

7 Secrets to a Healthy Mind, Body & Lifestyle

Maintaining a balance of the mind and body is necessary to live a happy and fulfilled life. The two are interconnected and a weakness or imbalance in one of these aspects is crippling to the other. For example, severe emotional stress of the mind can cause high blood pressure and other illnesses in an otherwise healthy body. By the same token, a physical illness or injury can cause depression in a usually healthy mind.

Maintaining a healthy weight and proper nutrition can help people live longer with fewer illnesses. Energy, emotions, and thought processes are greatly affected by the foods we eat. Understanding the elements of a healthy diet and caloric intake are some of the first steps in making appropriate choices for our mind and body.

We have the power to change negative thoughts, feelings, habits, strategies to create a healthy mind and body. Being healthy is important because it can greatly boost our chances of achieving what we want in life, including a fitter and healthier lifestyle.

Being healthy makes sense as there are so many benefits. Some of which include:

- More happiness
- Controls your weight
- Improves your mood
- Combats diseases
- Increased energy
- Improves longevity
- Boosts confidence

When we look at successful people who have a healthy mind, body and lifestyle what strategies or habits do they have?

My research has shown that there are 7 keys to their success. Here they are:

- ✓ They discovered and decided what they wanted for themselves.
- ✓ They created a purpose, vision and goals for what they wanted to achieve.
- ✓ They took 100% responsibility for the results they were getting
- ✓ They acquired and learned the skills and habits they needed to achieve.
- ✓ They created an action plan
- ✓ They were consistent with their actions and made it part of their daily routine.
- ✓ They never gave up.

“To keep the body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear” - Buddha

1 - DISCOVER & DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT

You cannot have success if you do not know what it means for you. Everyone views success differently and using someone else's standard for success is like eating another person's lunch and expecting to love it.

Your success has to come from you. And therefore, it really does belong to you.

Before you can begin achieving your goals you first have to know why you want it and then what you want. If you want to achieve your goals, improve your life, enjoy life or whatever it is you want to achieve, you first have to decide why it is important and then come up with a plan.

So how do you discover this? First, you start thinking about WHY. Why do you want to accomplish having good health, a slim body and feeling sexy? For what purpose do you want to have this? Is it to have more energy, to be able to achieve more in your day, keep up with the kids, feel great in your clothes, feel more confident, be a great role model for others or to be able to participate in sports events? Or feel young and sexy again?

It's important to know the reasons why you want to have a healthy mind, body and lifestyle. Your reasons must come before your answers. This is a critical first step to success. Dig deep and be honest with yourself. Ask yourself the question and write down 10 reasons as to why you want to have this success.

Another way of discovering and deciding on what you want is to think of your own personal stories where you were unhealthy, feeling sluggish, not sexy and how these times may have held you back. Write out these stories and put as much detail as you can, with how you felt, what you saw and heard. Make these stories as detailed as possible so that they have great meaning for you. This will create your change.

"If you don't know what you want, you end up with a lot you don't" – Chuck Palahniuk

2 – CREATE YOUR PURPOSE, VISION & GOALS

There is a lot of evidence and research that has proven the amazing benefits of goal setting. People that set goals are in the tiny minority of the general population and these are the people that experience abundance in many areas of their life.

Do you know what you want out of life?

Do you move towards it with passion and zest?

Do you stretch yourself to achieve results that you thought may be unachievable?

Start with the end in mind.

When you set goals you are influencing your subconscious mind to take action and get you to where you want to be. It takes effort, focus and action to turn your goals into reality. The best goals to set are 90 day goals. This is a good time frame as it is long enough to accomplish a significant task or project, but short enough that it puts a bit of pressure for you to take action to achieve it.

Using SMART Goals

When you have decided for yourself that it is time to change to a healthier life style or maybe just lose some weight, your first step is to choose your outcome or goal. Goals identify the overarching aims of the program. Goals are broad statements for achieving your results and will guide the action plan to ensure your success.

To give your action plan more detailed information, you can follow the SMART template by planning and creating your action. In this case ' S.M.A.R.T. ' stands for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. By using this SMART-principle you can make your action very clear and personal. This will increase the chance of you actually performing the action.

Write SMART goals:

Specific:	Be specific in what you want to achieve and the action steps you will take.
Measurable:	If you can't measure it, you can manage it.
Attainable:	Identify what you will do to reach your goals.
Realistic:	Set goals you can realistically accomplish in a few weeks or months.
Timely:	Set a time expectation. Have a start and finish date by which you expect to reach your goal. This gives you a clear target to work towards.

For example, if you were interested to get fit, instead of staying: 'I want to be more active', write:

(Specific) I will be jogging 5 kilometres 4 days a week
(Measurable) I will log my activity each day that I exercise and note how many kilometres I have done each time.
(Attainable) I will start with half a kilometre and add half a kilometre each week.
(Realistic) I will follow a jogging schedule to keep track
(Timely) It is 8 weeks and I am jogging 5 kilometres with ease.

Set rewards as a result for achieving your goals. This is a powerful way to keep you motivated. It doesn't have to be big or cost a lot of money. Having a beauty treatment is one of my favourite rewards. Rewards can be anything: a movie, a visit to your favourite restaurant, a new piece of clothing, one hour in the day all to yourself.

Another powerful way of moving towards your goals is to create a vision board. This is a visual reminder for the things that you want. Gone are the days where we would get a bunch of magazines and cut them out and past them on poster paper. We now have the internet and google and we can search and find many images that we can use for our vision board. If you have actual items to put on your board, such as a cheque or airline tickets for example, you can put these on your board. When making a vision board, make sure you cover all aspects of what you want from your life, eg home, car, family, holidays, travel, finances, health and fitness, books, etc.



3 – BE 100% RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR RESULTS

If you want to have success, you have to take 100% responsibility for everything that you experience in your life. This includes your achievements, the results you produce, the quality of your relationships, the state of your health and physical fitness, your finances, your feelings. In fact — everything!

In fact, most of us have been conditioned to blame something outside of ourselves for the parts of our life we don't like. We might blame our parents, our bosses, our friends, our co-workers, our clients, our spouse, our children, the weather, the economy, our astrological chart, or our lack of money. We can blame anyone or anything. We want to avoid looking where the real problem is—ourselves.

Look at the way you think, the language you are using, what you are choosing to believe. Are you taking full responsibility for the way you approach things in life OR are you in blame mode, using justification or blaming someone else and telling yourself how you can't or couldn't. This is all about you moving from having excuses that don't get you satisfying results, to being responsible and taking action. Be flexible and willing to do it differently if you have to.

If you want be healthy, slim and sexy, then you are going to have to take 100% responsibility for it. That means giving up all your excuses, all your victim stories, all the reason why you can't and why you haven't up until now, and all the blaming of outside circumstances. You have to give them all up forever.

You have to take the position that you have always had the personal power to make it different, to get it right, to produce the results you are after. For whatever reason - from ignorance, lack of awareness, fear, needing to be right, the need to feel safe—you chose not to exercise that personal power. Who knows why? It doesn't matter. You can change that today. All that matters now is that from this point forward you choose to act as if you are 100% responsible for everything that does or doesn't happen to you.

"I believe that we are solely responsible for our choices, and we have to accept the consequences of every deed, word and thought throughout our lifetime" – Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

4 – SKILLS & HABITS YOU NEED

Here are a list of great skills and habits to have a healthy mind, body and lifestyle.

Believe in Yourself

Many people don't believe they can be healthy or lose weight because they've been on diets or exercise routines that don't work.

You might also believe you're unworthy of being slim and that your excess weight is an expression of how you view yourself.

Your beliefs shape your reality - and if you don't believe you can be fit, healthy or lose weight, you won't.

Breathe Deeply

Oxygen is a vital source of life and you may know how to breathe. But are you breathing properly? Most people don't. We take shallow breathes and breathe to 1/3 of our lung capacity. Practice full breathes where your lungs are completely filled, your abdomen expands and there is minimum movement in your shoulders.

Drink lots of water

We are 70% water. Your body needs fluid to perform at all levels. Most of us actually don't drink enough water every day. Water is needed to carry out our body functions, remove waste and carry nutrients and oxygen around our body. Since we lose water every day, we need to replenish our water intake.

Your body will try to retain whatever water you take when you don't take in enough water, leading to increase in weight. If you drink regularly, your body knows that it's going to get its supply of fluids, so it doesn't try to retain more water.

The amount of water we need is variable, but generally we need to drink about 2 to 3 litres of water, or about 8 to 10 glass per day.

Did you know that a lot of the calorie burn from drinking water comes from your body working to bring cold water to 98.6 degrees – so drinking hot water or beverages all the time won't be as good as boosting your metabolism as cold water will.

Stop Stressing

It's not just unpleasant to be stressed – it's also bad for your metabolism. Cortisol is a big stress hormone and when activated, your body's more likely to store fat.

Get plenty of sleep

Research shows that being sleep-deprived on a regular basis tends to increase people weight more than those who get a good night's sleep on most nights. Why? It's because it can throw the hormones that control your appetite out of whack, making you feel hungrier and causing you to eat more. It is recommended that you get at least seven hours sleep a night.

Better Nutrition

Sadly, it is true that fruits and vegetables grown decades ago were much richer in vitamins and minerals than the varieties most of us get today. The main culprit in this disturbing nutritional trend is soil depletion: Modern intensive agricultural methods have stripped increasing amounts of nutrients from the soil in which the food we eat grows.

It is important that you make healthy choices in food that nourish your body. When your nutritional levels are low, you lose weight slower and your levels of the hormone ghrelin, which makes you hungry, are increased. It can be difficult to get enough nutrition in our diets, and if this is the case, taking a supplement when you won't be getting as much of the nutrients can help you drop pounds more easily.

Eat enough food

One of the biggest mistakes people make is not eating enough to fuel their body and assist with their fat loss and lean muscle gain goals. You need to eat regular meals packed with protein, some complex carbs, lots of vegies and some good fats. Starving yourself is only going to slow down your metabolism and see you gain weight long term.

Exercise regularly

Exercising a minimum of 3 days per week and doing something that you enjoy will lead to long term health and weight loss success. If you haven't exercised before, doesn't mean you can't do it. You simply need to develop the habit of doing it. Take the stairs, walk to work or the shops. Do whatever it takes to encourage your body and mind to get used to the habit of exercising.

Dump the Diets

Diets don't work. This is one of the most ineffective ways of losing weight. It involves depriving yourself of food for weeks or months, denying yourself the things you like and then seeing your goal weight sabotaged the moment it has been achieved. Depriving yourself is not the answer to achieving long term health.

Purge negative people from your life

Having a healthy positive mind is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. You don't need toxic people in your life. If you feel that a friend is overly critical or negative, then consider whether you should let them go.

Be kind to yourself

You don't need negativity from yourself either. Listen in on the thoughts that come up in your mind and get rid of negative thoughts you hear. A lot of overeating happens because one feels unhappy, so by staying in a positive happy state by yourself, you cut out that unhealthy dependence on food to be happy. Be kind to yourself. Speak to yourself like you would a good friend.

Stop smoking and avoid passive smoking

There is extensive evidence to prove that smoking is detrimental to health, severely increasing the risk of lung cancer, kidney cancer, oesophageal cancer (of our gullet), heart attacks and more. If you are a smoker, quit for better health – not just for yourself but also your family and friends.

Second hand smoking (breathing air from smokers) causes many of the same long-term diseases as direct smoking. Avoid smokers and cigarette smoke where you can.

Boost your Confidence

Our sexiness is about total confidence. It doesn't matter what your weight is, it's your internal voice that dictates whether you feel sexy or not. Shutting out the negative self-talk in your head that criticizes your perceived flaws is essential to feeling sexy and having real confidence. You are in control of that inner voice – not society, not your partner, not your family – YOU ! You get to choose how you feel about yourself, at any size or shape.

You may think that your fat jeans make you feel better when you're feeling yuk, but you are actually perpetuating that negative mind-set of "fat" every time you put them on. Dressing well reinforces you that your body is special and it deserves nice clothes. Even the garments you wear closest to your skin can affect how you feel. Wear garments that make you feel great and sexy. That will give you a sexy confidence that will stay with you whether your weight is up or down.

Remember to be who you are and not try to be somebody else. Confidence is the key. Sex appeal involves a belief in yourself that you can and will appear sexy. Most public icons or even film stars carry their sexiness in their confidence. Even a simple smile shows confidence and appeal. In fact the starting point to sexiness starts with confidence.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit" – Aristotle

5 - ACTION PLAN

A healthy mind, body and lifestyle doesn't just happen. It's the results of actions that you take on a consistent basis. Here are 3 simple steps to designing an Action Plan.

1. Set your goal
2. Activities
3. Strategies

SET YOUR GOAL

We have discussed previously about setting your goals using the SMART template. Decide and set your goals. This is the first step to your action plan. You have to know what you are working towards.

For example, let's say you set a goal that you will eat healthy food that nourishes your body.

If you are using the SMART template, then you could create your goals like this:

Specific:	I will eat healthy food that nourish by body
Measurable:	I will make healthy choices for my meals and snacks.
Attainable:	I will use a journal to record what I eat at every meal and snack every day.
Realistic:	I will have a 'treat' meal once a week as a reward
Timely:	I will have more energy in 8 weeks' time

Tip:

Reward yourself.

Don't forget to reward yourself after you have successfully performed your planned action, even if your action was small. Rewards can be things like: allowing yourself to go see that movie, or just sit down and do nothing. Rewarding yourself with food is not preferable especially if you are trying to lose weight.

ACTIVITIES

Activities are the actions that need to achieve your goal. These are all the day to day tasks for your action plan.

So now that you have set your goal, let's look at some examples of how to apply it for planning actions.

- Get a medical check-up
- Avoid pre-packaged food
- Avoid take away or junk food
- Prepare meals from scratch
- Drink 8 glasses of water
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables
- Eat smaller meals more regularly
- Participate in daily exercise
- Schedule time for rest and recreation
- Meditate or do yoga regularly

Tip: -

Visualizing your actions

To increase your chances of performing the action, imagine yourself doing it before you are going to perform it. This way you can train your mind getting used to the idea. Research has shown that imagining your actions before you perform them, increases the likelihood of actually performing them. It also increases the accuracy and confidence of how you are going to perform them. You can see it as practicing, before you are actually going to do it.

STRATEGIES

Strategies are the more detailed ways of reaching your goal. These strategies need to be feasible and achievable. So now that you have set your activities, let's look at some examples of how to apply strategies for being healthy, fit and slim.

- Eat a healthy breakfast every morning
- Won't skip on any meals
- Eat a piece of fruit for my afternoon snack Monday to Friday.
- Take a healthy lunch to work minimum 4 days a week
- Steam my vegetables instead of frying
- Experiment with different spices to use less salt
- Won't go grocery shopping when I am hungry
- Drink minimum 8 glasses of water every day
- Go to bed at a reasonable time and get at least 7 hours sleep per night
- Read a book on nutrition, one chapter per night
- Walk a minimum of 3 days per week
- Participate in a fun exercise activity once a week, say bike riding
- Tell myself every day that I am worth it

TIP:

If you want to be fit, healthy and slim then the fastest way to do that is to replicate what other people are doing that have the results you are after. Just as children model from their parents, you can also model off people who you may admire or who inspire you. The fastest way to model someone is to simply ask them questions on how they think, what do what they do and what habits and actions they have in their day, week etc. Or you could simply observe their behaviours for a period of time and learn about their attitude and habits. Then it is simply implementing the thinking and behaviours into your own lifestyle.

"Don't wait to be ready to take action, instead take action to be ready" – Jensen Siew

6 – BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR ACTIONS

Consistency is a necessary ingredient in success. It's strange, because most people do not seem to know its true power.

Whenever I start a new action plan or project there's that initial excitement that always keeps me going for weeks to sometimes months. When the excitement wears off, things can start to drop off and this is when you have to be honest with yourself and be consistent with what you are doing, especially if the end result is important to you.

Even when you're passionate about something, you still have to whip out your discipline to keep going through the dips. When you get through that first dip, the results can sometimes be quite amazing.

The 5 keys to consistency:

DISCIPLINE

Having a well-trained discipline muscle comes in handy when you run out of steam, as I said above. You can build your discipline in many ways. When you push yourself just a little bit more each time, your discipline muscle grows. Even when you don't want to do something, for example, exercise on a particular day, pushing yourself to do it, will teach you the discipline to take action even when you don't really feel like it. It gets easier the more you do it.

PATIENCE

We live in a quick-fix society. We want our results now. You can overcome this, by setting a realistic time-frame for what you can expect with the amount of work you are putting in. You must keep in mind that you must take action consistently before you can see any results. For instance you may not see or feel any results in a couple of weeks. It usually takes around 6-8 weeks before you may see results resulting from healthy eating or exercise.

TAKING ACTION

Taking action has to be one of the biggest secrets of success. It's tough and it's gruelling at times, but that is why you want to do what's important or what matters. If you love what you do, you'll enjoy the process so much more. Working your ass off in a gym might kill your enthusiasm, but walking with a friend every day might make it more enjoyable. The important this is to take action and be consistent!

FOCUS

You have to take action, but you cannot just take random action. It has to be on tasks that matter. The Pareto Principle or the 80/20 rule states that 20 percent of something always gives 80% of the results. So 20% of the tasks you do are responsible for the 80% of the results you get. Focus on what matters and what's most important to you. Stay focussed on your goal – for what you focus on you will get.

RESULTS

We all want results and we want them everywhere. We want more time, more money, more freedom, more love and more of everything. There's nothing wrong with that. We all have our paths to follow. Consistently doing the right things leads to amazing results. How can you know what the right things are? Find someone who's doing what you want to do and model them.

Keep a journal and record your results. This helps to increase your awareness of what, how much and what you are doing. This helps to cut down on activities or actions that are not leading you to the outcome you want. It can also help identify areas where you can make changes that will help you achieve your goals.

“Success isn’t always about greatness. It’s about consistency. Consistent hard work gains success. Greatness will come.” – Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson

7 – DON’T GIVE UP

As you are starting out with performing your actions, there is a chance that you will not be able to do what you have planned. It could also be that you failed to reach your goal even though you have worked hard for it. This is perfectly normal and should not be seen as a failure.

These things happen to everyone. But how you deal with these setbacks will determine if you will reach your goals.

When you were not able to perform your actions, then it could be that you didn’t plan it correctly. Maybe your action was too large, or you needed more time than you thought.

If you still haven’t reached your goal after you have successfully performed your actions, then maybe your actions didn’t influence your target that well. Just pick a different action and try again. Don’t be afraid to change your actions when you feel they are not working. Like Albert Einstein said: “Insanity is repeating the same behaviour and expecting different results”.

Remember it’s not a problem to fail, but it is a problem when you give up. Being able to start fresh the next day instead of giving up entirely, will set you up for success.

Here are some tips for dealing with the challenges:

- It's perfectly normal to try something, stop it, and then get mad at yourself. Lots of people have to try and try again before they reach their goals.
- If you feel like giving up, don't waste energy feeling bad about yourself. Remember your reason for wanting to change, think about the progress you've made, and give yourself a pep talk and a pat on the back. Then you may feel like eating healthy again or get back to your exercise program.
- When you hit a barrier—and most people do—get support. Talk to your family members and friends to see if someone wants to eat healthy with you, be your exercise buddy or cheer you on.
- Don't forget little rewards. Something to look forward to can keep you moving right along.
- Expect to encounter some barriers. And remember: The idea is not to get rid of barriers but to identify them ahead of time and plan what you will do to deal with them.

“You do what you can for as long as you can, and when you finally can’t, you do the next best thing. You back up, but you don’t give up” – General Chuck Yeager