FITNESS MAGAZINE :

Sweat: 7 Reasons It Does a Body Good



Denise Crew

*By Ayren Jackson-Cannady*

Whether you're breaking a sweat at the gym or just walking down the street on a scorching day (Guilty!), you may be giving your health a huge boost. Here, experts dish on the mental, physical and emotional benefits caused by a little perspiration.

Sweat Side Effect #1: Eases Pain

Got a kink in your neck that won't quit (and no one around to massage it out)? Working up a sweat just might soothe the soreness, experts say. "[Exercise](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/?lc=int_mb_1001) stimulates neurochemical pathways in the brain, resulting in the production of endorphins that act as natural painkillers," says James Ting, M.D., a sports medicine physician at Hoag Orthopedic Institute in Irvine, CA.

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Michael David Adams

Sweat Side Effect #2: Blasts Zits

"When you sweat, your pores open and release the grit and grime that has built up inside of them," says Whitney Bowe, M.D., a dermatologist in Briarcliff Manor, NY. Caveat: Don't just sweat and go. All of that dirt from your pores accumulates on the surface of your skin, so aim to wash your face three times a day, especially if you are constantly playing sports or working out.

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James Farrell

Sweat Side Effect #3: Rids the Body of Toxins

Not feeling the whole post-weekend juice detox plan? Hit the mat for a super-sweat session instead. Some experts believe that sweating can flush the body of system-clogging substances like alcohol, cholesterol and salt. Get the most bang for your bod with indoor cycling or [circuit training](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/lose-weight/burn-fat/circuit-training-workout/?lc=int_mb_1001) -- two of the sweatiest [workouts](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/?lc=int_mb_1001), according to Melissa Morin, an [exercise](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/exercises.htm) physiologist and Senior Director of Group [Exercise](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/?lc=int_mb_1001) at [New York](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/video-diaries/i-ran-the-new-york-city-marathon.htm) Sports Club.

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Sweat Side Effect #4: Controls Mood Swings

Maybe you've already noticed -- before a [workout](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/workout.htm) you're Ms. Crabby Pants. But afterwards you feel like giving everyone hugs and high fives. It seems natural that we associate feeling warm with a sense of well-being and relaxation, but there may in fact be a scientific explanation for this feeling, says Dr. Ting. "Research has suggested that temperature-sensitive neural circuits to specific regions in the brain exist and may play a significant [role](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/health/body/healthy-toolkit/sweat-health-benefits/?page=4) in controlling mood." So the next time you sense yourself being short, take a break for a [Bikram](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/health/body/healthy-toolkit/sweat-health-benefits/?page=4) [yoga](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/yoga.htm) session or a run for a get-happy fix.

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Laura Doss

Sweat Side Effect #5: Prevents Colds and Other Infections

If you've ever wished you could walk around dousing everything in sanitizer wipes to prevent illness, you might be in luck. A study from Eberhard-Karls-University T?bingen in Germany suggests that human perspiration contains a naturally occurring antimicrobial peptide called dermcidin, which has been proven to fight tuberculosis germs and other dangerous pathogens, says Dr. Bowe. It's like an invisible germ force field!

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Sam Robles

Sweat Side Effect #6: Regulates Body Temperature

The evaporation of sweat off of the skin prevents us from overheating during an intense [workout](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/workout.htm), says Dr. Bowe. So, what would happen if you didn't sweat? "In extreme cases, the lack of sweat during a seemingly strenuous [workout](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/workout.htm?lc=int_mb_1001) could be due to a condition called anhidrosis that can lead to dizziness, a skin rash, or loss of consciousness during [exercise](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/videos/exercises/exercises.htm)," says Morin.

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Sweat Side Effect #7: Lowers Kidney Stone Risk

Yes, really! Research from the University of Washington found that regular exercisers sweat out salt and tend to retain calcium in their bones, rather than having them -- salt and calcium -- go into the kidneys and urine where stones form. Frequent sweaters also tend to drink more water and fluids, which is another stone prevention mechanism.

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http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/health/body/healthy-toolkit/sweat-health-benefits/?page=7