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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

September 2020

What is exercise therapy?

Individuals with serious mental illnesses are more likely to be sedentary than the general population and are consequently at high risk for chronic medical conditions associated with inactivity. Physical activity reduces the risk of these medical conditions, and positive psychological effects have also been reported, including improved quality of life. Exercise also has the potential to alleviate secondary symptoms including depression, low self-esteem and social withdrawal.

What is the evidence for exercise therapy?

Moderate quality evidence finds exercise therapy can improve symptoms, particularly negative symptoms, as well as improving quality of life and functioning. Moderate to low quality evidence suggests exercise therapy can also improve depression, anxiety, weight, and cardiometabolic factors.

Moderate to high quality evidence suggests exercise therapy can improve cognition, particularly working memory, attention, and social cognition. More minutes per week of exercise supervised by a physical activity professional is associated with the greatest benefit for cognition.

Moderate quality evidence finds no significant differences between mindfulness exercise (yoga or tai chi) and non-mindfulness exercise for mental health or social functioning.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.