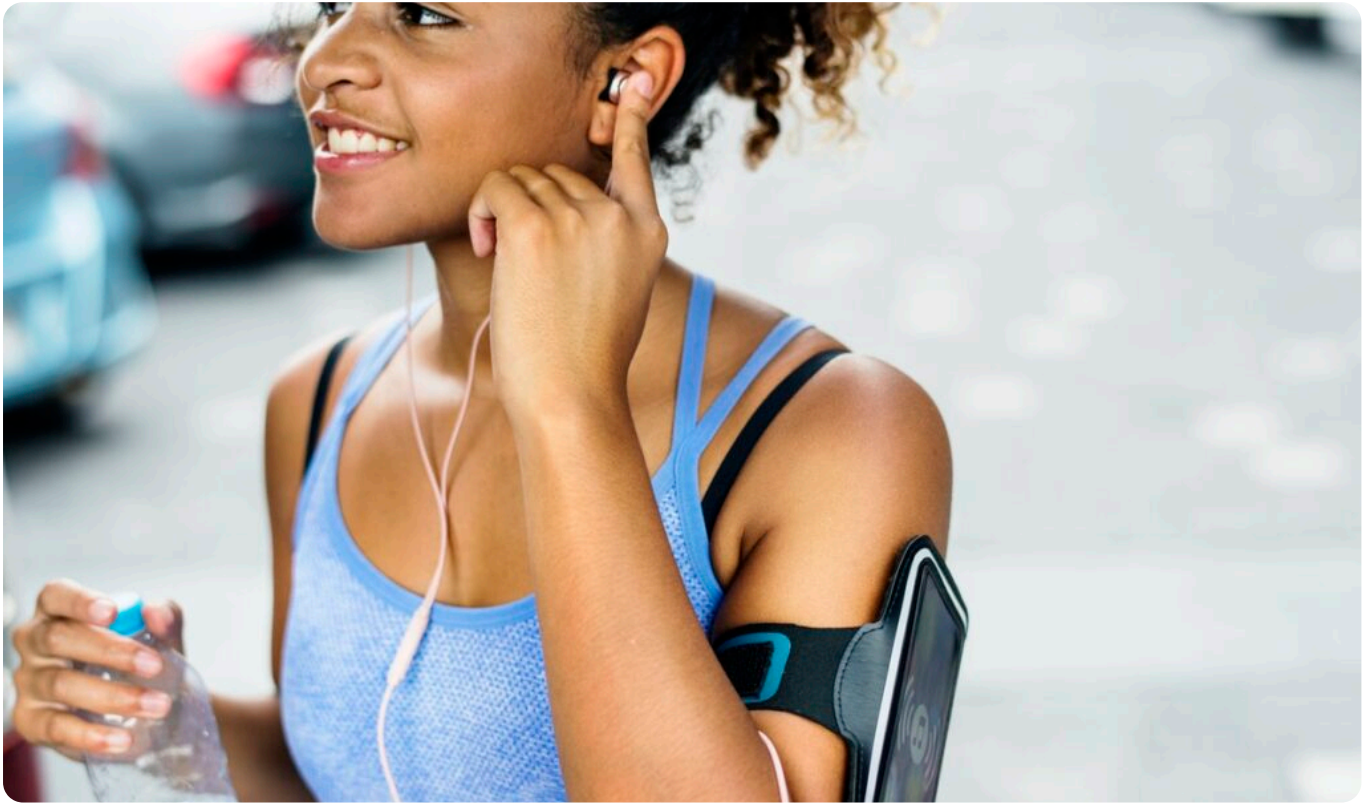


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How Moving Your Body, Helps Move Your Mood



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Posted by: admin

Everybody feels stressed at some point. But how do we deal with it? 75% of Australians admit that stress adversely affects their physical health and 64% report an impact on their mental health. For 86% of us, watching TV or movies is

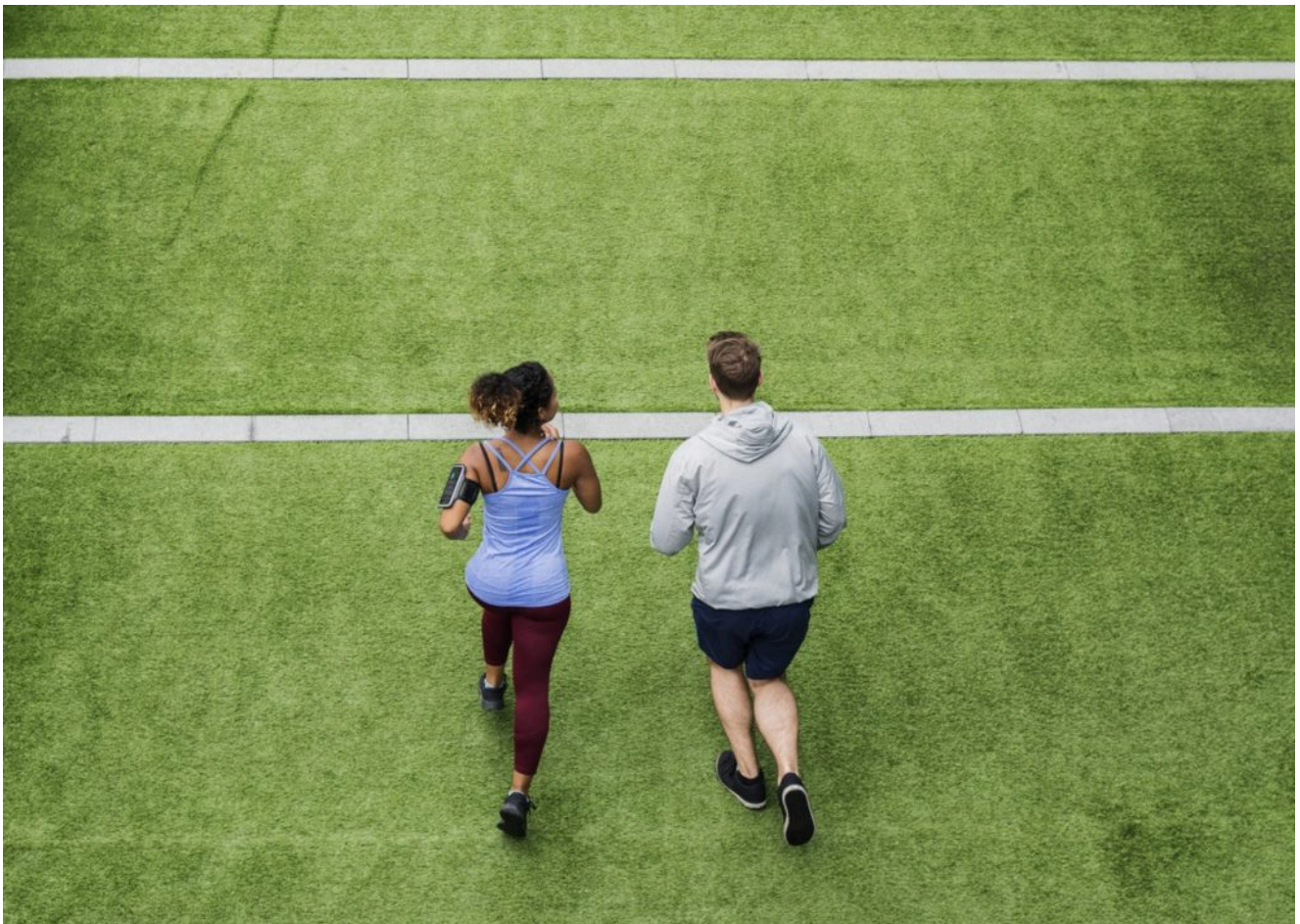
our chosen coping strategy for stress and only 55% of us are getting an adequate amount of physical activity.

So, what's the link between exercise, mood and stress?

The science suggests exercise should be our go-to for those stressful situations! You know those days where you wake up in the morning, a bunch of crazy happens and then you go to sleep (way too late)... You're up to your eye balls in reports at work. The kids have basketball training tonight. You forgot to get dinner out. You said you would help the school with their fundraiser this Friday. It's your mum's birthday next week. You promised your friend you would catch up for lunch on the weekend. You still haven't found time to exercise, like you planned.

Feeling stressed? How's your mood?

To learn more about exercise & Mental Health, download our FREE eBook! (<https://mailchi.mp/c2426a3f9ddd/mentalhealthebook>)



A little bit about stress

Stress comes in many shapes and sizes... Acute and chronic; social stress, physical stress, metabolic stress... just to name a few.

There's a psychological state of stress, and a physiological response to stress – and it's important to distinguish these. One is the external stressors of life, such as a looming deadline at work. The other is our internal state of stress, like when we feel stressed out of our minds and can't think straight!

We can manipulate one, by manipulating the other.

The Neurophysiology of stress (the simple version)

The body's stress response is a built-in gift from evolution. Without it we wouldn't be here today. This complex alarm system more commonly known as the "fight of flight response.

Basically, the short version is: our amygdala signals the adrenal gland to release a few different hormones, such as adrenaline, which causes increases in blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing. These hormones also act on the pituitary gland which triggers the release of cortisol into our immune system. The amygdala then signals the hippocampus to start recording memories (so we remember to avoid this in future), and the prefrontal cortex assesses whether it's an actual threat requiring action.

Now that you understand the mechanisms behind the stress we feel, let's look at how exercise improves our mood and reduces stress. Exercise can:

- Trigger the production of more insulin receptors, thus lowering blood glucose levels. Exercise produces FGF-2 and VEGF which build new capillaries and expand the vascular system in the brain.
- Increase BDNF production, which is responsible for neurogenesis: the creation of new neurons
- Boost serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine (feel good hormones!)

And on a physiological level, exercise can improve the stress we feel in our bodies by:

- Relaxing the resting tension of muscle spindles, breaking the stress-feedback loop to the brain
- Increasing the efficiency of the cardiovascular system, lowering blood pressure



Exercise does a whole range of juicy things to our body and our mind, and it's virtually impossible to impact one without impacting the other – now you see why! Just keep in mind that the more stress you have, the more your body needs

to move to keep your brain running smoothly.

Want to start moving your mood?

If you're new to exercise, getting help from an expert is a great place to start. We've got over 5000 university-qualified exercise professionals who can help you to Exercise Right for your mood.

To find one near you, click here. (<https://www.essa.org.au/find-aep>)



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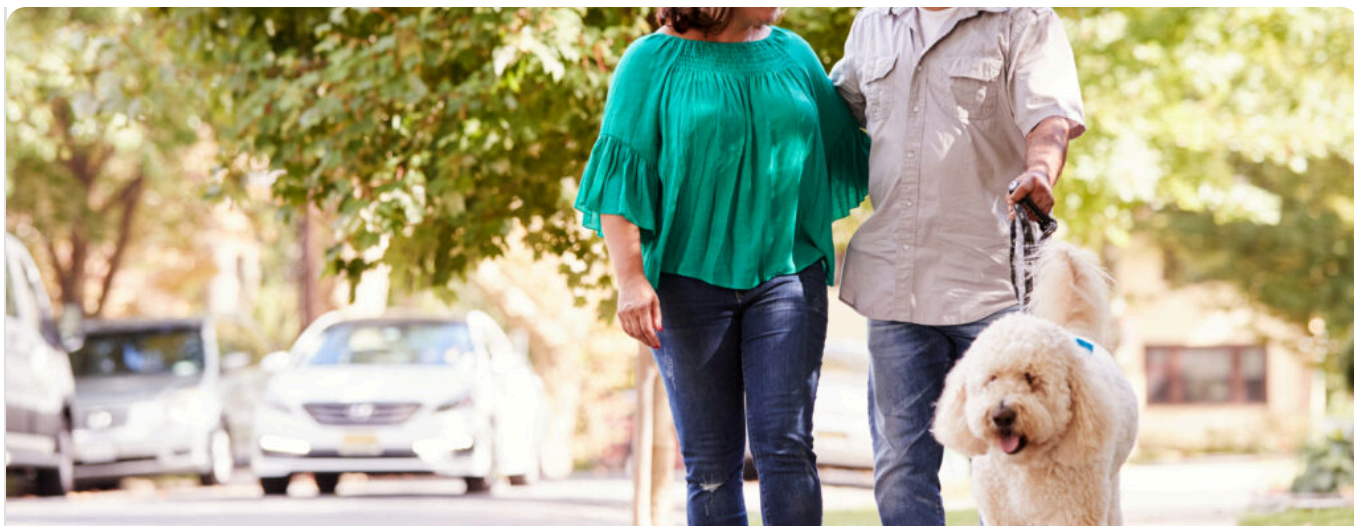


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This article was written by Alister MacInnes, Senior Exercise Physiologist and Exercise Scientist at The Biomechanics. Dementia is one of the most significant health and aged care issues facing Australia, and it is now the leading cause of death in the country.¹ In

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