

Live Life to the Fullest



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Aurora Mental Health Center to the Fullest

- 1 Viewpoint Plaza
Administration Center
11059 East Bethany Drive
- 2 North Center
1646 Elmira Street
- 3 Hampden Center
14301 East Hampden Avenue
- 4 Alameda Center
10782 East Alameda Avenue
- 5 Providers' Resource Clearinghouse (PRC)
14500 East 33rd Place
- 6 Community Transitions Center
1390 & 1400 Chambers Road
- 7 Intercept Center
16905 East 2nd Avenue
- 8 Fitzsimons Center
2206 Victor Street
- 9 Galena Center
1504 Galena Street
- 10 Asian Pacific Development Center
1537 Alton Street
- 11 Chambers Center
791 Chambers Road
- 12 Smoky Hill Center
20971 East Smoky Hill Road

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303.617.2300

PERSPECTIVES

SPRING/SUMMER 2016



The Mind-Body Connection

How Exercise Improves Mental Health

No matter your age or fitness level – from a light walk after dinner to running that next marathon – research shows that exercise positively affects our mental health.

“Wellness is not one-dimensional,” says Lauren Tolle, Licensed Clinical Psychologist at Aurora Mental Health. “We take a holistic approach that factors in physical health into our treatment plans. With many of our patients, we’ve seen some amazing results.”

DEPRESSION

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the U.S. In 2014, an estimated 15.7 million adults experienced major depression. Exercise may be the last thing you want to do when you’re depressed, but studies show that regular exercise can be as effective as anti-depressant medication.

The link between exercise and mood is not completely understood, but experts believe positive effects are caused by a couple things:

- Exercise releases “feel-good” chemicals in your brain.
- Exercise improves brain function by helping grow more neurotransmitters
- Exercise helps the brain produce serotonin, the chemical that many anti-depressants target.

ANXIETY

Getting up off the couch can also make you feel less anxious and stressed. Much like depression, exercise is good for anxiety treatment and prevention. Mental health clinicians have even begun to prescribe exercise as part of a routine to lower nervous tension. “I focus on teaching clients how to use exercise as a coping skill,

specifically to help them cope with stress and anxiety,” says Janie Forbes, certified personal trainer. “Rather than focusing on the number on the scale, we focus on how the person mentally and physically feels before, during and after his or her workout.”

One exercise session can reduce symptoms for hours, and clinical studies show that consistent exercise can have long-lasting effects.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem affects our mental health and is strongly influenced by our physical health. Exercise helps you look better, feel stronger and gives you more energy – all things that boost self-image.

AGING AND COGNITIVE DECLINE

Aging takes its toll on all of us. It contributes to cognitive decline by affecting our memory and general brain function. However, we have a means of fighting back. Studies have shown that regular physical activity slows, and can even reverse, the effects of aging on our brains.

- Exercise lowers risk of degenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s.
- It can positively affect the physiology of parts of the brain

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

PATH: CHANGING LIVES. BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

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PATH: Changing Lives. Building a Better Community

A Program of Aurora Mental Health Center

The First Step Is Understanding

To solve a problem, we first have to understand it. Aurora Mental Health and PATH are working hard to build relationships with people who are homeless and at risk. We give clients a voice and a sense of dignity.

The Need is Clear

Mental illness and addiction are a primary cause of chronic homelessness. PATH outreach and transition programs keep more people off the street – and out of E.R.s, jails and rehabilitation facilities. And most importantly, having access to care saves lives.

We Do More Than You Think

Aurora Mental Health Center and PATH provide services to combat the various problems homeless people and families face. At our drop-in center, we nurture a friendly, “come as you are” atmosphere and help clients connect and build a sense of community. We also provide:

- Clinical case management
- Mental health therapy and groups
- Connecting people to resources and benefits
- Onsite medical assistance
- Job coaching
- Veteran outreach and VA partnerships
- Housing assistance
- Food, hygiene and clothing donations (as available)

Our drop-in center helps 40-60 people per day



The PATH program and Aurora Mental Health are helping shape how our city addresses homelessness.”

– Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan

that control memory (hippocampus).

- Research suggests that exercise may increase blood flow to the brain, reducing the chance of stroke.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR GETTING STARTED AND STICKING WITH IT

So, the evidence is hard to argue against...but why then is it so hard for us to get into the habit of regular exercise? Well, if you're one of the many, here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Start small. You've heard it before, but start with easy workouts three times a week and work your way up. The “talk test” is a good way to measure: if you can't carry on a conversation during your workout because you're breathing too hard, slow it down.
- Do you want to be social or carve out some alone time? If your life is hectic, activities like biking and running can give you time alone with your thoughts. If you spend all day staring at a screen, running groups or team sports can help you get some quality social time.
- Create a routine. Make a calendar that carves out specific workout blocks, and plan the rest of your commitments around them.
- Switch it up. If you try an activity and you don't enjoy it, you're not going to stick with it. Keep trying things until you find one that you enjoy. And remember, even moderate exercise is good for you. Keep in mind activities like walking or even vigorous cleaning around the house.
- Be positive. Take the time after every workout to congratulate yourself. Get an activity tracker or write your workouts down on a calendar. Wait and see, that rewarding feeling can be addictive.

You Can be a First Responder