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## How Exercise Influences Your Brain

It's common advice to go for a walk when you need a break or you're having trouble focusing. Why? General exercise activates the feel-good chemicals in your brain, including dopamine, which drives motivation and mental focus, and endorphins, which dampen pain perception and helps you push through barriers. Movement also helps quiet the frontal lobes, which can unlock flow potential. All of this is beneficial when you're running a practice and meeting daily with patients who need you at your best.

So how can you use movement intentionally to unleash creativity and widen perspective?

### Use Exercise To Prime Yourself

Just like pro athletes use various warmup rituals to activate focus before games, you can use movement to spur creativity and shift perspective between patients or when making big moves in your practice. Here's how:

- **Work it out.** Fit in 20 minutes of moderate activity, like walking or shooting hoops, or five minutes of high intensity like sprinting or powerlifting to activate flow state.
- **Play with your balance.** Activities like yoga, tai chi, or dance activate inner ear mechanisms that directly stimulate the release of adrenaline and dopamine, leading to increased focus and a sense of excitement.
- **Try something new.** Trigger a greater neurochemical response by trying a new movement or activity, or simply switching your environment.
- **Engage with a group.** Group workouts instill a shared sense of purpose and connection that can promote group flow, and releases oxytocin, which increases social bonding.

### Use Exercise During Transitions

You also can use exercise after big moments to transition. Toggling between office and home life can be challenging to shift focus and keep energy levels high. A transitional practice can allow you to shift gears more easily. Choose a low- or moderate-intensity activity that you or your family can participate in together to help you wind down from your workday and move into your home life.

And to help transition after your workouts, don't skip your cooldown. It's key for lowering heart rate, increasing muscle recovery, and supporting the continued release of feel-good neurochemicals. A five-minute cooldown will help you step into your day or next meeting with a better sense of clarity so that you're not spun up in a high gear for hours at a time.