



JOOL Deep Dive *into Activity*

SESSION 2

Hi. Agatha here. Last time we talked about how important it is to be motivated from within and not just in grudging response to what others are telling you. In Session 2 let's dive deeper into what exercise can do for you in the present moment.

Energy Up

One of the wonderful things about physical movement of almost any kind is that it can have an immediate beneficial impact on how you're feeling. It seems kind of counterintuitive to think that exercising might be the solution when you're feeling physically low on energy. In many instances, though, this is absolutely the case. No question, if you're truly physically exhausted – you've just charged up a 3,000-foot maze of switchbacks, or been without sleep for 36 hours – what you need is rest! On the other hand, if you've been chained to your desk for 6 hours straight and you're fading into those dreaded, mid-afternoon doldrums, take it from me: moving is just what the doctor ordered. Think of it as $E = E^2$; Exercise = Energy Squared. Yes, you're expending energy to get up and move, but you're also tapping into energy reserves that are just itching for action. If you haven't experienced this. Try it. It's truly remarkable how quickly an explosion of happiness boosting hormones and energy just seems to flood your system.

Run From Stress

These days, our lives are loaded with stress. And it's one of the more difficult health issues to tackle because the sources of stress seem ever present and inescapable. "That's just modern life," people say. And it is. But science has been telling us that how stress affects your body is based a lot on how you think about stress. One way to view stress is to flip it from fear and doubt to confident excitement. And something that can really help with that is getting active. Many of the physical sensations associated with stress stem from the "fight or flight" survival mechanisms that were much more in need thousands of years ago. Take the hormone adrenaline. When we're stressed out, literally within seconds, adrenaline starts to seep into – or sometimes flood – our bloodstream. It has lots of immediate physical effects, like increased heart rate and blood pressure, that can be useful in a pinch but over time can be damaging. What to do? One very good response is to, quite literally, "take flight." Move. Walk. Run. Swim. Bike. The stress response is saying fight or flight – we say opt for the latter to burn off that adrenaline – along with a bunch of calories.

Mood

Lastly, let's touch briefly on mood. "The blues" "Feeling down" – lots of people struggle to some degree, at some point in their lives, with mood management. It's not uncommon but it's also something that, in its less entrenched forms -- responds very favorably to physical activity. Finding ways to move, to get up and go, to play when feeling low introduces immediate positive changes to the situation.

1. Getting active often involves a change of scene – something that can be very helpful in lifting a down mood. Being out in nature can also be quite healing. The Japanese call it "forest bathing."
2. Feeling down is often accompanied by a feeling of low energy – of grinding slowly to a halt. Remember $E = E^2$ – it can be very useful in quickly helping turning that around.
3. Taking charge and doing something proactively good for yourself is a positive act. It increases self-confidence and promotes a stronger feeling of being in charge and in control. Psychologists call this "agency," and it's a powerful feeling.

That's it for today's audiocast. Thanks so much for listening. Keep your eye out for an invite to Session 3. It should be showing up in your email inbox in a couple of days. Till then, I'll see you out on the hiking trails.