How is physical activity good for mental health?

Physical activity:
- Reduces depression, anxiety and tension.
- Helps you feel good about yourself.
- Allows you to concentrate and focus better.
- Helps you to sleep more soundly.
- Improves your ability to cope with cravings and withdrawal symptoms if you are trying to give up smoking, alcohol or drugs.

Why does physical activity work?

Physical activity:
- Has a positive effect on brain chemicals like dopamine and serotonin, which improves your mood and thinking.
- Helps new brain cells grow and develop – which may result in fewer memory issues.
- Reduces harmful changes in the brain caused by stress.
- Can lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

How much physical activity do I need?

- The recommendation is 150 minutes a week or 30 minutes most days of the week of moderate to vigorous activity, plus strength training two times a week.
- The activity can be broken up into several 10-minute segments during the day.

What counts?

- Household chores like sweeping, raking, cleaning and vacuuming.
- Activities such as walking, running, jogging, skiing, swimming, biking, or exercise classes.
- Sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, baseball, softball, or similar games.

How do I start?

- Talk to your doctor first if you have any health concerns.
- Start slowly and build up to the recommended amount over time.
- Set goals and share them with others so they can support you.
- Join a group or get a buddy for accountability and to keep from getting bored.

Remember, any exercise is better than none!