



MENTAL FITNESS

MASTER YOUR THINKING. MASTER YOUR LIFE.

The Mental Fitness Workbook

A 12-Week Guide to
Become Mentally Fit

Steve Wize, LCSW

Foreword

Fitness is a way of life for Steve Wize. Whether it's completing an Ironman 70.3, running in the Boston Marathon, or simply playing recreational softball with friends, being in top shape matters to Steve. But not only does Steve work hard to stay in shape, he helps and motivates others to do so. He has a passion to help people improve their physical health and have a better quality of life. Steve is an encourager. He has a gift to motivate you, even as he walks alongside with you.

As professional counselor and life coach, Steve has spent his career helping individuals overcome their addictions and improve their mental health. So it's no surprise that Steve came up with the idea of Mental Fitness- a total system to keep our minds in shape, just like we need to keep our bodies fit.

Steve not only developed the idea of Mental Fitness, he lives it. Each day he works to improve himself. He strives to be more positive, loving and authentic. He values and invests time in his relationships with his family, friends and clients. He works out to be in the best physical shape possible, while also challenging himself to grow intellectually, mentally, and spiritually.

Steve does an amazing job of putting into practice the ideals he espouses. Steve genuinely cares about people, and his desire to help people achieve their potential is evident in everything he does.

If you want to see results, you need to put in the effort. If you are willing to try, I can't think of a better person than Steve to help you to become mentally fit.

--Rev. Howard Irwin, MDiv., MSW, LCSW

Preface

In American society, when we hear the word “fitness,” we tend to think of physical fitness. Many of us count the calories we consume, the steps we take, and the hours we sleep. We purchase gym memberships, smartwatches, and meal plans. Yet, despite all these efforts, most of us fall short of our physical fitness goals. The question here is, “Why?”

The answer is simple: our Mental Fitness needs to be improved. Even with all the time, effort, and money we spend on physical fitness, we’re not taught how to develop our Mental Fitness, and as a result, we often fail to reach our goals.

Mental Fitness plays a primary role in everything we do – from mastering our emotions, to building relationships, to achieving our life’s purpose.

The Mental Fitness Workbook is designed to be a 12-week guide that will give you the knowledge and skills to work on and improve your Mental Fitness. The workbook includes concepts and worksheets and can be done over the course of 12 weeks or at one’s own pace.

It’s always been intriguing to me that we teach physical fitness, as Phys Ed., in high schools, but no one teaches Mental Fitness!

The goal of this workbook is to help bridge that gap. However, this workbook is not designed to be self-therapy or a replacement for mental health therapy. Still, the results you gain in your own self-improvement can be just as valuable, if not more so!

Here at Mental Fitness, we truly believe that if you *Master Your Thinking, You Master Your Life.*

Our 12-Week Journey Together

The workbook is divided into three main parts. The first four chapters address the mastery of one's self-talk and are all about *The Fundamentals*. These chapters are considered Part 1 and teach the basic skills and practical strategies you will need to lead a more mentally fit life and achieve mastery of self.

If done as suggested, Part 1 will take 4 weeks.

Part 2 of the workbook is about *Mastering Relationships*. In these three chapters, we'll discuss developing a mindset of empathy, learning skills to communicate effectively, and reviewing strategies to build happy, healthy, long-term relationships.

If done as suggested, Part 2 will take 3 weeks.

The third and final part of the workbook is "*Achieving Your Dreams*." In the last five chapters, we will build on your new mentally fit thinking to make your dreams a reality. In addition, we'll go over the skills necessary to inspire and influence others to their full potential.

If done as suggested, Part 3 will take 5 weeks.

As with everything written in the book, the goal is not to tell you what to think. That's solely up to you. Instead, my goal is for you to challenge your preconceived beliefs and then reassess whether or not they're working for you. If they are working, keep them. If they're not, perhaps this chapter has offered you some alternative suggestions. Ultimately, what you allow into your head and heart is up to you.

By the end of this journey together, the goal is to give people all the skills they need to stop limiting themselves. We need to stop settling for good enough. We must stop ignoring that little voice that says we could do more and instead turn up the volume!

The Mental Fitness Workbook can and will give you all the practical strategies you'll need so you can master your thinking and master your life.

Let's take the next 12 weeks and get mentally fit together!

The Mental Fitness Promise

So, here's the deal: Mental Fitness is not "The Lazy Person's Guide to Self-Improvement." It is not designed solely to make you "feel better" by simply selling you fuzzy feelings and heart-warming stories. Instead, it's intended to give you practical strategies to help you achieve the best life possible. There are no shortcuts. It will take work.

We're not born stressed and depressed. It takes years of practice to get that way. Finding happiness, purpose, and joy also takes practice. It will require dedication, commitment, and determination to recondition your thinking.

If you're feeling a bit nervous, that's okay! You're not alone on this journey. I'm not promising it will be easy, but let me be your guide, and I promise you: Investing in yourself and your Mental Fitness will be worth the effort!

How Mental Fitness Came to Be

Being healthy and athletic have always been core values for me. I loved playing sports in high school, but my two favorites were track and cross country. I suppose I've always considered myself a 'runner' at heart, so when I went to college, I took my first shot at running a marathon. Within two years of training, I qualified for the Boston Marathon.

Around the same time, I was finishing my Master's in Social Work and beginning my career as a professional therapist. Even though running and counseling may seem unrelated, I started using physical fitness analogies to encourage my clients to improve their mental health.

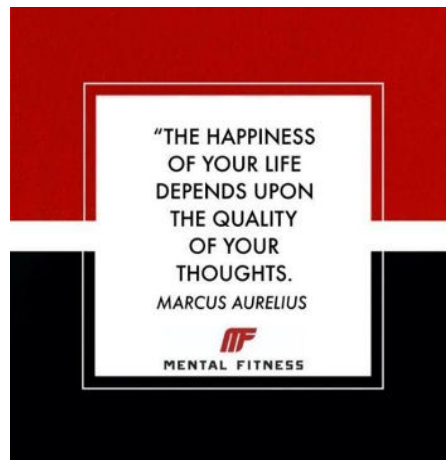
After a few years, I knew I was ready to start my own business. In May of 2016, it hit me. I needed to create a practice incorporating physical fitness and mental health. This is how Mental Fitness was born. Since then, I've also become a NASM-certified personal trainer and NASM-certified nutritional coach.

Mental Fitness became a combination of Mental Health + Personal Fitness. It was a perfect fit for my style of counseling.

Using this new approach, I've now worked with thousands of individuals to improve their mental fitness, and now it's *YOUR TURN!*

Mental Fitness 101

6,200 Thoughts Per Day



Ever try to count all your thoughts in a single day? I'm guessing probably not. First off, it's an enormous number. Secondly, unlike counting steps, it's hard to measure what constitutes a thought.

Still, according to research out of Queens University in Canada, even using the most conservative scientific number to date of 6,200 thoughts per day, that's still about 43,400 thoughts per week or 2,256,800 thoughts per year.

Think about that for a minute: What if, rather than 6,200 thoughts per day, you made \$6,200 per day or \$2.23 million per year. You'd probably consult with a financial expert, right? I know I would! Yet, with our thoughts, we expect that we can do it all on our own. Doesn't make *cents* to me!

Mental Fitness Takes Practice

You've just never had a professional coach!

Another way to think about it is this: What if, rather than having 6,200 thoughts per day, we took 6,200 golf swings per day? There's a catch, though: no one ever gives you instructions!

Over time, with 6,200 swings per day, you'd probably develop your own style and proficiency in your swing. However, you'd likely also have some poorly ingrained habits that may be limiting your performance.

For me, that's what Mental Fitness is all about! Just like Tiger Woods would not have been as great a golfer as he was in his prime without a lot of coaching along the way, so can a great counselor or coach help one improve their thinking and heighten their performance.

Negative Thoughts Are Toxic

Just like a golf instructor has to correct old habits before teaching new ones, so does one working on their Mental Fitness have to remove their old toxic thoughts before they can plant new ones and allow them to grow.

Unfortunately, for most of us who have never had a lesson, our baseline isn't too great, and our old habits are strong. Simply put, changing our thinking takes work, and it's not an easy task.

For me, having so many negative thoughts is like eating greasy cheeseburgers. You'll feel tired and sluggish if you allow junk food in your body. If you let junk thoughts into your mind, you'll have a toxic emotional state. It's that simple.

Just like it's hard to feel healthy when eating poorly, it is hard to live a positive life with a negative mindset!

Redefining Mental Health

Traditionally, when we think of therapy, we use only two terms: Mental illness or mental health. The trouble with these terms is that both are stigmatized by society.

Both terms suggest one has some distress or dysfunction and needs a therapist to return to baseline. But for me, the current spectrum of mental health is incomplete, and that's where Mental Fitness comes in. Mental Fitness is going from surviving to thriving!

Just like physical fitness is based on a continuum of health, from the morbidly unhealthy to the average person to peak physical form, our mental health should be no different. It doesn't just end on average!

To see a brief video explanation of this continuum, please feel free to visit:

[What is Mental Fitness](https://youtube.com/watch?v=k_UBq5pdzq0) (https://youtube.com/watch?v=k_UBq5pdzq0).

Note: With this continuum, the goal is not to reinforce stigma around Mental Illness or Mental Health. Instead, we want to introduce a new term into our collective vocabulary that focuses not just on surviving but thriving toward our full potential.

Achieving Your Full Potential

On a scale of 0-100, where would you rank yourself in achieving your potential? Before you answer, let me explain this a bit further. A score of 100 means you are operating at your fullest potential, tackling life with full force, and firing on all cylinders. A score of zero means you lay in bed all day, afraid to face the world, getting up only to eat and use the bathroom.

Now, using this scale, where do you rank yourself?

My Ranking	
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Got your answer? Good.

The C- Version of Ourselves

I asked this same question to 100 people – friends, family, colleagues, and clients. The average response?

70%

Now, obviously, this was not a scientific survey. Still, it does beg the question: *Why* are we not living life to our fullest potential? And are we only operating at 70% of our potential as human beings? *If this is correct, are most of us wasting a third of our lives away?*

Let's consider the implications of this "average" answer. In financial terms, according to Google, the median American household income in 2023 is roughly \$70,000 annually. If we're only operating at 70% of our potential, that's \$21,000 left behind in annual earning potential. That's over \$1 million throughout a 50-week work span. That's a lot of lost potential money!

But money is renewable and variable – we can get money back. Time, on the other hand, can't be regained. If the average person lives to be 80 years old, that's 24 years of wasted potential!



It's time we stop living the C- version of ourselves!

Week 1 Assignment: Beginning with the End in Mind

Let's be real; it would be foolish to design a path forward if we didn't figure out what direction we wanted to go. This assignment will help us do just that!

First, decide what three areas of your life you would like to see the most improvement from the following list:

Areas of Life	Pick 3 Options
<i>Relationships (Friends, Family, Significant Other)</i>	
<i>Finances</i>	
<i>Career</i>	
<i>Physical Health (Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise)</i>	
<i>Spiritual Well-Being</i>	
<i>Leisure Time (Hobbies/Travel)</i>	
<i>Meaning & Purpose</i>	
<i>Service to Others</i>	
<i>Creativity</i>	
<i>Happiness</i>	
<i>Productivity</i>	

Second, write out two sentences on why you chose this area of your life and how you'd like to see it improve.

Third, assess how well you think you can improve these three areas of your life. Rate each one on a scale of 1-5. "5" means being 100% confident in being able to improve this area of my life. "1" being I have no confidence in improving this area of my life.

Topic # 1	
Why did I choose this topic? How would I like to see it improve?	
Rating 1-5: How confident am I in my ability to change?	

Topic # 2	
Why did I choose this topic? How would I like to see it improve?	
Rating 1-5: How confident am I in my ability to change?	

Topic # 3	
Why did I choose this topic? How would I like to see it improve?	
Rating 1-5: How confident am I in my ability to change?	

Week 1 Activity Challenge

For every suggested activity challenge, please use common sense and consult with a doctor before doing anything physical. If you can't do the suggested activity for any reason, feel free to modify it to meet your specific needs.

For this week's Activity Challenge, your goal is to do an exercise until you "max out" and can't go any further. This could be maxing out on push-ups, pull-ups, or sit-ups. This could be going for a walk or running as far as you safely can.

The goal is simply that you do something physical until you can't do it any longer.

The body is a reflection of the mind. Pushing ourselves to the maximum of something physical will prime our mentality to be ready to do the same.

Congratulations. You've Completed Week 1!



Week 2

The goal for each day is to take about 10-15 minutes to thoughtfully improve your Mental Fitness.

For Week 2, here are your instructions:

Days	Completed
Day 1: Read through Deadly Phrase #1	
Day 2: Read through Deadly Phrase #3	
Day 3: Read through Deadly Phrase #5	
Day 4: Read through Deadly Phrase #7 to the end	
Day 5: Complete the written assignments	
Day 6: Complete the activity challenge	
Day 7: Take a break. Let everything you just read and did digest in your mind!	

Mastering the Basics

So, what are the fundamentals of Mental Fitness? Let's first consider the fundamentals of physical fitness: quality sleep, proper diet, and exercise. If even one of those areas is neglected, all others suffer.

In the first part of this book, we will look at three fundamental areas of Mental Fitness.

- *Detoxifying your thinking*
- *Mastering your emotions*
- *Reframing your stress*

And just like achieving peak physical fitness, all these skills are intertwined and interrelated. In addition, just like learning the basics of football, it's only by having these fundamental skills in place that we can apply and build upon them to make our dreams a reality.

We begin our journey together with a mental detox. Just like a good sauna or nutritional cleanse can jump-start one's physical health efforts, that's where our Mental Fitness conditioning will begin as well.