

This month we explore  
how physical therapy  
can help with  
depression!

# The Little River Post

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DIVE RIGHT IN!

Disclaimer: This newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice.

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<https://littleriverpt.com/v2/>

## PHYSICAL THERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH

By ROXANNE FISHER

Brendon Stubbs, who has worked as an in-house physical therapist in multiple mental health wards, stresses the importance physical health experts hold in mental health settings. Stubbs noticed how sedentary the life of mental health patients is and that they are often forced to sit within eyesight of their doctors all day long without even an opportunity to go outside. Stubbs found that when he began taking daily walks with patients and taking them to the gym, they seemed more emotionally comfortable with him than with their doctors, and shared more about their daily lives. The exercise itself also made them happier. In one mental health facility for older patients, Stubbs introduced outdoor group activities and he described seeing their faces light up. When he saw how much excitement the group activity sessions created, he hosted an info-session about the importance of physical

exercise for mental health, handed out pedometers and put a big chart on the wall for people to write their weekly step count on the wall. The patients became very competitive about the step chart and the hospital saw an increase in their cognition, mood and energy levels.

## ASK YOUR PT: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WITH DEPRESSION?

By LISA FISHER

The latest medical advice is that you need at least 15 minutes in the sunshine every day to get sufficient vitamin D and for your general health. A recent study conducted by JAMA psychiatry found that if adults are physically active, they can substantially reduce their risk of depression. My advice when you're feeling blue and finding it difficult to exercise is to commit to getting outside for 15 minutes a day for two weeks and see what difference that makes in your life. Try walking during this time: your goal should be to walk for the whole 15 minutes. It's perfectly normal to feel depressed when you feel bad physically, so it makes sense when your body feels better, your

mood lifts. Of course, exercise can't solve all mental health problems - but it certainly will help your body and is definitely worth a try. Once you are comfortable with the 15 minute outdoor walk, increase to walking for thirty minutes a day. On the back of this newsletter, there is a flyer with some simple stretches that can be done while walking.

## MENTAL HEALTH CRISES RESOURCES

By ROXANNE FISHER

If there is a life-threatening emergency, please call 9-1-1. Here are some other local resources you can call if you or someone you know is having a mental health crisis. If you or someone you know is suicidal please call or text Fairfax County's Suicide and Crisis Hotline: 9-8-8.

Mental Health Crisis Helpline for Fairfax County: 703-573-5679

Fairfax County Mobile Crisis Unit: 703-573-5679, available daily from 8 a.m. to midnight

Fairfax County Peer Resource Center: 703-559-3100