

Get Mentally Tough

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Change is not always easy; in fact, for many of us change is downright difficult. Humans are creatures of habit. We like our world to be predictable, and we want to know what to expect in our lives from moment to moment.

In today's world, however, change is part of life. It is now easier than ever to hear of someone losing his or her job, foreclosing on a home or breaking up with a loved one. With all these negative changes, it is difficult to know what to do. When life hands you a bunch of lemons, do you fall apart and spend months trying to recover, or are you resilient? During these trying times, wouldn't it be nice to develop a sense of resilience?

Resilient people are mentally tough. Think of them like the Energizer bunny – they keep going no matter what. Those who are resilient are able to overcome difficult situations and are ready to seek solutions to get back on track. But how can you develop this kind of strength and perseverance?

We can all learn to be more resilient and mentally tough. It's all about being in the ideal psychological, physical and emotional state to perform at peak levels. Performance is about how we go about our lives, how we behave, feel, think and do our jobs. Regardless of where we perform these functions and responsibilities, it is important to know how well we are doing and how we can improve or change.

If you want more out of your life — whether it's to do better on the job despite the economic downturn or enhance your skills in spite of previous roadblocks — then it's time to make changes and get mentally tough. Here are seven tools to help you become more resilient:

1.) Start breathing. This activity actually prepares your body for better performance. Are you holding your breathe right now? The more stressed and tense you are, the more likely you are to hold in your breathing. In fact, you could also be experiencing headaches, backaches or tightening shoulders. Here's a prescription for you: Take three deep breaths of air and let them out slowly. Count one, two, three. This creates good circulation and steady breathing for the rest of your day, no matter what situations you face.

2) Get more physical activity. Call it exercise or whatever you want. Anything that gets your heart pumping creates important, positive changes in your body. Exercise not only improves our physical bodies, but it also improves the mental. It gives us a sense of control, and as well all know, control is important to us as human beings. Activities such as running, walking, yoga, pilates, biking, hiking, swimming or playing sports are all great ways to keep your mind and body healthy.

3) Give your body the fuel it needs. Food fuels your human engine. You wouldn't leave the house without putting gas in your car when you are ready to take a long drive, right? Yet you might not think twice about leaving for work without eating breakfast. Where is the sense in that? Fill up your tank with energy-boosting whole grains, fruit and yogurt and watch your performance increase.

4) Get laughing. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. When times are tough, it's ideal to go out and find your sense of humor. Whether it's a comedy club, a funny movie or getting together with a particularly comedic friend, locating your funny bone will help you release those feel-good endorphins. This will help not only with your emotional state but also your physical being. Think about it. When you laugh, you breathe. Try it and do a big belly laugh and see what happens.

5) Visualize your future. Practice what you want to be, and see clearly what you want for your future. It may seem silly, but practicing in your mind, whether it's a skill you are trying to attain or the dream house you want to move into, can open up the possibilities. Athletes do it all the time. They will visualize the ball going into the hole, or the basketball going into the net. Think, and it will be.

6). Use your brain. The bottom line is mentally tough, resilient people use their brains. It is a muscle and it must be exercised. So, go out there and do brain games. Try out right-brain, left-brain exercises, such as puzzles, cards and memory games; brush your hair (or your teeth) with the opposite hand; find a new way to get home after work.

7). Stay cool. Mentally tough people know how to stay calm and avoid letting their emotions run over them. Here are some tips for that: Try doing some biofeedback; spend the afternoon daydreaming; listen to music; get a fuzzy pet. Last but not least, get rid of those negative thoughts! Stop saying "I can't" and replace it with "I can" or "I will."

Most important, to be a really mentally tough person you need to get happy! Happiness is a state of mind – not a place, an object, person or thing. Think of the laws of attraction. You attract what you think about. Mentally tough people practice being happy and know it is up to them to make it happen. They also know that practicing makes them really good at it. The good news is all of this costs absolutely nothing. You don't have to go and buy a manual or expensive equipment.

Times are tough ... but the tough get going and we can learn a lot from them. Be happy and be mentally tough, and you will be able to handle anything that comes your way.

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