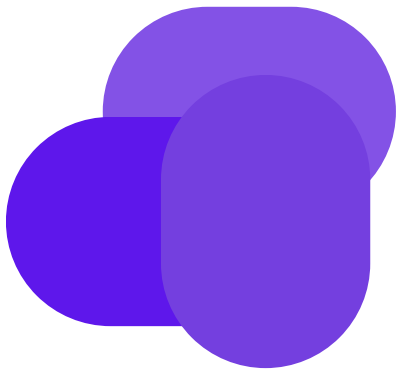


ESSAY OUTLINE

EXAMPLE



PREPARED BY :
THERESA ORR, PhD

ESSAY OUTLINE

Introduction

Overall theme	The link between regular physical exercise and academic success in university students
Background context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition of regular exercise (e.g., 150 minutes of moderate activity per week)• Overview of cognitive load theory• Existing research on physical activity and mental health
Thesis statement	Regular exercise improves academic performance by enhancing concentration, reducing stress, and supporting memory retention.
Signpost sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, this essay will examine how exercise boosts focus and attention.• It will then explore the role of exercise in stress management.• Finally, it will discuss how exercise improves memory consolidation and learning.

Body Paragraph 1

Theme 1	Exercise and focus
Key Point 1	Regular aerobic exercise improves attention span and concentration
Evidence	Smith & Jones (2019) found students who exercised 3x/week scored higher on sustained attention tests
Citations	Smith & Jones, 2019

Key Point 2	Students who engage in regular physical activity demonstrate higher levels of focus and sustained attention during study sessions compared to sedentary students.
Evidence	2022 Australian student health survey data
Citations	Australian Health Survey, 2022
Body Paragraph 2	
Theme 2	Exercise and stress reduction
Key Point 1	Exercise reduces cortisol levels and improves emotional regulation
Evidence	University of Melbourne study on exercise and stress in exam periods
Citations	Green et al., 2021
Key Point 2	Students who exercise report greater emotional resilience
Evidence	Student wellbeing report
Citations	USQ Student Report, 2020

Body Paragraph 3

Theme 3	Exercise and memory
Key Point 1	Physical activity promotes hippocampal function
Evidence	Neuroscience research on exercise-induced neuroplasticity
Citations	Lee & Zhang, 2018
Key Point 2	Exercise breaks during study improve retention and recall
Evidence	Pilot study comparing passive vs. active study sessions
Citations	Gomez et al., 2022
Conclusion	
Synthesis	<p>Regular physical activity enhances academic performance by boosting concentration, reducing stress, and supporting memory – all of which contribute to better learning outcomes.</p> <p>Why this matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps students perform better under pressure• Encourages sustainable study habits
Final Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students should consider integrating short bursts of activity into their study routine• Future research could explore the effects of different types of exercise (e.g., strength vs. cardio) on learning• Universities could implement low-cost campus fitness initiatives to support student performance