

Quick Tips For Building
MENTAL TOUGHNESS
One Strategy At A Time



FAITH WOOD

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Building one's mental toughness takes time. Much like working out at the gym, you cannot expect instant results overnight. Persist and you will find that you are able to optimize your overall mental performance in no time at all!

Here are some powerful Brain Hacks You Can Do in just a few minutes a day:

STOP STRESS BY LAUGHING — SERIOUSLY

Laughter releases dopamine, and even if you feel dumb doing it, you will eventually reap the rewards. Of course, these days we all have an instant home entertainment system in our pocket. Just pull out your smart phone, Google a funny video (perhaps something you know has made you cry with laughter in the past) and spend two minutes putting a smile on your face. Your shoulders will lift, you will feel better, and you will think more clearly.

CHANGE YOUR SPINE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

When you need to improve your mood or your focus — think like a light switch. Straighten your spine and then point toes on one foot up, thumbs up, eyebrows up, nose up. You get the idea. Turn the power back on!

USE YOUR EYEBROWS TO BECOME MORE CREATIVE

If you ever want to feel more creative, try raising your eyebrows and widening your eyes. This simple technique appears to act as a boost for your creative mind, literally broadening the scope of your ideas as you widen your eyes

and take more in. This is all backed by scientific research that was published in the Creativity Research Journal.

Two groups of people were asked to come up with captions for a seemingly mundane image. Those with raised eyebrows had much more creative and funny captions. Try it for yourself at home and see how it works with your family.

WRITE STUFF DOWN TO REMEMBER IT

This does not mean, “type stuff down.” No, you will have to go back to that archaic form of communication that uses a pen and a piece of paper. Or better yet, keep a little notepad and small pen or pencil on you as often as you can.

An experiment conducted at Indiana University proved that the physical act of writing something down stimulated parts of the brain that were not active when simply trying to remember something or typing it into a computer.

Perhaps it is the fact that your hand is hardwired to certain parts of the brain, and as you write you are pressing the words or images more deeply into your memory than the simple act of trying to remember. Whatever the reason, it works. Write it down, you'll remember it.

AVOID “CHOKING” BY SINGING

This is not the literal lack of breath, but rather falling victim to severe nerves and messing up something seemingly simple. It happens in sports a lot, but it can also happen to us if we must give a presentation at work, or perhaps give a speech at a wedding.



Choking is the result of pressure getting to us, usually because our brain is working overtime on all the “what ifs” and worst-case scenarios. The way to beat it is simple; do something to keep your brain occupied. Research shows that singing to yourself gives your brain something to do instead of stressing out. By singing, you are holding your brain hostage to a task you have given it, and it cannot concentrate on all the disasters you think are going to happen. Sing until it’s your time to do something, be it sinking a long putt, giving a speech, or bowling a strike for a perfect game.

TAKE 10 MINUTES AND GET BACK TO NATURE

The brain can’t get tired of doing intellectual work, but psychological and physical states can influence your concentration and activity. Recent research has shown that the brain works better where you can hear waves, feel the salty breeze, see all shades of blue, and feel the warm sand. So, take a walk in the forest, go on vacation close to bodies of water, and don’t be shy about walking barefoot during the summer.

DRAW WHEN YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH A DIFFICULT TASK OR DISCUSSION

Drawing activates the work of both hemispheres of the brain and you’ll come up with the right solution much quicker. Integrated studies showed that kids learn math better and memorize information quicker if they illustrate the new material or doodle in their notebooks.

Doodle or draw for 10–20 minutes. Use your non-dominant hand. For example, if you’re left-handed, use your right hand. Try to do it every day and you’ll notice a positive effect in just one month.

CHANNEL YOUR INNER CHILD AND STOP AND SWING AT THE PLAYGROUND

Playing on the swings during early childhood promotes the development of certain parts

of the brain responsible for speech and information processing. Swinging and spiraling strengthen the vestibular apparatus in the ear at any age by improving spatial orientation skills. This fact has been proven by astronauts.

Play on the swings for 15–20 minutes, 2–3 times a week and never miss a ride on a merry-go-round. It’ll spare you from seasickness and improve your balance.

ACTIVATE YOUR MENTAL TOUGHNESS THROUGH PHYSICAL TRAINING

The brain works better during complex physical training. During a full body workout, hormones responsible for memory, assimilation of new skills, and preservation of neurons are being produced.

For example, during an experiment study subjects had to solve tasks. During the break, group A was stretching, group B was resting. The results showed that the resting group failed the task.

The important thing is to avoid putting your health at risk during training. So, don’t rely on chess and crossword puzzles alone. Swim, dance, and do yoga to develop your whole body.

TAKE TIME TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Almost any skill can be learned and developed in adulthood. For example, surgeons have started taking violin lessons after age 30 to develop their fine motor skills. Special agents play video games to improve their reaction speeds, logic, and proper behavior on a mission.

New skills create new neural pathways preventing the brain from aging. During the Olympics in PyeongChang, Mexico was represented by a 40-year-old athlete in alpine skiing. He mastered this sport in just one year.



DEVELOP AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

Optimists cope with failures easier and reach goals faster. On the contrary, pessimism and constant worrying increase the risk of heart attack by up to 29% and the risk of cancer by up to 41%. Even if your attitude toward life is determined by your genes, your life experience can form you as a person. That's why many psychologists recommend developing a so-called positive distortion.

BECOME A DEVOTED READER

Caffeine boosts brain function and can postpone age-related memory disorders, but you don't have to drink it on a regular basis. You can dramatically improve your memory and enrich your knowledge pool by reading a lot of books.

Read at least 1–2 books of different genres per week. Re-read old ones to “renew the data.” If you don't use the information for a long time, the brain can erase it from your memory. Check out Faith's cozy suspense novels – a quick read to get you started. <https://www.imind.ca/store/colbie-colleen-series-faith-wood>

NURTURE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS AND DO THINGS THAT MATTER

The hormone dopamine raises the feeling of pleasure when you eat sweets, drink alcohol, or fall in love. It temporarily turns up the brain function and then reduces its productivity, demanding a new “dose.”

The hormone serotonin can boost brain function for a longer period than dopamine and it's produced when you feel personal fulfillment, laugh, or share a favorite hobby with a pleasant person (for example, watching a movie or having lunch). In these cases, you can make an exception and drink wine together or eat sweets.

So, spend more time with friends, travel more, meet new people, and share positive emotions with your family.

BUILD LITTLE VICTORIES OR LITTLE ACHIEVEMENTS INTO YOUR LIFE

If you are struggling, focus on a small victory each day, like making your bed, or working out every morning. This small achievement may help you gain clarity and mental strength.

Need more support than these tips can provide, please connect with Faith to arrange for some coaching and mentoring as you restore balance to mind and body!

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