

Couples who exercise together communicate better

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New research has found that married couples who exercise together communicate better. Researchers from Brigham Young University in the USA looked at the exercise habits and relationships of 1,693 young married

couples. In particular, the research team focused on conflict resolution, the ability to listen to a partner, and the seriousness and frequency of marital issues. Study co-author Professor Jeremy Yorgason suggested that exercising together helped couples sort out problems "peacefully". He added that the effect was small but significant. He said couples reported better communication and fewer problems when they exercised together.

The researchers compared couples exercising separately with couples exercising together. Both individual and shared exercise were associated with healthier marriages. However, couples who exercised together were found to be more successful at resolving marital problems. Professor Yorgason said: "About 60 per cent of husbands and wives in the sample said they exercised, but only about a third exercised together. That means about half the people who exercise are not exercising with their spouse." He added that while the impact was not necessarily large, it was very consistent across couples. The difference gave him the confidence to say that it was affecting relationships "in some meaningful way".

Sources: earth.com / phys.org / scitechdaily.com

Writing

Exercising alone is better than exercising with someone. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

research / married couples / communication / habits / listen / peacefully / problems / exercise / successful / husbands / wives / spouse / impact / confidence / meaningful

True / False

- 1) The article says all married couples who exercise together talk more. T / F
- 2) Researchers looked at 1,693 married couples of all ages. T / F
- 3) One thing researchers looked at was conflict resolution. T / F
- 4) A researcher said joint exercise could lead to "peaceful" problem solving. T / F
- 5) Researchers only looked at people who exercised with their spouse. T / F
- 6) About half of the people in the study did not exercise with their spouse. T / F
- 7) A researcher said exercise with a spouse had a big impact on marriage. T / F
- 8) The researcher said he was confident his marriage would last. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. habits | a. regularity |
| 2. conflict | b. linked |
| 3. frequency | c. matrimonial |
| 4. sort out | d. dispute |
| 5. significant | e. uniform |
| 6. separately | f. resolve |
| 7. associated | g. routines |
| 8. marital | h. husband/wife |
| 9. spouse | i. notable |
| 10. consistent | j. apart |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What exercise do you do?
- c) What exercise would you like to do?
- d) What are the secrets to a happy marriage?
- e) Should exercising together be a part of marriage vows?
- f) What can governments do to get more people to exercise?
- g) In what way could exercise be bad for relationships?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. the research team focused on conflict
2. the seriousness and frequency of marital
3. helped couples sort out problems
4. the effect was small
5. fewer problems when they
6. Both individual and
7. associated
8. not exercising with their
9. it was very consistent
10. affecting relationships in some meaningful

- a. way
- b. resolution
- c. exercised together
- d. issues
- e. with healthier marriages
- f. but significant
- g. spouse
- h. shared exercise
- i. "peacefully"
- j. across couples

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of exercising?
- b) Do you prefer exercising alone or with other people?
- c) Why might exercising with a partner better conflict resolution?
- d) What benefits does exercising with people bring?
- e) What are the best ways to resolve conflicts?
- f) What kinds of exercise are best at resolving problems?
- g) How important is it to listen to other people?
- h) Are you a good listener?

Spelling

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4. the seriousness and feynqceru
5. tmarail issues
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11. the impact was not cenylsiesra large
12. gave him the feeincondc to say that

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	In which country was this research conducted?
2.	How many young couples did the researchers look at?
3.	What did researchers look at the frequency of?
4.	What did couples who exercised together sort out peacefully?
5.	What did the researcher say the effect of exercise was besides small?
6.	Who did researchers compare couples who exercised together to?
7.	What were couples who exercised together more successful at?
8.	What percentage of spouses in the study exercised?
9.	What percentage of people in the study exercised with their spouse?
10.	In what way does exercising with a spouse affect relationships?

Speaking – Exercising

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about exercising with your spouse/partner at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Fun
- Time to talk
- Achieve exercise goals
- Quality time together
- Emotional connection
- Feeling good together
- Harder to give up
- Helping each other