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# Exercise as a Tool for Recovering from Tough Times

Did the pandemic, and everything else that has happened over the course of the past 20 months, throw you into a downward spiral? If you're on the road to recovery from tough times, a physical fitness plan can facilitate your recovery. You'll improve not only your physical health but your mental health, too, when you begin to exercise regularly.

Exercise reduces anxiety, depression, and tension; it raises low self-esteem and confidence and encourages social interaction. It's also one of many stress management techniques that provide a healthy way to release frustrations, letting loose feel-good endorphins that enhance your sense of well-being. In fact, the American Psychological Association [recommends](#) including exercise in a therapy or recovery program.

Here are some of the benefits you can glean from regularly working out:

- Reduces cravings
- Releases endorphins
- Relieves stress

- Increases confidence
- Heals physical damage resulting from addiction
- Raises energy levels
- Improves sleep

Ready to find out more? [LivFit](#) shares the following insight to help you get started.

## Finding the Right Exercise

Whether you're just easing into a fitness routine or you're hoping to mix it up a little bit, the plethora of exercise options makes choosing one a somewhat tricky challenge. Different exercises do different things — building muscle, burning fat, increasing flexibility — and all the experts tout their ways as “the best.” However, choose the one that works for you. What fits your needs? Your goals? Your life? Your personality?

**Walking:** Looking for an easily implementable activity that also gives you a reason to spend time outside? This low-key exercise only requires supportive, well-fitting shoes. You can start slowly, with just 10 minutes a day, and build up to walking for an hour or more several days a week. Walking yields many physical and mental health [benefits](#), too.

**Swimming:** Another great low-impact, non-weight-bearing activity that's [great for exercising](#) healing muscles, swimming burns calories and also releases endorphins. Because water is 800 times denser than air, it provides constant resistance for your muscles, which means it's great for cardio and strength training..

**Yoga:** Feeling stressed? Anxious? Burned out? Hoping to relax? Recover from injury? Increase your flexibility? Try yoga! It's not for everyone — if you're in perpetual motion, you might grow impatient with the activity, which requires patience and concentration. But it's another lower-impact activity that, with regular practice, will [improve](#) your physical and mental health.

**Strength Training:** This exercise adapts well to all ability levels, and there's no need to be a bodybuilder to try it. In fact, you can even start without using weights -- except your own body weight. This activity builds and maintains lean body mass, improves heart health, reduces the risk of diabetes, strengthens joints and bones, and helps fight depression.

**High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and Tabata:** These [methods](#) follow a similar style, although the duration of workout and rest intervals and total time, and heart rate targets differ. This intense training drives weight and fat loss, muscle gains, lung capacity, and more. But if you overdo it, you can injure yourself or suffer from rhabdomyolysis. If your body's still recovering from the effects of addiction, wait a while before you try HIIT or Tabata.

## Creating a Long-Term Routine

If it's been a while since you've exercised regularly, that's okay. Try these tips:

- Start small, 30 minutes a day (broken into 10-minute segments if necessary), a few days a week. Build from there.
- Choose activities you like — and mix it up so you don't tire of doing the same thing. If you hate what you're doing, it's easier to stop it!
- Make workouts comfortable and enjoyable. Wear comfortable clothing, including supportive shoes
- Put your workouts into your calendar just like you do any other activity or appointment. Make it a priority and part of your daily routine.
- Set small, reasonable, reachable goals — and reward yourself with a new [book](#), cup of gourmet coffee, or something else you enjoy. Don't neglect celebrating all successes.
- Consider working with a dedicated [personal trainer](#) who will create a customized workout plan that helps you progress and holds you accountable.

## Others Ways to Bolster the Good Feels

Obviously, we think exercise is a critical element to relieving tension as we continue to navigate uncertain times. But when you supplement exercise with other self-care habits, you're better equipped to handle what life throws at you.

In addition to healthy eating and getting enough sleep, keep stress management top of mind. While stress can be highly beneficial sometimes, too much of it can wreak havoc on our overall well-being, so it's important to find ways to manage stress. Simple [techniques](#) that can help include deep breathing, knowing your stress triggers, accepting that stress is a natural part of life, and taking cues from people who manage their stress well.

Other helpful ways to manage life when times are tough include activities like yoga and meditation, in addition to therapies like reiki, massage and the use of essential oils. Addressing your living environment is also wise, especially if you have an abundance of clutter and disorganization. The saying “a cluttered home is a cluttered mind” bears some truth, so take the time to clean up and clean out your home so you can harness [more positive energy](#) and let go of negativity.

It really is possible to make exercise an enjoyable part of your life. Ultimately, though, the best workout plan is the one you stick with!

***Are you looking for a customized workout plan or help with nutrition? Turn to [LivFit](#) today for 1:1 sessions that can help you achieve the results you're looking for! Schedule a free consultation today!***