

## 21 scientific facts that will motivate you to exercise when you really don't want to



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JUL. 2, 2016, 3:30 PM

We've all had those days when you know you *should* work out, but you have absolutely no motivation to do so.

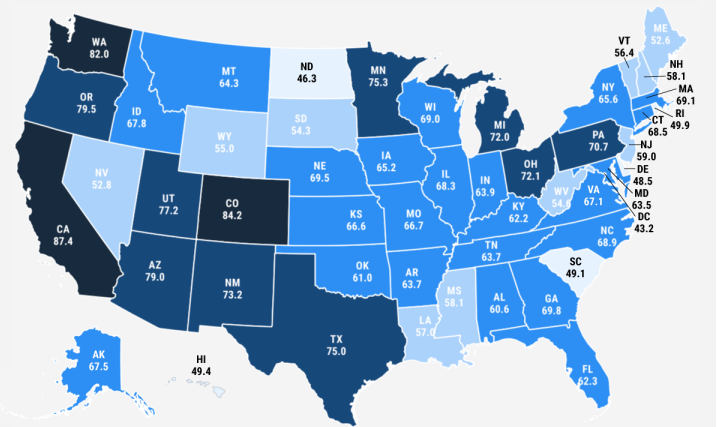
It may encourage you to hear that exercise really is super good for you. There's a mountain of research backing up its many benefits.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommend](#) at least 2.5 hours of moderate cardio activity or 1.25 hours of vigorous cardio activity every week, plus two days of strength training.

You can work up to that goal by starting small, though.

To motivate you to get moving, here are 21 research-based benefits of exercise:

### AVERAGE WORKOUT MINUTES PER WEEK



SOURCE: MyFitnessPal/MapMyFitness

BUSINESS INSIDER

Californians really are the fittest.

*Business Insider/Andy Kiersz, data from MyFitnessPal and MapMyFitness*

For women, including those taking antidepressants, exercise has been shown to increase sexual arousal.



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

*Sources: Annals of Behavioral Medicine, Journal of Abnormal Psychology*

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Working out regularly has been linked to fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression.



[zachd1\\_618/Flickr](#)

*Sources: Anxiety and Depression Association of America, The Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*

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Physical activity can help prevent and manage Type 2 Diabetes. At least one out of three Americans will develop this disease in their lifetime.



27703950@N07/Flickr

Sources: *Diabetologia*, *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, CDC

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Exercise could play a role in increasing 'good' cholesterol and lowering 'bad' cholesterol.



Lynne Sladky/AP

Sources: *Sports Medicine study*, *Sports Medicine review article*

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Studies have found that exercising can reduce airway inflammation in people with asthma.



*Flickr / Living Fitness*

*Sources: Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, Mayo Clinic*

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Strength training could help build strong bones and has been linked to a lower risk of osteoporosis.



Lynne Sladky/AP

Sources: *National Institute on Aging, Pediatrics*

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People who exercise vigorously were found to also have higher levels of mood-boosting vitamin D — probably because they spend more time out in the sun.



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Source: *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*

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While the popular belief that exercise can increase your metabolism isn't true, it does burn calories.



*navcent/Flickr*

*Source: Mayo Clinic*

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Working out has been associated with a more effective cardiovascular system and a lower risk of heart disease. Even low-impact exercise like yoga has shown these effects.



*Joe Raedle/Getty Images*

*Sources: Canadian Medical Association Journal, Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*

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Regular exercise has been shown to decrease stress levels.



*Win McNamee/Getty Images*

*Source: Mayo Clinic, American Psychological Association*

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Research has found that short bursts of intense cardio training can help people lose weight and shed fat.



REUTERS/Michael Klimentyev/RIA Novosti/Kremlin

Sources: *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*; Rutgers exercise scientist Shawn Arent

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Your body can become more agile through exercise and strength training, which could improve your balance and help prevent falls and other injuries.



[erin\\_costa/Flickr](#)

Source: *NIH Senior Health*

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Regular exercise has been found to increase immunity, though scientists aren't sure how this works yet. It could rid your airway of bacteria that lead to colds, or make your body produce more antibodies that fight sickness.



*flickr user: Anna Guttermuth*

*Source: U.S. National Library of Medicine (A.D.A.M.)*

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Aerobic exercise has been linked to memory maintenance, so it's especially important for older adults to stay active.



Lynne Sladky/AP

Source: *British Journal of Sports Medicine*

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Staying fit is associated with a longer life. People who are active for seven hours a week are 40% less likely to die young than those who exercise for 30 minutes or less.



*magnezja/Flickr*

*Source: CDC*

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Being active is even associated with a reduced risk of some cancers. One-third of all cancers in the US are linked to diet and exercise, according to the American Cancer Society.



Reuters/Brendan McDermid

Source: *American Cancer Society*

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Stressed at work? Go for a walk. Exercise has been linked to a reduced risk of workplace burnout.



*Simon Law/Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)*

*Source: PeerJ*

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Working out is associated with improved self esteem and confidence.



Chris Hondros/Getty Images

Source: *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

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Regular physical activity has been shown to help alleviate the symptoms of ADHD.



USAG-Humphreys/Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

Sources: *Pediatric Exercise Science, Neurotoxicity Research*

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Staying active is linked to better sleep.



*Mario Tama/Getty Images*

*Source: Mayo Clinic*

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Exercise energizes you with endorphins right when you finish, and it's associated with long-term increases in happiness, too. Are you ready to start reaping these benefits?



*Don Arnold/Getty Images*

*Sources: Aging & Mental Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Current Opinion in Psychiatry*

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