

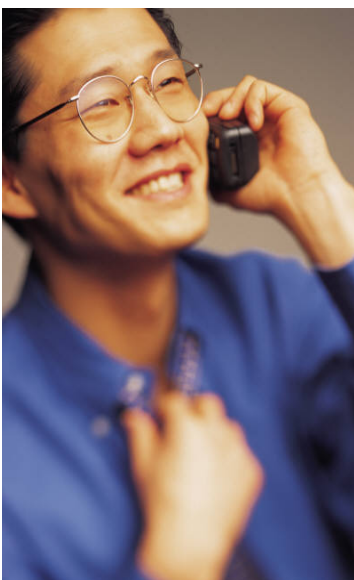
Fifteen Tips for Mental Fitness

1 Learn to Relax

Allow yourself to let go of inner tensions by giving yourself a “mini vacation.” Give your mind a break by becoming engrossed in a good book, watching a movie, listening to music, taking a walk, working on a hobby, meditating or similar activity that is relaxing for you.

4 Find A Friend

Friendships are very important to mental fitness. Working on developing and maintaining friendships is one of the best ways to continue growing as a person. Expressing feelings and ideas to another person can help us clarify what’s truly important to ourselves.



2 Be Kind To Yourself

People are frequently too hard on themselves when things don’t go right. Tune into your self talk, and counteract your negative thoughts about yourself with positive statements.

5 Learn to Say “No”

Often people feel the need to respond *immediately* when a friend or family member make a request. Help yourself set limits by avoiding the quick “knee jerk” response in the affirmative. Instead, let them know you will get back to them shortly. Then do a check of your schedule; ask yourself if you really want to add to your load. Give yourself permission to say “No” when you are too busy to take on additional commitments of your time or energy.

7 Do It Now

Procrastination can lead to negative feelings about yourself. One doesn’t have to go to extremes, but it can feel very satisfying at the end of the day to have accomplished a hard task or met a difficult situation head-on.

3 Eat Properly

Nutrition has a direct impact on feeling mentally positive. Limit your intake of sugar, fat, salt, caffeine and alcohol and help yourself stay mentally fit.

6 Exercise

Check with your doctor about what level is best for you. Even a brisk 15-minute walk, three times a week does wonders for how you think and feel.



8 Adapt To Rather Than Resist Change

Change is inevitable and is a necessary part of life. The important thing is to be patient with yourself when you are going through change, and to give yourself time to go through the phases of transition. Realize it takes time to let go of the old and embrace the new.

9 Test Your Assumptions

Sometimes in our interactions with other people, we make the most incredible assumptions and act as if they are true. Rather than assuming, it might be worth the risk to ask directly what was meant.

12 Rest

Get a good night's sleep. Not everyone needs the same amount of sleep, but it should be restful sleep. There are many techniques available to help promote relaxation; or, you might want to check with your doctor rather than assuming your restless sleep is simply something you have to live with.

14 Have A Laugh

Nurture your sense of humor, especially about yourself. Trying to see the humorous side of things makes even the most difficult situations easier to bear. Laughter is good medicine. Being too serious limits your ability to enjoy life.

10 Express Your Feelings

Emotions are a natural response to life. It is important to find ways to express your feelings. Journaling your thoughts is one way that can help you clarify what you are feeling. Once you have identified your feelings, you may find it easier to share them with others.

13 Review Your "Shoulds"

If you feel stuck by some things you "Should" be doing and aren't, set a time limit by which you will either have them done or get rid of them. Staying stuck in the middle is a good way to punish yourself and cause mental anguish and stress.



11 Grieve Losses

Sadness and grief are natural and appropriate responses to the losses which we all experience. Grief over the loss of a love one can be very painful and may last for some time. By being kind and allowing ourselves the time to grieve, we have the potential to be stronger than ever.

15 Ask For Help

If you need emotional support or just someone to talk to, don't be afraid to ask for it. There are times in life when everyone must look outside themselves for comfort and advice. If friends can do the job, ask them to help. If not, be assured that professional help is available through your employee assistance program.



UW CareLink – Faculty and Staff Assistance Program with services provided by APS Healthcare is available to help you and your household members feel better and cope with a variety of life challenges.

For confidential assistance call toll free 1-866-598-3978.