

# Staying Mentally Fit

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 31.1% of American adults will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their life. Of this number, 73% will experience a psychological complication such as anxiety and depression, with 77% of these individuals experiencing some type of physical complication due to stress. These could include issues such as high blood pressure, stomach issues, headaches, and skin conditions. So, what can you do to stay mentally fit? Let's take a look at some steps you can take.

There are things you can do for your physical health that will, in turn, help you stay mentally fit. One thing you can do is to exercise for 30 minutes every day. This delivers oxygen to your brain, helping you improve your memory, reasoning abilities and reaction times. Another is to actively manage your health. Going to the doctor for regular check-ups or when you are sick helps you take care of your physical health by addressing issues early on.

Believe it or not, what you eat can also help with your mental well-being. Eating foods like vegetables, fruits, protein, nuts, and other foods that have a high nutritional content will help reduce your chances of feeling depressed and stressed, which will, in turn, improve your mood. You can also boost your Vitamin B intake by eating whole grain cereals, green vegetables, and dairy as Vitamin B is vital to brain health.

It is also important to make sleep a priority. According to the Department of Homeland Security, *“Researchers have found that people need at least eight hours of sleep. When you do not get enough sleep, you are at risk of numerous adverse effects – many of which have to do with your mental health. Not getting enough sleep is linked to higher levels of stress, anxiety symptoms, and even depression.”*

So, what are some things you can do to more directly impact your mental fitness? One option is to read a book or article on a regular basis. Maintaining an interest in the world around you helps keep your mind stimulated, which could then lead to interesting conversations with friends, families, and even strangers. According to Better Health, *“This gives your brain an opportunity to explore, examine and inquire.”*

You can also challenge your brain power and memory. Learning a new language, filling out crossword puzzles, playing chess or taking up a new hobby gives your brain a workout which helps build neural pathways. Even watching game shows or playing question and answer games exercises your brain. These tactics can not only improve your brain health but also your social life.

Lastly, it is important to develop stress relief techniques, which can vary from one person to another. Journaling, drawing, writing music or poems, writing stories, or engaging in other creative activities can prove relaxing to some people. Others prefer working out or reading. And still others simply need to spend time with friends and family.

The brain is a muscle that needs to be exercised, just like the other muscles in our body. By exercising your brain, you can create a healthier outlook on life. Not only can it improve your mental health, it can also improve your physical health. Try to incorporate a few of these tips into your daily life – your brain will thank you.

## **References**

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ten-tips/10-tips-to-improve-your-mental-fitness>

<https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/7-tips-mental-fitness>

## **Here are some other resources on staying Mentally Fit:**

Staying Mentally Fit

<https://www.mhanational.org/staying-mentally-healthy>

Quick Facts on Why You Should Stay Mentally Fit, and Tips

<https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/mental-fitness>

How to Make Yourself Mentally Stronger

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201701/10-strategies-make-yourself-mentally-stronger>

How to Look After Your Mental Health

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health>

Staying Mentally Fit During COVID-19

<https://thinkhealth.priorityhealth.com/10-tips-for-staying-mentally-fit-during-the-covid-19-state-shutdown/>

Nutrition

<https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/eat-healthy/how-to-eat-healthy/index.html>