

# Personal Health



- \* **Physical health** : physical well-being when a person is physically fit and all parts of the body are functioning properly



- \* **Mental health** : ability to think clearly, process information, make decisions, and use logical reasoning; your overall sense of well-being



- \* **Emotional health** : ability to manage emotions and express them in a constructive way



- \* **Social health** : interacting with other people in positive ways

**MISSION:**  
**POSSIBLE**

Select one of the four areas of personal health that you'd like to focus on and set an individual health goal. Start off with a week and then if you reach your goal, extend it or set a new goal in another health area.

Create a chart, calendar, checklist, etc. to track your progress.

**GOAL:**

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## Factors of Personal Health Charades

1. Think about factors that may affect your personal health in one of the four health areas.
2. On small strips of paper, write down all the factors you think of together.
3. Play charades with your family by choosing a slip of paper and acting out the personal health factor.
4. After a correct guess, name the area of health it goes along with and see if you can connect it to another area using an if...then statement, e.g. Sleep – physical...If I don't get enough sleep, then I may be irritable the next day.

# 7 Facts About the Mind-Body Connection

<http://www.builtlean.com/2013/08/15/mind-body-connection-facts/#fnref-183515>

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For better or for worse, our minds and bodies are interconnected. It is up to us to become aware of our mind-body connections and to develop a loving and harmonious relationship between the two. Your mind and body can keep you healthy or not, and while it is not total, we do have control over how we think and react to the things around us. Find out some amazing facts about the mind-body connection:

## 1. We All Have The Mind-Body Connection.<sup>1</sup>

Whether consciously aware of it or not, each of us experiences the mind-body connection everyday of our lives. Instead of thinking of the connection as something far out of reach, or something only obtainable through hours of yoga and meditation, remember it is always here. Mouth-watering over a delicious-looking dessert, or nervous “butterflies” in the stomach before making a presentation, or running a race, are all perfect examples of natural mind-body connections, which most of us have experienced at some point. Sometimes, the mind-body connection can produce negative outcomes, like failing to meet athletic, academic, or professional goals due to fear created by the mind.

## 2. Our Bodies React To How We Think

“All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world.”

—Buddha

In other words, if we are constantly thinking negative, self-destructive thoughts, our bodies will follow suit. Emotional and mental imbalance can start as something like stress-induced headaches, tight shoulders, and a sore upper back, and lead to unhealthy weight gain or loss, insomnia, and high blood pressure. On the other hand, we can make a conscious effort to think more positively and to develop healthy coping mechanisms for life’s stress and trials. Over time, the state of our emotional and mental health can hurt or help the body’s immune system.

### 3. We Can Make Ourselves Sick And We Can Make Ourselves Well<sup>2</sup>

Studies show our coping mechanisms and ways we handle stress directly correlate to how we deal with serious illnesses, including cancer. Chronic stress affects the body in a negative way, and over long periods of time, long-term stress can make us more susceptible to diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, and some infections.

However, by using our innate mind-body connection in a positive way, by keeping our minds and bodies in shape with exercise and nutrition, we can keep stress levels lower. In other words, the better we are able to cope by staying calm and reducing psychological stress, we will in-turn reduce physical stress, along with the chance of developing a disease.

### 4. We Also Have A BODY-Mind Connection<sup>3</sup>

If we pay attention, it is easy to see the impact the body has on our state of mind as well. An example of body-mind reactions is the flu. More than likely, a person starts to feel out of sorts mentally the day or a few days before the body exposes the sore throat, nasal congestion, and other common physical symptoms.

On the flip side, body-mind connection is incredibly positive, whether it is endorphins produced after exercise or stress relief during a massage. In the physical postures of yoga, it is thought that certain poses produce certain mental states. Backbends, for example, are thought to stimulate the mind, while inversions may bring on a quieter state. Exercise can be a cheap way to boost our focus, moods, and overall health.

### 5. Food Affects Both Our Bodies & Minds

It goes back to that old saying, “We are what we eat.” Every single morsel or liquid passing through our lips has some sort of effect on our brains. Our nutritional intake, every day, can have huge impacts — both negative and positive — on how we feel, thanks mostly to the chemical serotonin. In a nutshell, when serotonin levels are high, we’re happier, and when they’re low, we become depressed.

Eating too many carbs and sugar can decrease sensitivity to serotonin, which leads to bad moods, and eventually obesity. To balance serotonin levels, eating protein can be the solution, especially before carb-intake. Instead of eating a sugary pick-me-up midday, go for a snack high in protein to keep the mood positive and energy up, avoiding a crash later.

## 6. Regular Sleep Is A Must For Mind And Body

Aside from food and exercise, sleep also plays an enormous role in maintaining healthy serotonin levels, and keeping our minds and bodies happy with each other. Serotonin's primary action in the body is to sedate, therefore, it is closely tied to how energy is — or is not — expended (i.e. exercise and sleep). Without sleep, our brains can be negatively affected, by messing with our brain's response to serotonin. In other words, it is important to keep up a consistent sleeping pattern, in order to keep the mind and body healthy.<sup>4</sup>

## 7. Meditation Can Help Our Hearts.<sup>5</sup>

According to the American Heart Association, medical evidence reveals a genuine reciprocal connection between the mind and body. Practices like meditation and other relaxation techniques have shown to alter not only mind-body, but also mind-heart connections. While there is a scarcity of studies directly addressing how mind-heart interventions can help patients with congestive heart failure, the AHA concluded meditation could help with anxiety and depression, which often coincide with serious illness.

Meditating for about 15 minutes daily can also help anyone who wants to stay centered and calm throughout the day. Exercises like meditation can help shift mental perceptions and reactions to situations. By becoming aware of tension and anxiety, and connecting to the breath, the mind will relax and the body will too. Even taking a few moments out of a stressful day to breathe quietly can have similar effects.

Essentially, we are what we think, eat, drink, say and breathe. Developing and applying mindfulness to all of these aspects of life can help us to maintain joyful mind-body connections. Let us know how you utilize your mind-body connection to stay healthy.

1. Available at: [http://www.yogajournal.com/for\\_teachers/2621](http://www.yogajournal.com/for_teachers/2621). Accessed June 7, 2013. ↩
2. Available at: <http://www.oralcancerfoundation.org/emotional/mind-body.htm>. Accessed June 7, 2013. ↩
3. Available at: [http://www.yogajournal.com/for\\_teachers/2621](http://www.yogajournal.com/for_teachers/2621). Accessed June 7, 2013. ↩
4. Available at: <http://nutritionwonderland.com/2009/06/understanding-bodies-serotonin-connection-between-food-and-mood/>. Accessed June 7, 2013. ↩
5. Emani S, Binkley PF. **Mind-body medicine in chronic heart failure: a translational science challenge**. *Circ Heart Fail*. 2010;3(6):715-25. ↩