



The psychology behind...

the connection between body and mind



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genetics play a role, the impact of lifestyle, particularly physical fitness and exercise, are important too.

In essence, the findings from a lot of the research in this area suggest that our ability to think well in middle age depends to a large degree on the kind of lifestyle we had as a young adult.

One of the reasons is that being out of shape is likely to mean poor heart and circulation health that can contribute to the development of plaques in the vessels leading to the brain, impairing its ability to function. So the old adage of: "A healthy body means a healthy mind" might be truer than we thought.

If you want to stay looking and feeling young here are five things you need to start doing:

Stay physically active

Exercise keeps us mentally as well as physically young and agile – not to mention it could help you live longer.

Stay social

Evidence suggests that a good social support system lessens the risk of disability and physical decline. It's a great way to reduce stress which has been found to play a major role in cognitive decline.

Keep learning

People who continue learning new things throughout life and challenging their brains are less likely to develop Alzheimer's and dementia, so make it a point to stay mentally active.

Have lots of sex

There's evidence that couples who have sex at least three times a week look more than 10 years younger than those who make love twice a week or less.

Laugh

Not only does it help your heart but it gives you a positive outlook that is vital for staying young at heart. It can help your body fight stress too.

It's World Health Day today, so I thought I'd use the opportunity to look at how keeping your body healthy is proven to keep your mind healthy, too.

The two are intrinsically linked, so much so that a new study from the University of Minnesota indicates that strong muscles could mean a strong brain. Plus the more active you are at age 25 the better your thinking tends to be when you reach middle age.

Luckily, the findings also suggest that even if you didn't exercise when you were young, you can start now and still improve the health of your brain. Mid-life declines like forgetting names or where you left your keys affect some people later than others and the current thinking is that, while

Your Stars...probably



JANETTE JACQUES
She knows, you know

ARIES

March 21-April 20

Your appearance irks you today. It'd take more than Gok Wan to sort out, you feel. Stop seeing faults – you look great. Joke alert: Thieves broke into Gok Wan's house and stole his pans. Yes...Gok Wan's wok's gone! Lucky herb: Mint

TAURUS

April 21-May 21

Hope springs eternal today as you realise your earlier doubts are bottomless. Unlike your bank account. Draw up a penny-pinching plan and stick to it. A friend from the past may contact you, so keep an open heart. Lucky duck: Peking

GEMINI

May 22-June 21

The trouble with being a complex character is not that people misunderstand you – it's that you can't fathom yourself. Write down three things that make you happy and work on one. Avoid fishy things, food or otherwise. Lucky bat: Ding

CANCER

June 22-July 23

Good to see you're trying to be more efficient. But don't go all military. Tiny steps, Cancer, not goose steps! On a cheerier note, news from abroad inspires you and you dream about a summer hol. Wear amethyst today. Lucky stance: Cocky

LEO

July 24-August 23

One of your pet hates is stinginess and some of your pals are so mean they only breathe in. Let it wash over you. PS: Why are 20p coins shaped that way? So you can remove them from a miser's fist with a spanner. Lucky bank: Piggy

VIRGO

August 24-September 23

Today you may face a few hitches, but try not to sound like a bus reversing. You are normally so calm on the outside (while the inside is doing the fandango). Take a break mid-afternoon, preferably with a KitKat. Lucky net: Butterfly

LIBRA

September 24-October 23

Are you having those dreams where your teeth fall out? You must be on to your 10th set of dentures by now. You're anxious, but it's never as bad as you fear. Treat yourself to a massage and ponder your top qualities. Lucky glue: Polygrip

SCORPIO

October 24-November 22

You have health concerns today. Possible high blood pressure and water retention bother you. On the bright side, put them together and conveniently you have boiling water. Ease your mind with a GP appointment. Lucky ailment: Bunions

SAGITTARIUS

November 23-December 21

Most days I would love to see the wiring in your head. Today, though, it would take an electrician with a death wish to make sense of it. Sparky, you take on too much. Delegate! Or wriggle out of it, whichever suits. Lucky eye: Lazy

CAPRICORN

December 22-January 20

A survey says swearing helps us tolerate pain (and idiots). But you must tone it down, even when someone is tap-dancing on your last nerve. Practise innocuous words in a really scary voice. Blue looks good on you today. Lucky case: Basket

AQUARIUS

January 21-February 19

Your friends think you have no willpower, but you've given up chocolate hundreds of times. What do they know! Still, it's worth a healthy eating stint, you feel better when you dine well. Lay off the Eccles cake. Lucky tomato: Cherry

PISCES

February 20-March 20

Fat-fighting Pisces feel the uphill struggle today. You're sure your neighbour didn't have a sunken living room until you visited. Banish doubts. You CAN lose inches if you want. Wear myriad colours today. Lucky loaf: Bloomer

Reflections

Chair, Islamic Society of Britain (isb.org.uk)
SUGHRA AHMED

Language is a powerful tool which can be misused to make people believe their lives don't matter. History has shown us many examples of where one group feels a sense of superiority over another based on skin colour, religion, gender or even a piece of land.

Muslim extremists are no different; they have used words

such as "kafir" to describe all those who don't believe in their version of Islam, and words like "takfir" to excommunicate Muslims who see something wrong with the terror they spread.

Whatever the language, extremists will use words to tell us about appropriate



values, beliefs, ideology and even behaviour.

My values come from where I live and those around me. My faith inspires me to share nothing but good and to not allow ignorance to be my guide but to seek knowledge in order to be a better person.