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# VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ *Newsletter*

*Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life*

*Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money. These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.*

*We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.*

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### *Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity*

*By Mayo Clinic Staff*

**You know exercise is good for you, but do you know how good? From boosting your mood to improving your sex life, find out how exercise can improve your life.**

Want to feel better, have more energy and perhaps even live longer? Look no further than exercise. The health benefits of regular exercise and physical activity are hard to ignore. And the benefits of exercise are yours for the taking, regardless of your age, sex or physical ability. Need more convincing to exercise? Check out these seven ways exercise can improve your life.

#### **No. 1: Exercise controls weight**

Exercise can help prevent excess weight gain or help maintain weight loss. When you engage in physical activity, you burn calories. The more intense the activity, the more calories you burn. You don't need to set aside large chunks of time for exercise to reap weight-loss benefits. If you can't do an actual workout, get more active throughout the day in simple ways — by taking the stairs instead of the elevator or revving up your household chores.

#### **No. 2: Exercise combats health conditions and diseases**

Worried about heart disease? Hoping to prevent high blood pressure? No matter what your current weight, being active boosts high-density lipoprotein (HDL),

or “good,” cholesterol and decreases unhealthy triglycerides. This one-two punch keeps your blood flowing smoothly, which decreases your risk of cardiovascular diseases. In fact, regular physical activity can help you prevent or manage a wide range of health problems and concerns, including stroke, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, certain types of cancer, arthritis and falls.

#### **No. 3: Exercise improves mood**

Need an emotional lift? Or need to blow off some steam after a stressful day? A workout at the gym or a brisk 30-minute walk can help. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed. You may also feel better about your appearance and yourself when you exercise regularly, which can boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem.

#### **No. 4: Exercise boosts energy**

Winded by grocery shopping or household chores? Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and boost your endurance. Exercise and physical activity deliver oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and help your cardiovascular system work more efficiently. And when your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to go about your daily chores.

**“Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.**

**- Albert Schweitzer**

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**Volume 18 - Issue 1**

# INNER HEALTH

## Yes, You Can: 10 Ways to Build Inner Strength

By Dr. Karin Luise

There are days when these lyrics remind me more of the overwhelming stress that can hit us from all sides like bombs exploding once-stable air. Like when you find out you have lost your job with no option in sight “Boom!” your spouse leaves because that he/she is in love with someone else. “Boom!” and you are told that it is time to put your 15-year-old Golden Retriever to sleep. “Pow!”

Life will deliver blows, knocking you off balance with a sense of weakening confusion and a total loss of how to get your shaking, bruised feet back under you again. And when the “Boom!” feels the strongest, it can leave you feeling paralyzed from your head to your soul. You can’t even remember what it feels like to “be normal.”

You ask yourself, “Will I ever feel strong again?”

You are not alone. Let me share something with you. Over the past year, I have used web analytics to see what people are typing into search engines to find my inspiration-based blog. I kept asking myself, “What are people really looking for?” What I discovered touched me deeply. The most commonly searched words that bring people to my site are:

“Inner strength.”

Every hour of every day, people are seeking ways to pull themselves out of crisis and feel “normal” again — feel strong again. I’ve been there, too, and it is the main reason why I was led to become a therapist. So I am writing this in hopes of helping you find your strength again, too.

First, here is what I believe completely: you can.

It is inspiring to know that you really can do something to make yourself stronger. Since part of survival is accepting that you cannot change outside circumstances or people, it is imperative to accept and feel empowered by the realization that you can transform yourself. It’s a super power. Yes, you can, and here are some pointers to help you get there.

### 10 Ways to Build Inner Strength

**1. Look back on your survival instincts of the past.** Remind yourself of times when you survived, got through challenges, and even surprised yourself. See strength in your own abilities and fighting power. Don’t underestimate your own resilience. You have roared before and will roar again.

**2. Trust your inner pilot light — your core.** Find power in your inner self and know that you were created with a spirit as your force field, even if it feels weakened. Your glow is not extinguishable, and it was created to rekindle itself.

**3. Focus on the story of your entire life beyond the crisis.** Practice seeing yourself rise above the pain, looking back and peering forward at the values, experiences and goals of your whole

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

– Buddha

life. Remind yourself that you are bigger than this, and that you will get back to you again. You have a lot of living yet to do.

**4. Lean on your “trusted few” — friends, family, or counselors who know you and who will root for you without judgment.** Ask for understanding, encouragement and TLC. Ask them to remind you of your strengths and listen to them. That is why these blessed relationships are in your life, and one day, you might do the same for them.

**5. Find motivation from your outer strength.** The key to feeling strong is holistically creating a solid foundation. While your energy levels might be low, make sure that you are doing something — anything — to tend to your physical self. Lift weights (even if they are soup cans), walk in nature, feed your body healthy food and get your sleep.

**6. Make real attempts to be surrounded by positive people and atmospheres that make you feel good, energized and motivated.** Limit any time around negative people or energy. Exit if you are starting to feel bad about yourself. Stay longer if you are feeling inspired.

**7. Keep a “feel-good folder” of emails, letters and compliments that remind you how fierce you are.** Anytime you receive a compliment that makes you feel strong, save it in a real or electronic file. You will likely forget the praise when you are at your lowest, and this will give you evidence of the positive effects you have on people’s lives. Let these words validate your worth, breathing hope over you again.

**8. Carve out time to do that thing that you are really good at.** Part of pulling yourself out of a sad place is reminding your body how to release endorphins back into your system. A quick way to do this is to do what you have loved in the past — your system will reward you. Do you love playing piano? Painting? Writing? Singing? Crafting? Working on cars? Skiing? Whatever made you feel good about you in the past is what your body needs right now. Often.

**9. Do something meaningful in the meantime, as time will keep passing anyway.** These were some of the wisest words ever spoken to me and why I started volunteering and taking classes after the bottom dropped out of my world. They were actually the two things that ended up making me feel the strongest in the long run. Volunteer. Create something. Finish your degree. Paint that room. Be constructive and your heart will strengthen while you’re not looking.

**10. Develop and nurture a spiritual connection to a higher power, a purpose greater than this.** Ask for spiritual guidance, comfort and grounding in your journey. Stay open to receiving divine gifts in the most wonderful, surprising ways, and believe that you deserve them when they show up. Meditate. Pray. Be mindful. Trust that you are going to move past this thing and that the universe wants that for you as well.

Yes, it does. And yes, you can.

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# CAREER HEALTH

## The Secret of Workplace Motivation

By Susan M. Heathfield

The most important brainstorm you will ever experience about employees and motivation is to realize that you can't do it for people. As a manager or coworker, no matter how hard you try, people choose whether to experience motivation at work.

You can't motivate others. You can only choose motivation for yourself. I recommend it. Days speed quickly by and you are engrossed in activities you enjoy. Challenges multiply because you are excited.

You set and achieve challenging goals. You feel good about yourself and your self-esteem swells.

Choose motivation. If you find you can't, seek out the career and job changing resources on the site. Or, read about how to deal with a bad boss. Don't freeze in place. You really can do better than this.

### Thoughts for Managers and Supervisors

If you can't cause employees to experience motivation, is there anything that a manager or supervisor can do to encourage employees to experience motivation at work? The answer to this question is that there is a whole lot that they can do.

Every time I do an exit interview with an employee I would really liked to have retained, I am struck by the fact that people leave supervisors or managers more often than they leave employers or jobs.

If you're not paying attention to the quality of management employees receive in your organization, your door will become a revolving door.

Your very best employees who know that they have options are the first to leave.

Thinking about employee motivation, here are some of the supervisory actions that cause people to stay with you as an employer. In work environments where factors such as these don't exist, employees are much more likely to leave their jobs.

· You need to pay attention to employees and help them feel important. This involves asking them how they are doing, thanking them for

their efforts, and keeping commitments you've made to them.

· Keeping commitments is as simple as attending a scheduled meeting rather than postponing it because everything else is more important. The employee will feel as if everything else is more important.

· Recognition is a key factor in employee motivation and people like to hear words of praise from their boss. They also enjoy their manager offering sincere thank yous to them for their approaches, accomplishments, and contributions.

· You need to provide solid direction so your staff knows that they are accomplishing important goals. One of the complaints heard most frequently from employees who are unhappy about having a bad boss is that the boss did not provide clear expectations. Employees who don't have clear direction are never sure about how they are performing.

· The power of a supervisor's feedback cannot be overemphasized. Employees, especially millennials, like feedback every day.

· Provide staff the opportunity to learn, grow and make career progress. In any study of employee engagement and motivation, a career path and knowing where they are going is important to employees. Again, millennials, who are used to full schedules and solid direction, need this the most of all of your employee groups.

· Finally, help employees feel like members of the "in-crowd". They want to know what is happening as quickly as everyone else - and - earlier, if possible.

Do these activities wisely and well and you'll be viewed as a positive, motivating supervisor or manager and you'll keep your best staff. You can create a workplace in which employees are more likely to choose motivation..

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## Exercise: 7 Benefits of Regular ...

Continued from front page

### No. 5: Exercise promotes better sleep

Struggling to fall asleep? Or to stay asleep? Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster and deepen your sleep. Just don't exercise too close to bedtime, or you may be too energized to fall asleep.

### No. 6: Exercise puts the spark back into your sex life

Do you feel too tired or too out of shape to enjoy physical intimacy? Regular physical activity can leave you feeling energized and looking better, which may have a positive effect on your sex life. But there's more to it than that. Regular physical activity can lead to enhanced arousal for women. And men who exercise regularly are less likely to have problems with erectile dysfunction than are men who don't exercise.

### No. 7: Exercise can be fun

Exercise and physical activity can be a fun way to spend some time. It gives you a chance to unwind, enjoy the outdoors or simply engage in activities that make you happy. Physical activity can also help you connect with family or friends in a fun social setting. So, take a dance class, hit the hiking trails or join a soccer team. Find a physical activity you enjoy, and just do it. If you get bored, try something new.

### The bottom line on exercise

Exercise and physical activity are a great way to feel better, gain health benefits and have fun. As a general goal, aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. If you want to lose weight or meet specific fitness goals, you may need to exercise more. Remember to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program, especially if you haven't exercised for a long time, have chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or arthritis, or you have any concerns.

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# RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

## Healthy Relationships Lead To Better Lives

By Teddi Dineley Johnson

Unless you're shipwrecked on a deserted island, you probably enjoy a handful of close relationships. From spouses to children to friends, parents, siblings and significant others, healthy relationships build self-esteem, improve mental and emotional health and help you live a fuller life.

"Relationships are — not surprisingly — enormously important for health, and there are lots of studies on the biological processes that account for the link between relationships and health," says psychology professor Arthur Aron, PhD, director of the Interpersonal Relationships Laboratory at New York's Stony Brook University.

The quality of our personal relationships also has an enormous impact on our physical health, as evidenced by a hefty number of research studies.

"We support each other in getting enough exercise, eating right, flossing — all the things that make for better health can be supported or undermined by close relationships," Aron says.

In the movie "Cast Away," Tom Hanks' character — stranded on an uninhabited island — creates a face on a volleyball and talks to the ball, which he names "Wilson," as if it were a person. Though fictional and funny, the gesture illustrates something very basic about us: Relationships are important — so important, in fact, that our brains are hardwired to form them.

"Evolution has set us up to be very good in relationships and to make them happen," says Aron, who also teaches an undergraduate course on close relationships. "We have evolved to form relationships and to keep them together to raise children."

That said, have you ever wondered why some of your relationships are more effective than others? Researchers have learned a lot in the last 30 years about what makes good relationships tick, and it boils down to just a few things. Unfortunately, most folks are only

minimally aware of those elements, Aron says, and therefore aren't doing everything they could be doing to improve their relationships.

### Mind your mental health

Without question, the mental health of all parties is the most important element of a good relationship. If you suffer from depression, anxiety, insecurity or low self-esteem, seek help from a health professional right away, because it's not just you, but also your relationship, that will suffer.

***"Necessity is blind until it becomes conscious. Freedom is the consciousness of necessity."***

*- Karl Marx*

You can't always control the stressors in your life, but for your relationships to be effective, try to keep stress to a minimum.

Also, be understanding when others are going through a tough time. Someone who loses her or his job, for example, might behave negatively for a little while. But things should get better eventually.

### Keep the lines open

"We just don't communicate!" is a common refrain in relationships — too common in fact, because after mental health, effective communication is the second most important ingredient in a healthy relationship.

Communication is important because conflicts are inevitable in relationships, and "most people are poorly prepared to deal with them well," Aron says.

But there's plenty of help out there. If you're planning to wed, take advantage of the

preparation courses offered through places of worship or community programs.

If you are already in a relationship, think about registering for a weekend seminar or marital enrichment course, often offered through churches, synagogues and community recreation departments.

And if you think the communication between you and your partner needs some extra help, consider couples counseling or marital therapy.

### Watch for unhealthy relationships

Not all relationships are going to be perfect all the time, but for the most part, a good relationship makes you feel secure, happy, loved, respected and free to be yourself. If you are in a relationship that makes you feel fearful, humiliated or controlled, or are a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, call 911 or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233.

Learning to recognize unhealthy relationships should start early. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Choose Respect initiative, online at [www.cdc.gov/chooserespect](http://www.cdc.gov/chooserespect), is available to help teens learn how to make decisions about relationships with their friends, family and dating partners.

### Build a bridge of support

Support from family and friends is an ingredient that repeatedly surfaces in good relationships. You might need someone to take the kids for the night, or help with carpooling. If you have a support system in place, or live near friends and family, don't be afraid to ask them for a helping hand, a sympathetic ear or advice.

"All relationships require effort and attention," Aron says. "Sometimes that effort and attention is automatic, such as with an infant. Beyond what is automatic, for most relationships, we usually need to put attention and effort into them, and it pays off."

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