Getting in Your Zone: 5 Ways Entrepreneurs Prime Their Mind and Body for Optimal Productivity

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As entrepreneurs, we don’t get to punch our time cards at 5:00 p.m. sharp. In reality, we are always on the clock thinking about our next pitch, marketing plan, or capital raise, sometimes during the most inopportune times. It’s time to start realizing the value that lies within taking care of ourselves, or dare I say — even taking a break. A break does not have to mean a long vacation. Small adjustments throughout our day can let us recalibrate and make sure that we take care of ourselves before trying to build the next great business. These vital self-care routines have been proven to help elevate the performance and mental health of all kinds of people from entrepreneurs to athletes.

1. Get some rest

Ironic, I know. How can more rest make me more productive? #TeamNoSleep! As we go through school, we get into some habits that don’t carry over into the real world. “All-nighters” during finals week seem to be a normal thing, as we stay up until the wee hours cramming those last few slides just in case it can grab us a few extra points. Entrepreneurship is a very different world. Our test questions come in the form of

presentations, conversations, negotiations, and so much more. If your mental clarity is not where it needs to be, the opportunity is as good as gone. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults should get anywhere from 7-9 hours of sleep every night. That might sound crazy, but you will definitely feel the difference after a good night's rest. Don't be afraid to experiment with some products that may help you get that sound sleep faster, like chamomile tea, melatonin, or even CBD. Focus on your rest, re-energizing, and mental clarity – your body (and performance!) will thank you.

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2. A good sweat can detoxify more than just your pores

Many investors and entrepreneurs believe in a certain mantra: If people don't take care of themselves, how can they take care of a business? The parallels between business and fitness are undeniable; they both require dedication, perseverance, and self-discipline. This doesn't mean every successful entrepreneur needs a chiseled six-pack or bulging shoulders. This is more about keeping the body active and enjoying the benefits of oxygenated blood flow. From a brisk morning walk to an intense cardio session, physical activity can achieve the main goal of keeping our bodies in shape, active, and in motion. Stasis is a key factor in many chronic disease states and regular exercise is the only way to prevent it, especially for those of us at a desk all day. The American Heart Association recommends adults to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week. Adding a 30-minute routine to our day not only improves our overall health, but the natural energy that exercise delivers is exactly what every entrepreneur needs, especially those of us that are constantly working overtime.

3. You are what you eat (and supplement)

As we age, our bodies show more sensitivity to certain foods and ingredients. Some of us are slow caffeine metabolizers (which can make the effects of coffee last longer), while others are discovering new allergies (such as gluten). Make an effort to monitor how your body reacts to certain foods, maybe even keeping track of it in a journal. Sometimes our busy schedules do not allow for a suitable food break. But it's important that we do eat, and we don't want to pay later for the food that we eat now. (Who can afford a sick day?). I am not here to give you dietary advice, but I am here to encourage you to identify the foods that leave your body feeling good and energized, so you can stick with them and continue your busy day. Lastly, do not be afraid to supplement. As a pharmacist, I encourage entrepreneurs to make sure they are getting all of the vital nutrients and supplement with multi-vitamins as needed. I am a big advocate for anti-inflammatory supplements (like Omega 3) to aid in digestive and immune health. While we are always looking for a "boost" in our energy levels, it is important not to overload on caffeine from coffee or soda. Look for other sources like B Vitamins or natural teas that can give you the edge, especially in that afternoon stretch.

4. Divide and conquer

Unfortunately for most of us, when we have set out on this journey to build something on our own, we start thinking that we have to do everything by ourselves. While that is true in many areas, there are certain tasks that we have to allow ourselves to delegate to coworkers and vendors. This is a hard lesson learned, but trust me, when you find yourself on your company's social media responding to comments past midnight, that is when you know it is time to hire help. You have hired

the people around you for a reason and you have partnered with certain vendors because they are specialists in what they do. Let them go to work. It will alleviate a lot of your stress while saving a ton of time, and there is nothing better than hearing “it’s already done!”

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5. Meditate and recap

When we hear the word meditation, the traditional view used to be candles, a nature soundtrack, eyes closed, and a peaceful pose. But now, we are seeing an influx of technology in the form of apps that are teaching us how to find peace within our day. It’s important to have some guidance on how to meditate. Self-reflection and unplugging are absolutely helpful, but there is a way to make this meditation productive for your work as well. At night, I encourage you to find a way to relax. But you should actively think about your day at work while you are relaxed. What did you achieve? What went well? What went wrong? What is still pending? What are the priorities for tomorrow? Most importantly, stay calm no matter what the answers are. This exercise will help you organize and compartmentalize your thoughts in a calm manner, while also allowing the body and mind to exfoliate from the day. It takes practice, but you will find yourself with a clear plan of attack every day using this simple 15-30 minute routine the night before.

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We truly love being in this position, don’t we? The pressure is on and performing at a high level is what we do! We just have to remember that this is not our only performance. There are multiple performances every single day, and we want each one to be as energetic as our first. The only way to achieve that is self-care. Mental clarity, physical fitness,

and articulate plans are three key factors that will radiate in every project, presentation, and negotiation that we take part in. The fuel to all of those factors is self-care. Take care of yourself, prioritize your wellness, and your performance will undoubtedly follow and take you to new heights.

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