ASSIGNMENT!!!

Refrigerator Organization:

- Read the article provided.
- Clean/wash the inside and outside of your fridge. You do not need to clean the freezer.
- Take this time to also go through each food item and throw away outdated/bad food.
- **Create a list** of foods you threw out and why.
- Use the guide provided to safely reorganize your fridge.

**Make sure you consult your parents BEFORE you throw anything away!**

PANTRY CLEAN OUT

- Go through each food item and throw away outdated/ bad food.
- Consider donating what you won’t use that is still good.
- **Create a list** of foods you threw out and why.
- Were there any foods you could donate? Create a list for donated food as well.

**Make sure you consult your parents BEFORE you throw anything away!**
How To Clean the Inside of Your Fridge in 30 Minutes or Less

BY SHIFRAH COMBITHS
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Last week, I was getting ready for my mother to come for a visit. So naturally, I had to clean out my fridge! I used the method she taught me, and 20 minutes later my fridge was mom-worthy clean. Here’s how I do it:

Empty the Fridge

You can do this all at once or in sections. I prefer to do it all at once. The thought of the food sitting out helps me do everything faster. Set aside two areas for setting items down: one area for things that need to be cleaned out (outdated leftovers in tupperware, for example) and another area for items that need to be put back into the fridge. Anything that needs to be discarded that’s not in a container you want to keep goes straight into the trash, of course.

Clean Contents

If your fridge is less than pristine, chances are that your milk carton and olive jar aren’t squeaky clean either. With a damp rag, wipe the bottoms of items and also clean any drips on the sides. If lid areas need a little TLC, tackle those too. You want everything you return to the fridge to be clean so you’re not spreading messes around. You can clean out leftovers containers now, or wait until you’re done with the fridge.

Clean the Inside of the Fridge

If you can remove shelves and drawers, do it. Spray the inside of the fridge with a solution of vinegar and water, concentrating on soiled areas and let it soak in. Wash the removed shelves and drawers with warm soapy water and set them aside to dry. Head back to the fridge and wipe everything down with a rag.

Return Contents

Dry shelves and drawers and return them to the fridge. Next, place all newly cleaned items back in the fridge in their respective areas. (I have my fridge sections labelled to help keep items where they belong, but that’s just me.)

Step back and admire your sparkling fridge!
13 Mental Health Benefits of Exercise!

By Sophia Breene

Many people hit the gym or pound the pavement to improve cardiovascular health, build muscle, and of course, get a rockin’ bod, but working out has above-the-neck benefits, too. For the past decade or so, scientists have pondered how exercising can boost brain function. Regardless of age or fitness level (yup, this includes everyone from mall-walkers to marathoners), studies show that making time for exercise provides some serious mental benefits. Get inspired to exercise by reading up on these unexpected ways that working out can benefit mental health, relationships and lead to a healthier and happier life overall.

1. Reduce Stress
Rough day at the office? Take a walk or head to the gym for a quick workout. One of the most common mental benefits of exercise is stress relief. Working up a sweat can help manage physical and mental stress. Exercise also increases concentrations of norepinephrine, a chemical that can moderate the brain’s response to stress. So go ahead and get sweaty -- working out can reduce stress and boost the body’s ability to deal with existing mental tension. Win-win!

2. Boost Happy Chemicals
Slogging through a few miles on the ‘mill can be tough, but it’s worth the effort! Exercise releases endorphins, which create feelings of happiness and euphoria. Studies have shown that exercise can even alleviate symptoms among the clinically depressed. For this reason, docs recommend that people suffering from depression or anxiety (or those who are just feeling blue) pencil in plenty of gym time. In some cases, exercise can be just as effective as antidepressant pills in treating depression. Don’t worry if you’re not exactly the gym rat type -- getting a happy buzz from working out for just 30 minutes a few times a week can instantly boost overall mood.

3. Improve Self-Confidence
Hop on the treadmill to look (and more importantly, feel) like a million bucks. On a very basic level, physical fitness can boost self-esteem and improve positive self-image. Regardless of weight, size, gender or age, exercise can quickly elevate a person’s perception of his or her attractiveness, that is, self-worth. How’s that for feeling the (self) love?

4. Enjoy The Great Outdoors
For an extra boost of self-love, take that workout outside. Exercising in the great outdoors can increase self-esteem even more. Find an outdoor workout that fits your style, whether it’s rock-climbing, hiking, renting a canoe or just taking a jog in the park. Plus, all that Vitamin D acquired from soaking up the sun (while wearing sunscreen, of course!) can lessen the likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms. Why book a spa day when a little fresh air and sunshine (and exercise) can work wonders for self-confidence and happiness?

5. Prevent Cognitive Decline
It’s unpleasant, but it’s true -- as we get older, our brains get a little... hazy. As aging and degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's kill off brain cells, the noggin actually shrinks, losing many important brain functions in the process. While exercise and a healthy diet can’t “cure” Alzheimer’s, they can help shore up the brain against cognitive decline that begins after age 45. Working out, especially between age 25 and 45, boosts the chemicals in the brain that support and prevent degeneration of the hippocampus, an important part of the brain for memory and learning.
6. Alleviate Anxiety
Quick Q&A: Which is better at relieving anxiety -- a warm bubble bath or a 20-minute jog? You might be surprised at the answer. The warm and fuzzy chemicals that are released during and after exercise can help people with anxiety disorders calm down. Hopping on the track or treadmill for some moderate-to-high intensity aerobic exercise (intervals, anyone?) can reduce anxiety sensitivity. And we thought intervals were just a good way to burn calories!

7. Boost Brainpower
Those buff lab rats might be smarter than we think. Various studies on mice and men have shown that cardiovascular exercise can create new brain cells (aka neurogenesis) and improve overall brain performance. Ready to apply for a Nobel Prize? Studies suggest that a tough workout increases levels of a brain-derived protein (known as BDNF) in the body, believed to help with decision making, higher thinking and learning. Smarty (spandex) pants, indeed.

8. Sharpen Memory
Get ready to win big at Go Fish. Regular physical activity boosts memory and ability to learn new things. Getting sweaty increases production of cells in hippocampus responsible for memory and learning. For this reason, research has linked children's brain development with level of physical fitness (take that, recess haters!). But exercise-based brainpower isn’t just for kids. Even if it’s not as fun as a game of Red Rover, working out can boost memory among grown-ups, too. A study showed that running sprints improved vocabulary retention among healthy adults.

9. Help Control Addiction
The brain releases dopamine, the “reward chemical” in response to any form of pleasure, be that exercise, sex, drugs, alcohol or food. Unfortunately, some people become addicted to dopamine and dependent on the substances that produce it, like drugs or alcohol (and more rarely, food and sex). On the bright side, exercise can help in addiction recovery. Short exercise sessions can also effectively distract drug or alcohol addicts, making them de-prioritize cravings (at least in the short term). Working out when on the wagon has other benefits, too. Alcohol abuse disrupts many body processes, including circadian rhythms. As a result, alcoholics find they can't fall asleep (or stay asleep) without drinking. Exercise can help reboot the body clock, helping people hit the hay at the right time.

10. Increase Relaxation
Ever hit the hay after a long run or weight session at the gym? For some, a moderate workout can be the equivalent of a sleeping pill, even for people with insomnia. Moving around five to six hours before bedtime raises the body's core temperature. When the body temp drops back to normal a few hours later, it signals the body that it’s time to sleep.

11. Get More Done
Feeling uninspired in the cubicle? The solution might be just a short walk or jog away. Research shows that workers who take time for exercise on a regular basis are more productive and have more energy than their more sedentary peers. While busy schedules can make it tough to squeeze in a gym session in the middle of the day, some experts believe that midday is the ideal time for a workout due to the body’s circadian rhythms.

12. Tap Into Creativity
Most people end a tough workout with a hot shower, but maybe we should be breaking out the colored pencils instead. A heart-pumping gym session can boost creativity for up to two hours afterwards. Supercharge post-workout inspiration by exercising outdoors and interacting with nature (see benefit #4). Next time you need a burst of creative thinking, hit the trails for a long walk or run to refresh the body and the brain at the same time.
13. Inspire Others
Whether it’s a pick-up game of soccer, a group class at the gym, or just a run with a friend, exercise rarely happens in a bubble. And that’s good news for all of us. Studies show that most people perform better on aerobic tests when paired up with a workout buddy. Pin it to inspiration or good old-fashioned competition, nobody wants to let the other person down. In fact, being part of a team is so powerful that it can actually raise athletes’ tolerances for pain. Even fitness beginners can inspire each other to push harder during a sweat session, so find a workout buddy and get moving!

Working out can have positive effects far beyond the gym (and beach season). Gaining self-confidence, getting out of a funk, and even thinking smarter are some of the motivations to take time for exercise on a regular basis.

Assignment: After reading the article, choose a physical activity to get your body moving for at least 30 minutes! This could be playing a sport, taking the dog for a walk, completing rigorous cleaning tasks, etc.

Answer the following questions:
1. What did you do? For how long?
2. How did you feel before? During? After?
3. What did you notice about how it affected your mood?
Reflections on Random Acts of Kindness

So, what is Random Acts of Kindness, better known to me as "RAK"?

A little bit about Random Acts of Kindness

It is an unplanned act whose goal is to bring kindness and spread kindness to those we know and those we do not know. It’s a practice that offers hope to unsuspecting people to provide a ray of light in someone’s life. It brings a smile to a frown; it can create a positive emotion when none was expected; it can be the beginning of a new start; and it has the capability to change how we treat one another.

I’ve been fortunate to witness “RAK” first hand many times. However, I know my experience is not the norm.

The first thing to understand about RAK is that it can’t be about you, it is about bringing joy to others.

Random Acts of Kindness in Action

Let me share a great example: Last week, while doing a presentation to middle & high school students from three surrounding counties, a powerful RAK showed up.

It wasn’t planned. It just happened.

So, here’s a little backstory, a student bravely shared how she is being bullied at her current school. She shared how challenging everyday life can be without a friend to sit with or talk to and how painful it is to not have someone to support you. She courageously explained how being different than the status quo makes her a target. She shared how a friendly smile, a hug, or compliment could brightness someone’s day.

The beauty of what we do at STARS, and with the MOVE2STAND training, is that we can be the nudge, the voice that says “take some sort of action to be of support to someone else.”

When young people or adults decide they want to support positive change, incredible acts of courage and kindness occur.

As facilitators, we often don’t get to see all the change that comes from our work. We know the seeds have been planted and, with a little sun light and water, the message will grow.

In this case, only hours after leaving the training, I received a picture from a teacher stating, “Today was a wake-up call for them, an eye opening experience for many and that they could and needed to do more.”
The teacher shared with me during our last break, one student from another school went up to the student who is isolated and being bullied, reached out to her to give her that friendly smile, that hug and that compliment she needed so much. I found out they exchanged numbers and have begun a new friendship.

There is comfort knowing, in the words of the Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer, “We can’t do everything and there is a sense of liberation in that but we can all do something.”

My challenge to everyone reading this is to do “something” that brings joy and kindness to others.

Random Acts of Kindness!

1. Read this article provided.
2. Perform a random act of kindness
3. Reflect on how it made the person feel and how you felt doing this.

Date: 

Parent/Guardian Signature: 

Describe the random act of kindness you completed: 

Reflection: How did you feel? How did the person receiving the act of kindness feel?