



Mental Health Minute

Front Range Psychological Associates

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New Blog Posts:

Your Mind.
Your Body.

[What Really Happens When You Call 911?](#)

[Good, Old Fashioned Manners](#)

[American Stories of Recession
Despair and Resilience](#)



Happy Halloween!

**Have a fun and safe October!
Dr. Bridget Engel & Dr. Stephanie Smith**



Working Out Builds the Mind's Muscles

Exercise makes our bodies stronger, but can it do the same for our minds? It might, according to several lines of research in animals and humans.

In research with rats, there's evidence that exercise increases the blood supply to their brains. One group of rats got free access to a running wheel and another ran on a treadmill for an hour a day. After 30 days, both groups had a better blood supply to their brains. A group of sedentary rats showed no increase.

An increased blood supply means increased oxygen and energy supply, and that equals better performance. In the same study, a group of rats learned to run through an obstacle course. Because that was more a learning task than a physical task, these rats developed more connections between the neurons in their brains.

Although these types of studies are only now beginning in humans, the theory is that because sports combine learning and



Parenting:

Communication Tips for Parents

Be available for your children

- Notice times when your kids are most likely to talk—for example, at bedtime, before dinner, in the car—and be available.

- Start the conversation; it lets your kids know you care about what's happening in their lives.

- Find time each week for a one-on-one activity with each child, and avoid scheduling other activities during that time.

- Learn about your children's interests—for example, favorite music and activities—and show interest in them.

- Initiate conversations by sharing what you have been thinking about rather than beginning a conversation with a question.

Let your kids know you're listening

- When your children are talking about concerns, stop whatever you are doing and listen.

- Express interest in what they are saying without being intrusive.

- Listen to their point of view, even if it's difficult to hear.

- Let them complete their point before you respond.

- Repeat what you heard them say to ensure that you understand them correctly.

Respond in a way your children will hear

- Soften strong reactions; kids will tune you out if you appear angry or defensive.

exercise, they may both increase blood supply and enhance brain connections.

Some evidence in humans suggests that being physically fit helps people maintain their cognitive abilities as they age. Many studies have found that physically active elderly people perform better than sedentary elderly people on cognitive tasks such as reasoning, vocabulary, memory, and reaction time. Some studies have found similar differences between physically active and sedentary young people, but results varied from study to study.

Researchers caution that exercise and conditioning have a limited window of effect, we lose that effect quickly if we stop exercising.

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- Express your opinion without putting down theirs; acknowledge that it's okay to disagree.

- Resist arguing about who is right. Instead say, "I know you disagree with me, but this is what I think."

- Focus on your child's feelings rather than your own during your conversation.

Remember:

- Ask your children what they may want or need from you in a conversation, such as advice, simply listening, help in dealing with feelings, or help solving a problem.

- Kids learn by imitating. Most often, they will follow your lead in how they deal with anger, solve problems, and work through difficult feelings.

- Talk to your children—don't lecture, criticize, threaten, or say hurtful things.

- Kids learn from their own choices. As long as the consequences are not dangerous, don't feel you have to step in.

- Realize your children may test you by telling you a small part of what is bothering them. Listen carefully to what they say, encourage them to talk, and they may share the rest of the story.

Parenting is hard work

- Listening and talking is the key to a healthy connection between you and your children. But parenting is hard work and maintaining a good connection with teens can be challenging, especially since parents are dealing with many other pressures. If you are having problems over an extended period of time, you might want to consider consulting with a mental health professional to find out how they can help.

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Did you know...
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity
Disorder affects an estimated 4.1% of
youths ages 9 to 17 in a 6-month
period. (National Institutes of Mental
Health)

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