



A Natural High

Endurance aerobic activities (like jogging, cycling, dancing, rowing and the like) have long been seen as reducing stress, relieving anxiety, enhancing mood and decreasing the perception of pain. The high that can sometimes accompany jogging even led to the creation of its own term, “runner's high.”

There are various theories on how this “high” occurs related to the natural release in the body of endorphins, endocannabinoids or leptin. These “natural drugs” activate the same mechanisms in the brain as opioids, cannabis or other drugs. While the research on the “runner’s high” is not definitive, there is solid evidence that exercise, even in smaller doses, can boost your mood, raise your energy level, relieve anxiety and make you feel calm and relaxed. This on top of all the other benefits of physical activity!

Instructional strategies

1. Introduce the expression “runner’s high” and ask students questions like:
 - a. What do you think the expression means?
 - b. Why is it called a high? [Share a wee bit of information about the natural processes that are similar to what happens when people take drugs.]
 - c. Could you say

