

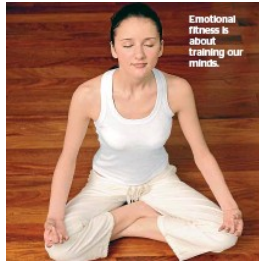
- Physical fitness / Mental health

Get your mind match fit for life

What is good for the body is good for the mind. Karen Nimmo has a guide to get your brain fighting fit.

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Is your mind in good shape? I am talking about being ripped and toned mentally – building emotional strength and fitness – to arm you for life’s inevitable challenges in a world that constantly tests us. Emotional fitness is about training our minds to manage our thoughts and emotions in healthy, adaptable ways. We all have wayward (and dark) thoughts and difficult emotions. But being emotionally fit means you have a sharp radar for your thoughts and feelings that you can latch on to, and manage those that matter, and let the rest go.



Are some people more emotionally fit? Just as some people have more natural physical strength and fitness, some people have a headstart psychologically. Some are advantaged through their biology, sound parenting and early environments, and the things that happened to them (or did not happen).

And some people are disadvantaged by all of the same things. The good news is that emotional muscle can be built. Anyone can get mentally fitter and stronger. But just like physical fitness, you can’t reach peak state in a week. When you join the Emotional Fitness Gym, you are signing on for life. Here are the skills most worth working on. and express. Learning to recognise and label emotions accurately reduces the fear of being overwhelmed by them, and enables us to cope better. When people talk about emotions, they often focus on difficult or negative ones. It is important to recognise and feel positive emotion.

When we get into emotionally challenging situations, our reactions can escalate the problem, making it worse. When we are emotionally fit, we are better able to see and accept the reality of situations that can’t be changed.

Emotionally fit people deal well with stress. They are not derailed, or shut down, by their feelings. They are still able to think clearly and function well, and they don’t rely wholly on others to soothe them. They have at least one reliable way of calming themselves down and picking themselves up.