



Strengthening the mind-body connection

The mind and the body are often viewed as two separate entities. However, in reality, our physical health and emotional health are deeply intertwined in what's known as the mind-body connection.

How you feel emotionally can directly impact how you feel physically and vice versa. Understanding this connection and learning ways to support yourself as a whole person can have a positive impact on overall well-being.

The mind and the body are connected through chemical and physical messengers, such as hormones and neurotransmitters. When you feel strong emotions like stress or fear, those emotions trigger a physical response in the body, such as the release of cortisol or adrenaline. As a result, you may experience muscle tension, headaches or digestive issues.

All our feelings have bodily sensations. These physical symptoms are your body's warning system to pay attention to what is going on with your emotional health. On the flip side, when you experience physical illness or injury, those physical ailments can trigger emotional responses like sadness, anxiety, and stress. If we fail to recognize or manage our emotions, it can lead to further illness or injury, while also weakening our immune system and compromising our overall health.

Tips for a healthy body and mind

Since your body – how you move it and how you interact with your physical surroundings – shapes how you think, feel, and behave, here are four things you can do to improve this connection:

- 1. Take the time for an honest check in with yourself** throughout the day. Acknowledge what you're going through and how you're feeling, both physically and mentally. Pay attention to what your body is telling you about the state of your mind.
- 2. Find ways to relax** through mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or deep breathing. These activities can help calm both the body and mind. If you're struggling with stress and anxiety, visit www.independenthealth.com/healthhub to view a series of "Vagus Nerve/Relaxation" workout from home videos.
- 3. Get moving with physical activity**, such as strength training, tai chi, tennis, or walking. Find an activity that not only gets you moving, but brings you joy.
- 4. Stay connected socially.** Join a club or grab a friend and hit the trails. Being part of a group can help with purpose, connection and meaning in your life.

If you find that your emotions are throwing your life out of balance and/or negatively affecting both your mental and physical health, talk with your doctor, a trusted friend or loved one. Remember, you don't have to go through it alone, and you don't have to wait until your condition declines to seek help.