



6 Ways to Boost Your Mental Fitness (While Social Distancing)

Our world has been turned upside down these past few weeks because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily routines and schedules have been thrown out the window as many parents are now juggling working from home and caring for their children, testing both their multitasking abilities and their patience. While there are many things that are completely out of our control, we have to remind ourselves to stay positive and remain mentally strong while we navigate this “new normal.”

This time proves to be especially difficult for student athletes, particularly seniors, as many sporting events, even championship tournaments, have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. It’s important for athletes to still maintain their fitness levels – both physically and mentally. We reached out to several members of our Sports Nutrition Advisory Panel (SNAP) for expert advice on boosting mental fitness during these trying times.

1 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Right now, there is an abundance of fun and interactive workout videos on social media that allow you to connect with others. Take this opportunity to participate in these free workout routines and learn from these fitness professionals.

-Kelly Springer, MS, RD, CDN

2 REMAIN PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Make physical activity part of your new routine and get creative with your home workouts. For example, save your empty gallons of milk and then refill them with water or sand to use as free weights. Tip: A gallon milk jug filled with water is about nine pounds, and, if it’s filled with sand, it’s more like 13 pounds.

-Matt Darnell, PhD, RD, CSSD, SCCC

3 BUILD STRUCTURE IN YOUR DAY

Now that we are several weeks into our home-bound status, try to keep a routine, not only for yourself, but as a family. Weather permitting and keeping social distancing in mind, try to take walks together outdoors or, better yet, simply eat dinner together every day.

-Felicia Stoler, DCN, MS, RDN

4 EAT MINDFULLY

Control what you can with your eating plan. Be consistent with how you fuel and with your hydration, even when your routine takes a vacation. Muscle up with a simple smoothie that includes milk, yogurt and your favorite fruit.

-Leslie Bonci, MPH, RD, CSSD, LDN

5 BE KIND TO YOURSELF

During these unprecedented times, try to remain flexible and realistic with your routine from day to day. You do not have to eat perfectly to eat healthfully. Savor the food you eat, whether it is a mango or your favorite piece of candy. Be mindful without being critical of your choices.

-Heidi Skolnik, MS, CDN

6 GET YOUR ZZZS

Sleep influences just about every aspect of your physical and mental well-being, including your mood, energy levels and exercise performance. The key to getting a good night’s sleep is sticking to a schedule. That means not only going to bed and waking up at your typical time, but also eating and exercising as usual, too.

-Heather Mangieri, MS, RD, CSSD

Remember, we are in this together. It’s important to take care of ourselves and others during these challenging times. Use these tips to help keep yourself strong and fit – both mentally and physically – while you continue this new practice of “social distancing.” Be safe and stay healthy!



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