

# The Immune-Boosting Benefits Of Exercise

**Exercise offers a wide range of benefits:** everything from improved mobility to enhanced brain function to lower risks of injuries. It's a well-established belief that exercise can increase immunity to diseases. However, there is still a good deal of debate as to precisely how exercise enhances immunity.

**There are a few theories:**

- **Exercises changes white blood cells and antibodies.** The change causes the white blood cells and antibodies to circulate through the bloodstream more quickly, meaning they are able to deal with infections and pathogens more quickly as well. This earlier detection can reduce the risk of illness.
- **Exercise flushes bacteria from the respiratory system.** The faster pace of breathing resulting from exercise expels a lot of the bacteria from the airways (nose and throat) and lungs. For airborne illnesses (like colds, flus, coughs, and other pulmonary conditions), exercise is the first line of defense to stop the pathogens from infecting the respiratory system.
- **Exercise reduces stress hormones.** Cortisol dampens immune function in the body, thereby leaving the body vulnerable to infection. By reducing cortisol, exercise protects the body's immunity to disease.
- **Exercise raises the body temperature.** It is believed that a higher body temperature creates an unfavorable environment for bacterial growth. Bacteria needs a warm environment, but too much heat can kill the bacteria, which is why the body temperature rises (fever) when you are sick. The increase in temperature caused by the exercise may help to fight infections.

While it's not 100% clear how exercise raises immunity, **it's well-established that it does.** Those looking to increase their immune function and decrease their risk of illness would do well to add regular exercise to their life.

**A moderate exercise program is more than sufficient to increase immunity to disease.**

Exercises like cycling, walking, jogging, light resistance training, or even sports can bolster immune function, increase energy production, and fight off disease. Plus, those who regularly engage in [regular physical activity](#) will feel better about themselves, have a lower risk of depression, and have higher energy levels.

**However, there's a caveat to this: excessive exercise can suppress immune function.**<sup>1</sup> For those who already exercise, it's not recommended to increase activity simply for immune-boosting potential. [Long-term heavy exercise](#) could cause harm to the bones, joints, muscles, and to the immune system.

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