

A person wearing a yellow jacket and a blue backpack is walking away on a gravel path through a misty forest. The path is made of grey gravel and leads into the distance. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees, and the air is thick with mist or fog, creating a serene and somewhat somber atmosphere. The lighting is soft and diffused, typical of an overcast day in a wooded area.

# Exercise for Mental Health

The Why and the How



# The Benefits

- Improves:
  - Stress levels - short term and long term
  - Attention and concentration
  - Learning including school performance through improved problem solving
  - Mood and anxiety and may prevent depression from developing
  - Energy
  - Body image
  - Sleep





# Are We Exercising Enough?

In Ontario only 22% of youth are getting the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity



# What Can I Do?

- Age 12-17 years:
  - A total of 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous-intensity
  - Moderate intensity: biking, skating, brisk walk
  - Vigorous intensity: Running, rollerblading, swimming, snow shovelling, basketball, tennis, skiing



# Park Rx

- Park Rx is a prescription for spending time in nature
  - 20 minutes at a time for a total of 120 minutes a week:
    - Improves resilience against stress
    - Boost self esteem
    - Improves confidence & self esteem
    - Reduces mental health problems in the future
    - Encourages teamwork and kindness
    - Develops commitment to the environment

PaRx

*Side effects may include:*  
Living longer  
Increased energy  
Decreased anxiety  
Better mood  
Pain reduction  
Reduced stress levels  
Improved heart health

Ask your doctor.



PaRx

*One Solution to*  
Fatigue  
Anxiety  
Tension  
Stress  
Pain reduction  
Heart health

Learn more about PaRx at [www.parkprescriptions.ca](http://www.parkprescriptions.ca)





# Build Green Into Your Day

- Move your exercise to the park (basketball, rollerblading, biking, hiking)
- Walk the dog at the park
- Get the family out for a walk
- Meeting up with a friend? Try the park!





# Tips to Stay Motivated

- Set small goals: 7 – 20 minutes to start
  - And write them down! Be sure to include your reason for the goal
    - Goal: Walk 15 minutes 5x/week
    - Reason: To sleep better and manage anxiety
- Make a schedule that's realistic
  - When are you most likely to exercise? Before, after school, on your lunch?
- Track your progress (time, effort, number of reps, how you felt, etc.)
- Remember that it's ok to miss a day or two – don't feel guilty
- Don't compare yourself to others
- Find someone to do it with or to cheer you on
- Find an exercise you enjoy and find fun
- Reward yourself!