

Good Habits Can Boost Your Brain Power & Mental Health

By Minco Jokhi

Legendary Greek philosopher Aristotle has truly said: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." That's true indeed and one very critical

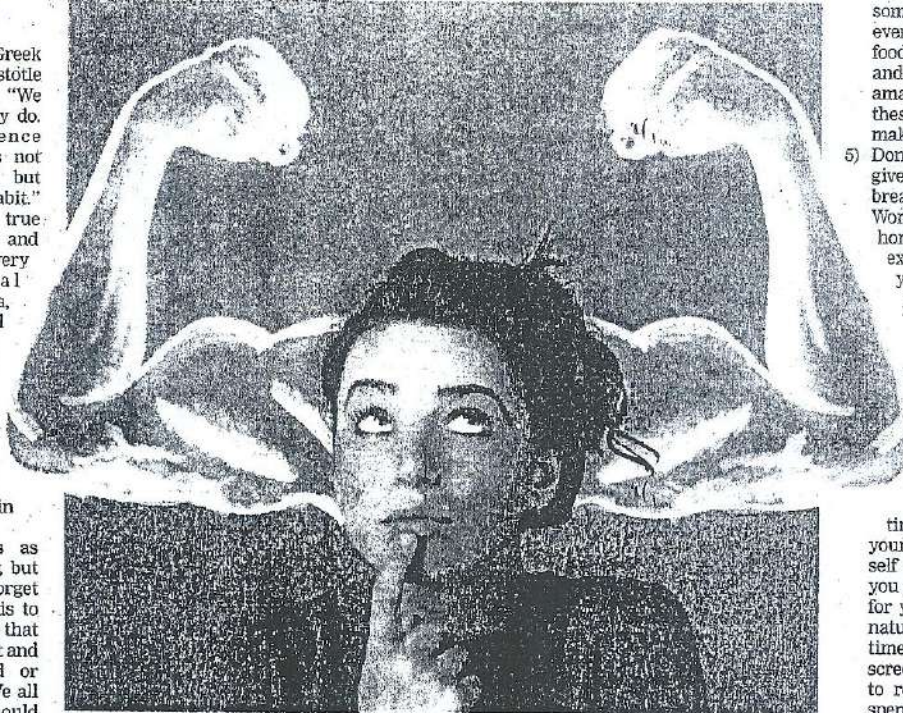
and important arena, which is very essential in today's times, is mental health and an individual can truly benefit if good and proper habits, which become a lifestyle and can be beneficial, are inculcated preferably at an early age—or, in fact, at any age!

A healthy mind is as vital as a healthy body, but sometimes we can forget just how important it is to form habits that ensure that you are happy, confident and not insecure, stressed or nervous all the time. We all understand that we should eat properly and healthily and do the needed physical workout, but we have to also ensure that we are emotionally strong, resilient and very importantly content too and not ignore our emotional and mental wellbeing.

Always try to exercise perception in all five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

SIGHT: Regularly form a good habit to observe any persons or objects that you notice when you move around. The observation should be minute as well as vivid. This is a good exercise to make your short term memory turn into long term memory.

HEARING: While talking on your cell-phone try to recognize the caller's voice before they introduce themselves. Also if possible learn some and if possible the entire phone numbers and names of callers over say three days; see how many you remember. And to make it more challenging recall the number of times each caller has called and the date and time. Many people will think this is an obstacle and avoid it so remember the late French playwright Moliere words: "The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it."



SMELL & TASTE: When eating your food, be it at home or out, try to identify the ingredients in the dishes you are eating. Later memorise the dishes names and if it is a hotel the prices of the various dishes!

TOUCH: Try to exercise your sense of smell and touch and try to identify objects with your eyes closed.

Tips for Happiness

Mental health includes your psychological and social well-being. It is very important and can't be ignored. It also encompasses your emotional health or your ability to address and regulate your various emotions. Mental health is about the functionality of your brain and all that impacts it. Factors like genetics, life experiences, and overall family history play a part in mental health, which at times you can't control. Mental health helps determine how an individual can handle stress, relate to others and make relevant and correct choice, which will benefit that individual in his/her overall well-being. Your mental health can impact everything about your life, including the way you view and move through

the world and your ability to handle the challenges life throws at you and thus building good habits for better mental health can make a big difference in your day-to-day life and can give you the happiness you strive for.

As the renowned thinker Aristotle had said: "Happiness depends upon ourselves."

Useful tips to boost your mental health and happiness include:

- 1) Don't neglect your sleep: If you have a few days without a good night's sleep it can have a huge impact on your emotions, memory as well as critical thinking processes. A common misunderstanding of people with mental health concerns is that they should just pull themselves together and be ready to do something, but in reality it's probably more important that these issues are addressed and understood, as they can often be both a contributing factor and a side effect of a mental illness. Try to go to bed at a set time, with 5-10 minutes here or there and don't get distracted

by electronic gadgets. In fact, it's probably best to keep screens out of the room altogether if possible and only go to bed when you intend to sleep. Your brain is fantastic at making connections and it's important that your brain connects your bedroom with sleeping.

- 2) A cup of coffee or green tea: Coffee can make you fresh and agile and in fact helps to overcome depression. In case you wish to avoid caffeine, then try to have green tea to "wake you up" when you feel mentally sluggish.
- 3) Write work agendas on To Do lists: All that you do on your To Do list, strike it off with a pen and be happy and grateful for all the good things you achieve; give yourself self incentives.
- 4) Healthy mind in a healthy body: Start by stepping out of the house and move around, even if it's only for 10 to 20 minutes a day to start with. Build it up to 30 to 45 minutes and then for 1 hour. Just a small amount of exercise and fresh air can have a massive impact on your mental health. Try to make sure that you eat

something green with every meal, avoid junk food, reduce the carbs and sugar. You'll be amazed at the difference these small changes will make to your mood.

- 5) Don't overwork and burn. give yourself regular breaks to rejuvenate: Work pressure, deadlines, homework for students, exam fear... how do you handle all this?

Today is the age of social media and technology. They do help immensely but at times cause stress, anxiety, a feeling of being overwhelmed and huge pressure to be available at all times. Go easy on yourself! Practice some self care and make sure you put aside some time for yourself. Go out into nature and spend some time away from your screen in the garden, try to reduce the time you spend on social media. It's alright to have some downtime and focus on things that relax you and make you feel happy, whatever those things may be.

- 6) Dance around while you do your house work: Not only will you get your chores done, but dancing reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol and increases endorphins!
- 7) Smile often: It takes much less face muscles to smile and many more to frown. Also a smile helps to lower your heart rate and calm you.
- 8) Inculcate mental fitness: Mental Fitness is the person's ability to concentrate and reason as well as visualize and imagine and make proper decisions.
- 9) Family and friends: Both family and friends are a great support system so however busy you are never ignore them.
- 10) Get out of your comfort zone: If you wish to grow you have to take calculated risks. This adds happiness, excitement and a sense of fulfillment to your life.

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