

# Exercise is Medicine

Vitamins are like exercise: you only miss 'em when you stop! Next thing you know, you're feeling run down, unable to sleep, chocolate takes on new meaning... A good vitamin will keep you from coming down with that stress-cold but nothing beats stress itself like a good workout! When it comes to stress, exercise is the best medicine.

I am a swimmer. For many years now, I swim every week, ideally three times a week. Sometimes it's a struggle to do my full workout (72 laps = 1 mile) but as my teacher would say, "Better to do something imperfectly than not do it at all." Because when I swim, I feel great! 'Loosey goosey,' I believe is the expression.

I've had times in my life when I hadn't been swimming in months and believe me, the stress piled up. I would wander around like my head weighed a ton, wondering if there's any solution to my problems, complaining about myself to myself, nothing seemed to be going right and I wasn't handling it well, and then I'd remember... swimming!

everyone has their own thing, You may not be a swimmer, but for me the feel of the water on my body as I glide along the surface, stretching out into a reaching front crawl, face beneath the surface in another world, consciously breathing, planning ahead to hit that wall... it is my salvation from a stressful world.

The first swim was hard. I thought I would never get to 72 laps, and wanted to give up after only 20. So I took breaks, did sets of 10, and kept going. After 40 I felt that second wind kick in and with it the endorphins! I felt it mid-lane; my body finally gave up on being tired. Sometimes all you need to get to 72 is to just get to 20 first, and the rest will take care of itself.

I remember after that swim, coming out of the change room feeling the endorphins coursing through my veins. It was the most relaxed I had felt in weeks! And the stress? There was none. It had melted away like an ice cube in a cup of tea. I'm not saying I was cured forever but I resumed my regular workout routine and was much more able to handle the daily stresses in my life. Solutions popped up and everything became manageable again. People say you can't run from your problems, but you sure can swim from them.

So, before you take that pill, have that drink, or visit your shrink, try a solid workout. It may seem daunting at first but guaranteed, you won't regret it after. And no side effects... except for euphoria.

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