

Research Reviews

When Your Body Gets the Blues

Brown, M.A. & Robinson, J. (2001) When Your Body Gets the Blues: The Clinically Proven Program for Women Who Feel Tired and Stressed and Eat Too Much.

<http://www.thebodyblues.com/>

This is an amazing story put together by Brown (nurse practitioner) and Robinson (science writer), which provides the evidence for how exercise, light and selected vitamins are needed by our bodies to promote a positive mood state and sense of well being. The book details the empirical evidence for each component. In the chapter on walking the authors detail their decision for recommending 20 minutes a day of walking, citing work that demonstrated that brisk walking versus jogging or stretching was associated with feeling less tense, anxious, confused and better able to cope. In fact, further studies have shown that combining outdoor light with exercise resulted in a more positive mood and sense of well being than exercise without outdoor light. The authors state that brisk outdoor walking increases serotonin and dopamine activity, cerebral blood flow, reduces tension and anxiety, raises energy level, improves ability to cope with stress, burns fat, decreases appetite, connects you with nature and reduces your risk of a number of life-threatening diseases.

There is a whole chapter devoted to how to get the most out of your 20-minute walks. There are instructions for defining your “feel-good zone,” which is 60 bpm or your maximum heart rate. For women in the reproductive age range of 18-25, this is 120 beats per minute; ages 26-33 is 114 beats per minute; ages 34-41 is 110 beats per minute. The book also give you hints about maintaining your posture, what type of socks to wear, how to wearproof for fall and winter rain, how to make exercise a priority, and how to motivate yourself. There are many self-tests for determining your readiness to exercise and motivation.

This is a good book for you as a health practitioner and for your clients. Check the webb for bargain prices.

The book reproduces the journal article published by Dr. Brown and her colleagues on the randomized control trial that they did combining walking, light and vitamins. See Brown, M. A., Goldstein-Shirley, G. & Robinson, J. (2001), The Effects of a Multi-Modal Intervention Trial of Light, Exercise, and Vitamins on Women’s Mood. Women and Health. Vol. 34(3)

(Reviewed by Kathryn E. Barnard)

