

# Physical Activity & Mental Health

**Health** is defined as a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being; not merely the absence of illness or infirmity.



Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

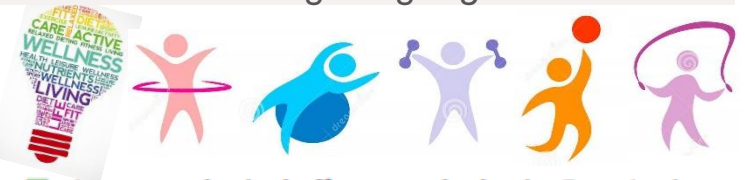
**well-being**  
noun /wel'bi:ɪŋ/

the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.  
"an improvement in the patient's well-being"

Similar: welfare health good health happiness

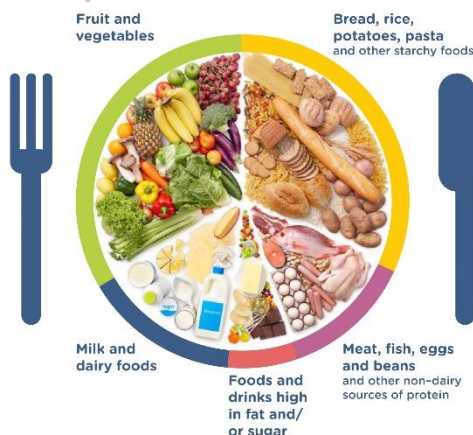
- being in *good physical health*, eating a *balanced diet* and getting *regular exercise*

## So, Why will exercising make me feel better?



- Pharmacological effects on the brain:** Exercise has extensive effects on metabolism, including on heart rate, breathing patterns, production of sweat and release of hormones. The physical changes affect the levels of certain brain chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin, both of which are associated with mood. Exercise may also promote brain growth and health in other ways, and may reduce harmful changes to the brain caused by stress hormones. Exercise enhances endorphins, natural chemicals that act like morphine, relieving pain and inducing euphoria. Any or all of these factors may account for some of the changes in mood. In addition, although levels of the 'stress hormone' cortisol rise during exercise because the body is being stressed, it has been suggested that regular training decreases the effect and may help with response to subsequent stress

- Social effects.** Team sports seem to have particular associations with positive benefits for young people, and it has been suggested that there is something about the social nature of the participation that carries the benefit, over and above physiological consequences. The benefits may be quite subtle; even a lone runner may feel a positive connection and shared purpose with other runners. Positive effects may come from socialising or from other connections with adults and peers associated with the activity.
- Behavioural associations:** The significance of exercise may simply be due to its relationship to other positive behaviours – eating differently, or sleeping better, for example. Physically active young people adopt other healthy behaviours, such as not smoking.



- There is no 'one size fits all' recommendation. There are many ways in which participation in sport and organised exercise can vary, and the effects may be different for different groups of young people.

Circuit Training is adaptable & the programme allows you to choose what best suits you!

