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**Please forward this ezine to anyone you know who would be interested in creating a Life Positioning System for themselves or is ready to expand and deepen their happiness.**

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## **Happy Exercise**

Many of us have heard how important exercise is to good health. Most of us have probably been professionally advised at least once in our lives that regular exercise will help us stay healthy; and news abounds about the importance of exercise to our hearts, blood pressure, bone density, and general physical health. Research also backs up the positive impact that exercise has on our mood. Studies have shown that people who participate in moderate exercise several times a week report a high level of daily satisfaction, an ability to effectively handle stress, high self esteem, and a positive sense of well-being. While the preventive benefits of exercise have long been widely discussed and accepted, when we're feeling down it's sometimes hard to believe that exercise can help.

James Blumenthal and a team of researchers at Duke University conducted a study where they randomly assigned middle-aged and elderly people seeking help for Major Depression to three different types of treatment. One group was prescribed a commonly used anti-depressant, Zoloft. A second group was prescribed an exercise regiment of brisk walking for 30 minutes 3 times a week. A third group was prescribed both the anti-depressant and the exercise regiment. After 16 weeks of treatment, the 3 groups showed similar levels of improvement, although the exercise only group took 4 weeks to see an initial impact on the depressive symptoms, which was slightly longer than the other two groups. At a follow-up 6 months later, the results became more astounding. Of the three different treatment approaches, 62% of the medication only group and 69% of the exercise and medication group continued to feel less depressed, but **92% of the people in the exercise only group still felt an improvement in their mood 10 months later!**

This research indicates that exercise can impact how happy or depressed someone feels and it has a continuing impact. The possible reasons for this are numerous. Exercise releases endorphins in the brain which is nature's "anti-depressant". Implementing an

exercise plan can also lead to a sense of accomplishment. Finally, exercise has a snowball effect; Blumenthal and his colleagues found that when people exercised, they felt better and then were likely to exercise more, which made them feel even better.

If you have a regular exercise routine already established, congratulate yourself! If you don't, consider how you might incorporate a little more activity in your week. Are there times when you can take the stairs rather than the elevator? Can you walk instead of drive? If you want to spend time with someone, suggest going for a walk! Both your physical body and your emotions will benefit!

Need some more inspiration to get started? I wrote a commentary piece called "Finding Joy in Exercise" for the Roanoke Times that is available for free on my website, you can find the link on [www.PointForwardCoaching.com/resources](http://www.PointForwardCoaching.com/resources) - check it out and share it with that friend you want to go for a walk with!

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Point Forward, Inc exists to help individuals and organizations shift their orientation to power in order to reach a place of balance and sustainable success. Rooted in Positive Psychology research, the Point Forward Process guides people in establishing a Life Positioning System™ that helps them harness their own POWER to flourish.

For a free introductory coaching session, send an email to [tasha@pointforwardcoaching.com](mailto:tasha@pointforwardcoaching.com) with **FREE Intro to Coaching** in the subject line.

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