Your unconscious mind is like an elephant, moving on instinct, watching its environment. Your conscious mind is like its rider, planning ahead and thinking things through. Your conscious mind is good at tuning things out and focussing on one thing at a time. But, your unconscious elephant is affected by all things you’ve ignored. To manage your mind, you need to pay attention to how external influences affect your mind, consciously and unconsciously.

Noises & distractions

Load unpredictable noises can break your concentration and tire you out. Some background noise can create stress, and everyone has different sensitivities. Being able to control noise levels is the key noise that is out of your control is distracting.

Light

Sunlight wakes us up and resets our sleep patterns, producing vitamin D, which is good for mental alertness and wellbeing. Watch out for digital devices though they emit a light similar to daylight and can disrupt your mind.

Sleep

Going without sleep is bad for our minds. Sleep deprivation has similar effects to being drunk, slows our reactions and makes it harder to process information. Yet we each need different amounts of sleep to function, and everyone has different sensitivities. What do you think? Do the Five Ways inspire you to add any other activities to your daily ‘mindapples’ list?

Food & drink

Healthy, energising foods will aid your concentration and mental energy, whilst sugary foods can create your moods and mental energy to crash, and caffeine may make you feel tense and anxious. Food isn’t everything though one of the best ways you can look after your mind is by drinking water. Good hydration is essential for cognitive performance, whilst dehydration can depress your mood. So if your mind is feeling flat or sluggish, drink more water.

Physical health

Your mind is affected by what happens to your body, and vice versa. Look after your physical health, take regular exercise and try to take care of yourself: it’s hard to focus or enjoy life when you’re ill or in pain.

Other people

We are instinctively social, and being with other people is good for our wellbeing and everyone has different sensitivities. It has to be positive contact though: being bullied or discriminated against is very bad for our minds.

Your mind is your greatest asset. Whatever you do, whatever you think about how your mind works and how to get the best from it. We all have mental health, and what we do each day affects it, so looking after our minds should be normal and natural for everyone. So, if we can brush our teeth and eat our 5-a-day, then what can we do for our minds?

WHAT AFFECTS YOUR MIND?

External influences will affect you more when you feel tired or stressed, so manage your environment, but also manage your mind.

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

Whatever you do, what do you think? Do the Five Ways inspire you to add any other activities to your daily ‘mindapples’ list?

5-A-DAY FOR YOUR MIND

Go outside

Natural light, parsley and green spaces, help your mind stay calm and energised.

Eat well

A healthy diet isn’t just good for your health, it can help keep your mind fresh and focussed too.

Drink water

It’s easy to do, but easy to forget. Build a habit of drinking water during the day to refresh your mind.

Take exercise

Why do you think giving or helping out, a little bit of exercise every day is great for your mind.

Sleep more

Try to get 8 hours a night, regularly, and if you haven’t slept well, go easy on yourself today.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY, DOING EVERY DAY TO LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY AND MIND WILL DO THAT FOR YOUR MIND will be much more effective if you do everything you can do to look after your mind.

FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO CARE OF YOUR MIND

1. Connect. Spend quality time with people outside your usual circle.
2. Be active. Take some exercise every day to keep your mind healthy.
3. Take notice. Appreciate the world around you.
5. Be kind. Helpfulness makes us feel good too.

WHAT DO YOU DO THAT’S GOOD FOR YOUR MIND?

Take a moment now to think about five things you do regularly. Make a mental note of how you do that’s good for your mind. Your mind will be much more effective if you do everything you can do to look after your mind. Your mind will be much more effective if you do everything you can do to look after your mind. And everyone has different sensitivities. Be yourself, juggle activities, find compromises and listen to your mind.

WHAT WORKS FOR US

Whatever you do, whatever you think about how your mind works and how to get the best from it. We all have different sensitivities. It has to be positive contact though: being bullied or discriminated against is very bad for our minds.

Your mind is affected by what happens to your body, and vice versa. Look after your physical health, take regular exercise and try to take care of yourself: it’s hard to focus or enjoy life when you’re ill or in pain.

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