# The Process I Use To Help Patients Achieve Mental Fitness Transcript

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## Introduction to Mental Fitness

Hey, everyone. I hope you're enjoying the summit. It's been such a treat talking to so many experts about how we can take care of symptoms of depression and anxiety.

What are the solutions that people see working? And I want to talk about how I help my patients build amazing mental fitness. As you've heard me talk about, mental fitness is the framework that I've been using as I think about how to help people take care of their mental health, and really, along with focusing on symptoms and symptom reduction and all my work as a traditional psychiatrist, I've noticed over the years the people who have really got better.

I kind of look at it like, what was the inflection moment? Like, what changed? How is it that we get back to optimal mental health?

## Nutrition and Mental Health

And as I often meet people when they're really in very, very bad shape with their mental health, over the years, I've gotten to some, I think just conviction, seeing over and over again people getting better.

And I wonder what what is it? What is it they're doing? Certainly seeing people shift what they eat and pay more attention to lifestyle factors like nutrition that give rise to nutritional psychiatry and all my work in that area.

Seeing that it was one of those factors that we really ignore, it makes a big difference if you're got bad clinical depression, if you're eating horrible junk food or not eating enough, versus, you know, you're really taking care of yourself, nourishing yourself, eating whole real foods.

The data has gotten pretty clear about that. Well, that same idea about nutritional psychiatry. It applies in a number of areas of our life that it felt to me that in a mental health setting, we weren't addressing or in the health setting, it was being addressed in a way that wasn't helping patients a lot.

For example, thinking about exercise. Yeah. Exercise recommendations, for mental health is about 150 minutes a week. I found that when I would talk in those types of terms to patients, I'd think about going to the gym or getting a pair of running shoes, and they'd often feel pretty defeated.

There weren't really that type of exercise there, or they hadn't adopted those habits before in their life.

## Movement Beyond Traditional Exercise

But when I shifted and I'm begin using this mental fitness framework and thinking about movement, think about step count, think about whether patients go out dancing or that a bowling night counts.

That as long as my patients were moving, were active, were trying to in some way enjoy their bodies. Patient taught me this, kind of really highlighted this.

I write about in Healing the Modern Brain. As a woman I've been working with for a while who has had her over the treatment resistant depression, and she done better for you, you know, interventions at health.

But she really, what was I was lit up just, like, had a grit. And she told me, like, kind of out of nowhere, like was I was tango dancing. And it's the kind of thing people don't say that all the time in session.

Right. And it just really intrigued me. And she began to tell me that actually, she had discovered dancing and

specifically tango dancing and taking lessons years ago.

I gave her a lot of joy. She really enjoyed it. She's enjoyed sort of taking lessons and learning some of the technical stuff. But there was a group that got together and and danced, some really skilled tango dancers.

And this became, as you can imagine, not just exercise. It became, a little bit of a social group for her. It became something to look forward to. It created another element of mental fitness that I talk a lot about in our e-course, Healing the Modern Brain.

And in my book connection. And so there's a way that getting out on, that treadmill by yourself in the basement for 150 minutes a week, if that's what works for you.

Hey, I'm going to encourage that. I'm a little jealous of that. That's amazing.

## Connection, Purpose, and the Modern Brain

But I wouldn't want that to be all there is when it comes to how you enjoy moving your body. And so I think about this like, how do I work with patients from a mental fitness to help them achieve optimal mental health or just improve their mental health?

It's really thinking through a mental fitness framework. There are nine core tenets of mental fitness, and some of them are the core pieces of lifestyle medicine.

We often talk about movement, sleep, exercise, but a few of them are really honed from my use of a psychiatrist thinking about things like self-awareness and connection, thinking about tenants that, you know, a lot of times we don't pay enough attention to.

How do you improve the quality of your connections and connections? Maybe not just people, but also with institutions, or how do you work on your sense of purpose?

And that's something we often make space for unless someone asks us. But it's absolutely essential to your mental health to have your sense of purpose.

Healing the modern brain is the framework, that I've been calling this for mental fitness. It was the idea that the modern brain is up against some new challenges, whether it's the nutritional environment of ultra processed food or the sedentary life environment, or there's just so much fun stuff to watch, it's hard not to say a lot, or whether it's this new modern world where making real, authentic connections can be a lot harder, but also there's a lot more in terms of tools and technology for making more connections.

It's almost like a paradox. As you've heard, we're in a connected age, but we're more disconnected than ever. Well, mental fitness in a lot of ways. My challenge to you run mental fitness is that you really turning the tables on that, that this actually is going to be the most connected age, an era for you.

This is going to be an age and an era for you in your life where you achieve optimal mental fitness, or you take care of whatever mental health challenges that you're having, where you are able to really be in a connected and purpose driven life.

Everyone, I hope this helps you think around your mental fitness framework to think about some of the core tenants of mental fitness. We talk a lot about many of them in the summit, and then I hope it shares with you a little of my thinking and my encouragement on along with, addressing, you know, symptoms and thinking in traditional ways about mental health.

We really need to kind of grow our awareness around mental fitness and the aspects of nourishing ourself and bolstering our mental health. It's just a treat to get to spend a little more time with you.

I hope you'll check out, some of the information and we'll we'll send you an email here really shortly about our course, heal in the Modern Brain. Thanks so much.