

Physical Well-Being and Body Image

Physical health and a sense of personal wellness, vitality, and robustness comprise one of the most important foundations of self-esteem. It's often difficult to feel good about yourself when you're feeling physically weak, tired, or ill. Current evidence points to the role of physiological imbalances—often caused by stress—in the genesis of panic attacks, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Upgrading your physical well-being will have a direct impact on your particular problem with anxiety, as well as contribute substantially to your self-esteem. The chapters on relaxation, exercise, and nutrition relate directly to physical well-being. Reading them and putting into practice the suggestions and guidelines offered will go a long way toward upgrading your personal wellness. The questionnaire below is intended to give you an overview of how you are doing in this area.

Personal Wellness Questionnaire

1. Are you exercising for at least one half hour 3 to 5 times per week?
2. Do you enjoy the exercise you do?
3. Do you give yourself the opportunity to deeply relax each day through progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, meditation, or some other relaxation method?
4. Do you give yourself at least one hour of downtime or leisure time each day?
5. Do you manage your time so that you are not perpetually rushed?
6. Do you handle stress or do you feel that it has control of you?
7. Do you give yourself solitary time for personal reflection?
8. Do you get at least seven hours of sleep every night?
9. Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of your sleep?
10. Are you eating three solid meals each day, including a good-sized breakfast?
11. Are you minimizing your consumption of stress-producing foods (those containing caffeine, sugar, salt, or processed "junk" foods)?
12. Do you take vitamin supplements on a regular basis to augment your diet—such as a multiple vitamin tablet and extra vitamin B-complex and vitamin C when you're under physical or emotional stress?
13. Do you like your living environment? Is the place where you live comfortable and relaxing?
14. Does smoking tobacco interfere with your physical well-being?
15. Does excessive use of alcohol or so-called recreational drugs compromise your well-being?
16. Are you comfortable with your present weight? If not, what can you do about it?
17. Do you value your personal appearance through good hygiene, grooming, and dressing in a way that feels comfortable and attractive?
18. Do you like your body and the way you appear?