

5 Ways to Boost Your Mental Fitness

We don't get to be physically fit by doing exercise once in our lives. Our mental strength is the same. Improving our mental fitness requires time, practice, and consistency. Making it a constant practice everyday would bring lots of benefits in your life such as increasing productivity and happiness.

Mental fitness training isn't as difficult as getting ready to run a marathon, but it does take the same level of dedication. Here are 5 ways to get started and build your mental fitness:

1. Say No to things that no longer serve you

We are caught up in the fast-paced daily life where being busy is seen as a badge of honor. Somehow in our society busy and over-scheduling have become the norm and being busy is mistakenly labeled as being productive while in fact, being busy for the sake of being busy is neither productive nor healthy for the mind and body.

Know that you are at choice, every.single.time.

Your time and energy are precious and it takes courage to say No to the things that no longer serve you. So that you have more time and energy to nourish your being and from this grounded, energized state, you are able to focus on the things you really, really want to do.

Saying NO to something means saying YES to something else that is more meaningful and important to you, e.g. your self-care / mental and physical health / peace / dreams and goals etc.

Quest 1: If saying No is difficult for you, practice asking for some time to decide, instead of giving a default Yes answer on the spot.

Quest 2: Review your busy calendar for the week and ask yourself: what is 1 thing that drains your energy that you can seek help for or delegate?

2. Manage your energy, not time

No one knows your energy limits better than you. Slowing down and identifying how you replenish your energy on a daily basis would enable you to be mentally fit.

While time is a finite resource, energy works differently. It is a renewable resource.

Identifying activities that recharge and drain you, would be a helpful strategy to manage your energy better everyday. This could be taking the time to create or read, doing sports, incorporating some quiet "me time" to rest and do nothing and just BE, spending time with the people you love the most, etc.

Setting boundaries or pacing ourselves is as important as replenishing our energy. Reject the false economy of "powering through" as this will drain your energy to the point that it is harder to

replenish. Set the limit of what you can do within a day, to ensure your energy can be fully recovered the next day. This helps you sustain motivation and mood and in return make you more productive and happier as a result.

Quest 1: What are some activities you enjoy doing so much that you forget about time AND help you recharge? If they have not made it into your busy calendar, give yourself permission to include them into your week.

Quest 2: What is 1 thing you can start doing regularly, that can protect your energy levels?

3. Slow down to speed up

How often have you rushed into your day without even thinking about how you'd like things to go? Before you know it, something or someone has rubbed you the wrong way, and you've reacted automatically with disappointment, frustration, impatience or rage.

It's estimated that 95% of our behavior runs on autopilot.

You have the power to end these patterns by incorporating a daily mindfulness break so you are more in line with how you would like your days to be and live life by design, not by default.

Making time to slow down for mindfulness practice on a regular basis will help you operate from a place that is more grounded and stable, more intentional each day.

When you are in a mindful state, you focus on the current experience you are having and not think of the past or the future. You accept things as they are, so that they don't have much pull or power over you.

What usually get in the way for most people to do mindfulness practice regularly is the many distractions of seemingly more important tasks at hand or the crave for multi-tasking. Multi-tasking does not make you more efficient, single-tasking is! Your brain is overwhelmed when you multitask, it takes you away from the present moment, drains your concentration and energy faster & could even negatively impact the quality of your relationships.

Many studies show that daily mindfulness practice produce significant improvements in attention, focus, energy, productivity and reducing anxiety & stress. It's even said to contribute to life longevity!

If mindfulness practice is new to you, please be gentle on yourself, know that it is okay to have a challenging start or if your mind often drifts away. Key is to keep trying. You will gain better control on your mind and its automatic thoughts over time and respond to any challenging situation with a calm, clear mind.

Quest 1: Practice incorporating senses of sight, smell, touch, and taste to make space for being present. What can you hold onto or breath into that brings calmness for 2 minutes?

Quest 2: Setting intention is like setting an underlying motivation of what we think, say and do. It would make your words, actions and responses more aligned to how you would like them to be. Ask yourself before starting your day, “what is my intention for today? / how would I like to show up today to have the best impact?”

4. The power of gratitude

In today’s fast-paced life, we can find ourselves perpetually focusing on what’s next at the expense of recognizing the beauty around us and the blessings we already have in our lives. It is easier to compare ourselves to other people’s lives and feel we aren’t enough than counting our blessings.

Research in the field of positive psychology shows that both feeling and expressing this powerful emotion of gratitude, can heighten health, happiness, and productivity — at home and in the workplace.

Gratitude is a process of seeing and acknowledging the goodness what we already have, like the air we breathe, the beautiful sunrises and sunsets, the kindness of people around us and many other things we already have. Often times these could be hard to notice when we allow ourselves getting carried away with this fast-paced of life.

In a world that seems out of our control, one thing we can control is our thoughts. Though that comes with practice and consistency. We can actively choose to focus on things we are thankful for, an act of appreciation.

Quest 1: What is 1 thing that went right today? Try to be very specific about what it is that you appreciate, so that your daily gratitude practice isn’t going to be boring after a while.

Quest 2: Who are the people in your life you can rely on or love you unconditionally?

5. Inner work: The missing link

For the vast majority of people, they think thriving is when they devote so much time to focus on outer work. When all our goals are focused on the outer work, we may miss the importance of doing the inner work that helps the outer work succeed.

Inner work explores our inner world and personal experiences & perceptions.

Inner work brings light, compassion and awareness to the conscious, subconscious and unconscious realms of our being.

It is about diving inward: speaking to yourself, being in connection with yourself, seeing yourself, knowing yourself, loving yourself.

It can be gut-wrenching and endless dance between your inner and outer world. Your fears and desires and your personality and soul. It is a journey of self discovery that allows you to look at your life honestly and objectively.

It requires courage, to feel the things you don't want to feel and challenge your own beliefs.

To do the unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

But many found this process to be liberating, rewarding and even life-changing. Through doing inner work, you build stronger inner foundation which is another essential tool in your mental fitness toolbox that can enable you to rise to your higher self.

With increased awareness of ourselves, comes the ability to notice and rewire ourselves in more helpful ways so we are more capable to initiate change and transformation, rewrite our stories and create the new reality we long for.

So if you feel like you have tried everything, couldn't possibly work any harder and yet don't get the life or the results you've wanted, it is probably time to look inward!

Quest 1: What do you think must occur during your lifetime so that you consider your life to have been satisfying and well lived, a life of few or no regrets?

Quest 2: What has been your biggest achievement in the past that you are proud of and looking back: what were your beliefs, values, strengths, patterns of behavior that you believe enabled those?