

Strategies to Operate at Peak Mental Performance

We all know about getting more sleep (which is important as it allows all of our cells to do their "work" during our rest). Many may also be familiar with meditation, which has been shown to strengthen the gray brain matter, and in turn fosters focus and creates new mental maps.

However, let me offer you three additional ones:

1 - Break your 'Mental Patterns'

Have you ever noticed that when you change your environment, new insights begin to present themselves? When you go to the park, the coffee shop or even on vacation you may sometimes find the answers that had been eluding you, "magically" revealed themselves. It's as if they were simply waiting for you to step into a space or place which was a pivot from your normal routine.

Research has shown that by stepping away from the usual spaces and places, engaging in unscripted conversations and being introduced to novelty (new scenery, or experiences) creates new mental maps that allows for renewed creativity and insight. Your mind is literally expanding.

2 - Reduce the Multi-Minding

This is detrimental to your mental productivity, but we do it each day. This is multi-tasking at the MENTAL level. If you're in a meeting, and you're also checking email you are not fully engaged nor mentally present. Not to mention, you're using up precious brain resources.

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Did you know that your actual IQ decreases as well? So you're literally getting less smart; one study done on Harvard students illustrated their IQ levels were diminished to that of an 8 year old, when they were multi-tasking! In reality, you're actually becoming "less smart".

3 - Get Moving

When we purposefully exercise, we activate a part of the brain called the "motor cortex". This causes the brain to get bigger and increases blood flow, which in turn provides additional oxygen and nutrients needed to replenish your overloaded and energy exhausted mental maps. With this increased oxygen being furnished to the brain, you are actually feeding the brain so that it is able to support you and function at peak performance.

Training our brains to support the work we are doing in our personal and professional lives allows us the opportunity to establish the mental pathways to be calm under pressure, remain agile and stay connected to our vision.

Simply put, our brains work better when we intentionally wire them to do so.

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