



Endorphins: What Are They... and How Can I Get Some?) by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

What Are Endorphins? ("en-DOR-fins")

"Endorphin" is Greek for "the morphine within," describing pain-relief chemicals produced naturally in the body. The central nervous system is equipped with specific receptor sites for morphine-like substances that attach to receptors to help relay "stop-pain" messages. Discovered in the 1970's, scientists now believe that in some cases, anti-stress/pain hormones are secreted to block the signal of emotional pain as well, easing tension, lifting depression or causing a "lighter" or even somewhat euphoric effect.

How Can I Get Some?

You've likely heard that exercise is one way to purposely increase the flow of endorphins. Those who have enjoyed that feel-good experience tend to want to repeat it. Exercise is not a "one size fits all" proposition. Before beginning any exercise program, it's wise to have a medical evaluation and perhaps a session or two with a fitness expert to get some safety and stretching guidelines to prevent injury and to plan a program that's realistic, appropriately challenging, well-rounded and most of all ... fun for you! (*Otherwise, how will you ever get yourself to do it on a regular basis?*) Adding energetic music can boost your spirits and entrain your feet - and perhaps even your heart rate - to match the rhythm. We're more likely to "bop along" if there's a beat. The lift we enjoy after exercise is also partly from the sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. S-t-r-e-t-c-h-ing warmed-up muscles, drinking plenty of water, and exercise to the point of perspiration will help flush toxins, energize, improve skin tone and mental clarity. According to The Mayo Clinic [<http://www.mayohealth.org>], duration of exercise appears to be more important than intensity. Walking, swimming and cycling are also thought to boost Serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to some forms of depression and sleep. Ask your doctor about moderate exercise if insomnia, stress or depression are problems. Smiling, music, hugs, laughter all boost the feel-good factor too!

Bonus: See tip entitled "70 Ways to Feel Really Good--Fast!" on www.relaxintuit.com

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