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Improving mental and physical health through exercise

Being mentally resilient is a huge advantage when it comes to coping with life's ups and downs. It means you can keep your determination on track, while being able to focus on an end goal and do what's necessary to meet it. With the right mental attitude, you should find yourself striding towards your fitness objectives in no time – it could also benefit other areas of your life.

Stress is a very common issue. It's something many of us talk about but which is difficult to define. People react in different ways and some people get stressed about things which others don't. Telltale signs of stress building up include:

- Not being able to sleep properly with worries going through your mind.
- Being impatient or irritable at minor problems.
- Not being able to concentrate due to many things going through your mind.
- Being unable to make decisions.
- Drinking or smoking more.
- Not enjoying food so much.
- Being unable to relax, and always feeling that something needs to be done.
- Feeling tense – sometimes this includes a 'knot' in the stomach, or feeling sweaty with a dry mouth or a thumping heart.

If you want to reduce the stress in your life, perhaps try to think about what your triggers are and how you might keep them in check. Another method to reduce stress is through exercise and physical activity.

A good example of this is yoga, an ancient form of exercise that focuses on improving physical and mental well-being. It has many health benefits, as well as being an effective way to boost physical activity. Some of the advantages include reducing blood pressure, heart disease, stress and muscle pain.

Here are some of the other health problems that yoga can help alleviate:

Arthritis

Yoga has been known to help ease pain and increase mobility for people who have [arthritis](#). The gentle stretches help reduce joint inflammation and are perfect for people who are older and less mobile. Make sure you keep to the simple stretches and don't overwork yourself. Certain types of yoga such as power yoga may not be suitable, so do your research first.

Migraines

Headaches and [migraines](#) can be caused by number of factors such as poor posture, eye strain and stress. However, just a few simple yoga stretches a day could help alleviate the problem. Research has shown that those who have been doing yoga over a period of three months have been less susceptible to migraine attacks.

Mental health

Yoga uses a number of relaxation techniques such as controlled breathing and meditation, which can help battle [depression](#) and minimise [it](#). It is also known to stimulate your body's natural production of GABA, a chemical in the brain and nervous system that helps control calmness in your body. As a result, yoga is fast becoming a recommended holistic approach to overcoming various forms of mental illness.

Asthma

With an emphasis on controlled breathing and posture, yoga can help those who have [asthma](#). The deep breathing exercises help build lung strength and efficiency, increasing airflow and reducing the risk of an asthma attack.

Although it originated in India, yoga can now be found in many gyms and health clubs all over the world. This is just one example however - everyone is different and different exercises might work better for some than for others.

Staying on track

When it comes to fitness, it's important to have goals in place. It might be you want to run a marathon in a year's time, or you have a [weight loss objective](#). No matter what your motivation, having something to work towards helps focus your efforts.

However, not meeting your objectives could knock mental resilience so it's important to set realistic targets. As any athlete who's had a setback will tell you, overcoming these hurdles will make you stronger and more determined.

Mental resilience requires a variety of skills and has to be worked at; however, once it's developed, there's no doubt it will up your fitness game for good.

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