
The Perception of Effectiveness of Swimming to Reduce Stress among Urban Residents

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Stress is of major public health significance. Health distractions, social issues, and abnormal behaviors illustrate a reflection of the level of stress. When people feel stress, body reacts by releasing chemicals (hormones) to the blood to supply more energy and strength. For compensated mechanism, to expel the rest of these chemical formations from the body and to produce feel good hormones (serotonin and endorphin) requires active physical performance. Especially this study has identified swimming as the best physical exercise modality to reduce stress. As an all-round physical activity it keeps physical, physiological and psychological status at an extraordinary level comparatively to other physical exercises. Its high intensity, rhythmic and aerobic form improves endurance, cardio vascular fitness and builds muscular strength for better perfusion to eliminate chemicals from body efficiently. In addition, water accumulation makes unique qualities to reduce stress effectively, making a perfect place for exercise with natural hydrotherapy, wide range of hydraulic pressure, **higher density**, efficient whole body involvement with locomotor function, reduce weight-bearing stress and allow successful abdominal breathing with floating and earthing. Opportunity to perform without interpersonal competition, its exercise adherence to recreational activity, predictable physical exercise modality for all ages even for that disabled is significant. In the Sri Lankan society, awareness of swimming is very poor and have not been identified as beneficial. However swimming in a simply manner will reap a number of advantages. Aim of this study is to introduce swimming as the best physical exercise modality to reduce stress to the people. This study has carried out with 200 Colombo district resident's perceptions of effectiveness of swimming via a questioner and interview focusing on stress indicators. Treatment group-A, 100 people consisted of early started regular swimming⁷⁵, swimming as a part of daily routing 25 and control group-B consisted of 100 of people who do not perform swimming. The study has recognized, that swimming provide significant adjunct for improve physiological, psychological and emotional response for stressors. From treatment group 90% achieved mood uplift, 84% improved sleep patterns, 88% achieved reduced disease conditions and irritation, 82% achieved better endurance, 68% improved interest in sex, 98% improved physical fitness, and 58% improved body image. In addition, they were significantly low with anger, fatigue, confusion and tension after swim for more than month. However control group B, people done gym exercise and jogging, have not achieved significant stress reduction out come.

Keywords: stress reduction; urban living; effectiveness of swimming; perception, therapy