

# Get a Move On: Five Reasons to Exercise

by Judith Fertig

The research is in. Getting off the couch and moving away from TV, video and computer screens pays off in more ways than one.

## **Helps maintain a healthy weight:**

Everyone knows that the more active we are, the more calories we work off, and the more our weight stays at a healthy number on the scale.

**Improves brain function:** “The decline the brain experiences late in life is not inevitable; it can be affected by things like habitual exercise,” asserts Dr. Eric Larson, of the Group Health Research Institute, in Seattle. Larson and his team of researchers published a pivotal study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* showing that older adults that exercised at least three times a week were 38 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease. The theory is that exercise not only increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain, it may also reduce the abnormality known as brain plaque that has been associated with Alzheimer’s.

**Helps prevent diabetes:** A study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found that moderate exercise led to a 50 to 60 percent reduction in the risk for developing diabetes, and delayed the onset of Type 2 diabetes among those already at high risk.

**Lowers blood pressure:** After reviewing 15 studies on exercise and high blood pressure, the American College of Sports Medicine concluded that moderate exercise decreased blood pressure in approximately 75 percent of individuals with hypertension.

**Keeps us going:** The good news is that exercise—especially the short, intense bursts in circuit or interval training—helps maintain and develop muscles, strength and stamina, according to a recent study in the