

# **Exercise Your Mind**

## **by Peggy McColl**

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If you are into physical fitness, being in great shape and having a toned body, then you are fully aware of the importance of regular physical exercise.

Physical exercise is important for your health. When you exercise you are oxygenating your blood, releasing endorphins and contributing toward a healthier body. There are numerous statistics, facts and reports that show the multiple benefits of being involved in a regular physical exercise program. You'll feel better, have less stress, have more energy, think clearer, and have a higher level of self esteem.

How much time do you invest each week taking care of your physical body? What shape would you be in if you didn't exercise at all?

The mind is no different than the body. The mind also requires regular exercise to stay healthy and positive. The mind is a powerful central control system for the body and the benefit of regular mental exercise is manifold. And, likened to physical exercise, mental exercise will also reduce stress, help you feel better, you'll feel more energized, think clearer, increase your self esteem and have a tremendously powerful and positive impact on your life.

But, how much exercise does the mind really need? And, how do you exercise your mind?

The mind needs regular daily exercise, but unlike physical exercise, which is typically completed in a specified or pre-determined length of time during a day several times a week, mental exercise is required all day long. For simplicity sake, and to get you started on a beginner mental exercise program, we've created a daily 30 minute program that can be easily implemented into your life.

When you are first training to be a runner, the experts recommend following a beginner program. I'm going to give you a simple program that will provide you with the basis for a marathon (mental fitness) program.

This is a 4 step 30 minute a day program. This program is to be completed twice a day for a period of 15 minutes each. You can repeat this program more than twice throughout the day for maximum effectiveness.

Here is the 4 step program:

**STEP #1:** Warm up in the morning by focusing on three things. Answer these questions: a. What is great in my life?; b. What am I looking forward to? and; c. How will I contribute today? Invest one minute for each question. You can either think of what the

answers are to each of these questions or write them down in your journal. (Journaling is far more effective.) Invest 3 minutes on this step.

STEP #2: Following the warm up, invest 3 minutes to read your goal statements (these are clearly defined statements, written in the present tense, of you already in possession of the goals that you desire). If you finish reading the goal statements before the 3 minute period is finished, read them again until to you reach 3 minutes.

STEP #3: Then move to visualization. For 5 minutes visualize yourself already in possession of the goals that you desire. Step into the full experience in your mind and feel it in your body. Close your eyes. See it. See every aspect of it. Feel what it will feel like once you have achieved these goals. Put a big smile on your face as you do this. See your life as you truly desire to live it!

STEP #4: Now, for 4 minutes, put some energy and thought into thinking about the person that you need to become in order to have the goals that you desire. Answer this question: What or Who do I need to BE in order to have the goals that I desire? Write the answers down. If the answer is “confident” or “determined” or “loving” or “happy”, then immediately feel what it feels like to BE confident, determined, loving and/or happy. You can do this. You can practice feeling what it feels like before you have the experience of having it. I cannot express enough how powerful this one step is to the realization of your goals.

To augment your mental exercise, and as you go through your day, take regular action that is progressive and goal achieving.

Do these 4 steps twice a day as a minimum. The best time is as soon as you wake up and just before going to bed at night. Even if you don't feel like doing it, push yourself. Develop the discipline to do this each and every day. Block off 21 days on your calendar and start today. Do this for 21 days and you will notice a significant improvement in how you feel and your results. After 21 days you will have developed the habit of this mental exercise program. You may want to intensify the exercises by putting more of yourself into it. Do it.

Mediocre effort equals mediocre results. What kind of results do you want? If you want mediocre results, give it a mediocre effort. If you want tremendous results, put everything you have into this. Act as if your life depends on it; because maybe it does.

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