

## Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise

**Stephen C. Putnam**

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"Marathon Mind" a label for ADHD, a condition with behaviors that often reflect a need for constant physical and mental movement. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a disease that affects "an estimated 15% of American children" with symptoms of hyperactivity, impulsivity, inattention, and lack of control is most often treated with Ritalin, a stimulant medication. The author has used his master's degree in guidance and psychological services to study other means of treating these children, primarily exercise.

Exercise, a natural high, shows evidence of the same chemical benefit as medication. It enhances classroom toleration, allowing the reduction or termination of the repressive medication, and offering increased feelings of accomplishment. Exercise may help by using the natural process to produce an endorphin effect. Children should be encouraged to begin an aerobic form of exercise suitable to their age and interests. Flexibility and parent participation are important to adapt the exercise into the child's lifestyle. It may require time to find the right activity, but those who respond well to medication often are the most responsive to activity, and exercise creates no side effects, as medication may.

"Have we, as a society, substituted medication for the exercise that is no longer a routine part of life?" In the past, energy was required for survival tasks. Now, with the advent of remote controls and easy living, the typical child spends much time relaxing. Excess energy may build up in susceptible people, causing agitation and similar symptoms. Following Putnam's advice, parents should keep their children moving.

The usefulness of this resource goes beyond ADHD. People with other dysfunctional diseases such as depression, anxiety, and sensory deprivation may benefit, according to the author, who discusses the pros and cons of exercise as an alternative treatment. Readers may use the book's checklists, motivational ideas, tips, and tests to find how an individual is affected by exercise. These suggestions will help set up a program of fitness. Methods to take a heart rate, and exercise safety and risks are discussed to develop a safe program. The author uses medical research and studies to back up his concepts. This handy guide could transform the struggle with a "difficult" child into an enjoyable, healthy relationship.

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