

each issue of Health & Healing features a topic that serves as a focal point for many of the articles. in may 2021, the feature topic is:

THE MAGIC OF MOVEMENT!

Will we ever find a therapy or pharmacologic substance that offers benefit to so many parts and functions of the body that is equal to the simplicity of movement? Thankfully, we have a remarkable range of options to help ease and often overcome impaired movement ability, no matter the cause: diabetic foot ulcers, osteoporosis, cartilage-riven knees, quirky backs, aching muscles, and a good deal more.

During exercise, our hearts pump a greater volume of blood to active muscle groups, airways expand to let in more air, and blood vessels supplying our skin and digestive system contract, diverting blood to the muscles—supplying them with the oxygen and nutrients they need to provide energy for contractions.

The benefit of all this activity is profound. Studies show that aerobic and anaerobic exercise can dramatically reverse many of the physiological changes we simply call “aging” while also increasing life span. Exercise enhances blood flow to the brain reducing the risk of stroke. It improves cognitive processing. When older people are tested for reasoning skills and memory, the best scores belong to the most active. In many cases, the benefits of movement are also disease-specific. It is often helpful in the treatment of heart disease, back pain, arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, and peripheral vascular disease. The central nervous system declines with age—resulting in slower reaction times and muscles that do not move as quickly—but regular exercise arouses the brain and halts this slide. Older people who are active often have faster muscular movement than younger people who are sedentary. The old saying is true: *Use it or lose it.*

There is more to this magic of movement. When fad diets come and go, exercise remains at the top of the list for effective ways to manage weight—or as a principal instrument in reducing and eliminating obesity. Experts agree that a program of movement can also improve psychological states—it is often especially useful in overcoming depression—and it is a virtual elixir for reducing stress.

There is one important reservation in all this good news about movement that deserves careful attention. Exercise and movement can injure as well as cure. While it is vital to life to move, it is also essential to *move correctly*. How many reps are too many? Is the right movement yoga or jogging, walking or aerobics? How do we maximize the benefits and reduce the risks in our exercise program? There are a host of procedures and therapies to address issues we may have in our *ability* to move.

In the May 2021 edition of *Health&Healing*, we will ask practitioners in what ways, and to what extent, the magic of movement is important in the treatment and advice they offer their patients, how to go about engaging in movement in a safe and beneficial way, and—importantly in many instances—how to move better than ever before. We’ll explore, too, options and advances in treating muscle and skeletal injuries and disease. You are invited to share in this conversation.