

Your body, for all its faults, is a gift from God, so make sure you look after it

SPORT

Fr Vlad Felzmann

Sport, like music, can have healing properties. Darren Reitz, 34, said he started fishing after being attacked in a nightclub in Southend-on-sea, Essex, in 2017. He took up the hobby, alongside motocross, after being the victim of an unprovoked assault. He required four metal plates in his face owing to the incident.

Reitz was rewarded for his commitment to fishing. On Saturday 27th April, he landed a huge catfish at Chigborough Lakes nature reserve in Maldon, Essex, reeling in what is thought to be the biggest fish caught on a rod in freshwater in Britain.

Reitz said it took him and three others 50 minutes to haul the 143lb (64.4kg) catfish out of the water on Saturday night. He said: "I'm over the moon, I can't stop talking about it, you never think you will catch something like that. And that is the joy of fishing, I guess I was just in the right place at the right time."

'Take care of your body – it's the only place you have to live'

Jim Rohn (1930-2009) an American entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker, issued a reminder to "take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."

Sports have several health benefits, such as preventing and managing noncommunicable diseases. These include: heart disease, stroke, diabetes and several cancers; preventing hypertension; maintaining healthy body weight; improving mental health, quality of life and well-being; reducing body fat or controlling body weight; developing fitness and skills; fighting depression and anxiety; challenging yourself and setting goals; strengthening bones and aiding co-ordination, balance and flexibility.

Exercise can help prevent excess weight gain or help you keep off lost weight. When you take part in physical activity, you burn calories. The more intense the activity, the more calories you burn.

Based on the walking classifications from the *Compendium of Physical Activity*, a 170-pound person would burn approximately 80 calories walking one mile at a slow pace (2.0 mph); 74 calories walking one mile at a moderate pace (2.8 mph); 83 calories walking one mile at a brisk pace (3.5 mph); or 91 calories walking one really fast.

Regular trips to the gym are great, but don't worry if you can't find a large chunk of time to



exercise every day. Any amount of activity is better than none. To gain the benefits of exercise, just get more active throughout your day. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator or rev up your household chores. Consistency is key.

Benefits of exercise

Exercise combats health conditions and diseases. Worried about heart disease? Hoping to prevent high blood pressure? No matter what your current weight is, being active boosts high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, the "good" cholesterol, and it decreases unhealthy triglycerides. This one-two punch keeps your blood flowing smoothly, which lowers your risk of heart and blood vessel, called cardiovascular, diseases. It also can help improve cognitive function and helps lower the risk of death from all causes.

Exercise improves mood. Need an emotional lift? Or need to lower stress after a bad day? A gym session or brisk walk can help. Physical activity stimulates many brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier, more relaxed and less anxious. "To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our

mind strong and clear" taught Siddhartha Gautama (6-5th century bce) most commonly referred to as the Buddha.

You also may feel better about your appearance and yourself when you exercise regularly, which can boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem.

Energy boost

Exercise boosts energy. Winded by grocery shopping or household chores? Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and boost your endurance.

Canadian writer Robin Sharma, born 1964, best known for his *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* book series, made it clear that "if you don't make time for exercise, you'll probably have to make time for illness."

Exercise sends oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and helps your cardiovascular system work more efficiently. And when your heart and lung health improve, you have more energy to tackle daily chores.

Exercise promotes better sleep. Struggling to snooze? Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster, get better sleep and deepen your sleep. Just don't exercise too close to bedtime, or you may be too energised to sleep.

Exercise can be fun — and social!

Exercise and physical activity can be fun. They give you a chance to unwind, enjoy the outdoors or simply do activities that make you happy. Physical activity also can help you connect with family or friends in a fun social setting.

So, take a dance class, hit the hiking trails or join a football team. Find a physical activity you enjoy, and just do it. Bored? Try something new, or do something with friends or family.

Feel better and have fun

Exercise and physical activity are great ways to feel better, boost your health and have fun. Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity. Or get at least 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week. You also can get an equal combination of moderate and vigorous activity. Aim to spread out this exercise over a few days or more in a week.

For even more health benefits, it is suggested that getting 300 minutes a week or more of moderate aerobic activity will help. Exercising this much may help with weight loss or keeping off lost weight. But even small amounts of physical activity can be helpful. Being active for short periods of

time during the day can add up and have health benefits.

Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. One set of each exercise is enough for health and fitness benefits. Use a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 to 15 repetitions.

Moderate aerobic exercise includes activities such as brisk walking, biking, swimming and mowing the lawn.

If you want to lose weight, you may not only limit your calorie-intake but need to exercise more.

The body is a gift from God

Muhammad Ali (1942-2016) is regarded as one of the most significant sports figures of the 20th century and the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time. He said: "I don't count my sit-ups. I only start counting when it starts hurting because they're the only ones that count."

Remember to check with a doctor before starting a new exercise programme, especially if you have any concerns about your fitness or haven't exercised for a long time. Also check with a doctor if you have chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or arthritis.

I do not waste the weakness/evil in my heart. I use vanity and pride and desire to be able to help God for as long as possible. So, I keep on keeping on with exercises.

Given the fact that I have celebrated my 85th birthday – and spent nine months in my mother's womb - I do 86 mini-press-ups on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays and 86 full-squats on Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturdays.

A video of my early morning exercises can be found on my website fatherofvlad.com. I force myself to travel on foot – rather take short bus rides – and I always walk up and down Tube escalators and up to four flights of stairs in a hospital.

If your vanity-pride is not strong enough to keep you keeping on with your exercise routines, you might find it helpful to team up with a friend or two, and together do what you would like to do.

I see my body – including my mind – as a gift from God and know that to miss-use a gift insults the giver of that gift. Since, in a few years, I am bound to meet the giver face to face, I do my best to look after my body and my mind.

As Hercule Poirot uses his grey cells to solve murder mysteries, writing keeps my grey-cells active. Hence these fortnightly pieces. I hope they are Ubuntu: good for you as they are good for me.