

# Compulsive Exercise

Compulsive exercise is not a recognized clinical diagnosis in the DSM-5, but many people struggle with symptoms associated with this term. If you are concerned about your or a loved one's relationship with exercise, please speak with a treatment professional.

## WARNING SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF COMPULSIVE EXERCISE

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- Exercise that significantly interferes with important activities, occurs at inappropriate times or in inappropriate settings, or when the individual continues to exercise despite injury or other medical complications
- Intense anxiety, depression, irritability, feelings of guilt, and/or distress if unable to exercise
- Maintains excessive, rigid exercise regimen – despite weather, fatigue, illness, or injury
- Discomfort with rest or inactivity
- Exercise used to manage emotions
- Exercise as a means of purging (needing to “get rid of” or “burn off” calories)
- Exercise as permission to eat
- Exercise that is secretive or hidden
- Feeling as though you are not good enough, fast enough or not pushing hard enough during a period of exercise; overtraining
- Withdrawal from friends and family

## HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF COMPULSIVE EXERCISE

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- Bone density loss (osteopenia or osteoporosis)
- Loss of menstrual cycle (in women)
- [Female Athlete Triad](#) (in women)
- Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S)
- Persistent muscle soreness
- Chronic bone & joint pain
- Increased incidence of injury (overuse injuries, stress fractures, etc.)
- Persistent fatigue and sluggishness
- Altered resting heart rate
- Increased frequency of illness & upper respiratory infections

\*\*These statistics have been taken from [www.nationaleatingdisorder.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorder.org)

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