

## Take Care of Body and Soul

Why does physical activity make us happier?

1. It gives you a sense of self-esteem and competence. Seeing that you get better / faster/ stronger gives you a sense of power and control.
2. Physical activity often results in a state of 'flow'. It functions as a time-out on a busy day. In that sense, it resembles meditation a lot.
3. Physical activity gives you a chance for social interaction. It can help you gain more social support and create friendships.

Another interesting tip is that you could become happier by pretending to be happy. When you smile and pretend you are energetic and enthusiastic, these fake feelings rub off on you. They actually make you happier. The 'facial feedback hypothesis' states that our brains 'read' our emotions from the muscles in our faces. So, if we fake-smile, this gives our brains a signal that we are happy. People who have a disease where they cannot use their face muscles, also report to not feel any emotions. Injecting botox in muscles that show negative facial emotions actually helps depressed people to become less depressed. Another reason why fake-smiling works is because the people around you treat you more positively when you smile. They feel more comfortable around you, find it easier to start a conversation etc. Laughing out loud takes away stress in many situations, and makes you feel happier and less sad.