



This week I would like to share with you the results of an experiment I carried out on myself over the past week. As you are probably well aware, exercise is associated with the release of serotonin to the brain. This is sometimes referred to as the “feel good” hormone as it contributes to positive mood.

A number of years ago, having read the research, I started taking regular exercise and my routine is to go to the gym 4-5 mornings a week. I decided to assess the impact on my mood of not taking any exercise for 1 week. I picked last week as it was a routine week with no exceptional events expected and so I considered it an ideal week to monitor my mood.

What happened surprised me. Not only did my mood go down but I found that some of the other patterns of my life also changed – negatively.

When I go to the gym, I would generally drink about a litre of water. However sitting at home I had coffee rather than drink water and so my hydration levels were even further lowered. Halfway through the morning I really needed a pick-me up as my energy levels were low, so more coffee was drunk and some nice sugary nibbles also.

I quickly realised that there are a network of healthy behaviour patterns that fell by the wayside as soon as the exercise element was missing. There were a number of patterns that had developed over time that were all interconnected and I had not realised just how interconnected they were.

It is very easy to engage in patterns around exercise and diet and not be fully aware of the extent to which they make a positive impact on our lives. My week without exercise gave me a very clear reminder that exercise has a pivotal role to play in my sense of well-being and is something that I need to do. It is not just nice to have, it is essential to my life.

My challenge for you this week is to encourage you to go out in the middle of the day and take a brisk 15 minute walk. Use the time to clear your head and de-stress. When you get back to your normal routine try to be aware of your mood, your concentration levels and your general energy levels. The key element of this is to be aware of the connection between the activity and your sense of well-being.

If this is an activity that you would normally do then change your routine and see what difference it makes. Most of all enjoy the time for yourself – you are worth it!

Warm Wishes

Mary

*If you find it challenging to create the time for exercise give me a call and let us see what we can do.*