

SELF



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great-body secrets

from around the world

* **The single best workout out there, p. 140**

* **2 guaranteed ways to beat the fat-American syndrome**

* **The planet's 12 most fabulous beauty finds**

* **Lessons from the world's healthiest women—learn 'em!**

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Pump up your motivation muscle!

A WORKOUT THAT WILL WHIP YOUR CAN-DO POWERS INTO SHAPE

DO YOU PANIC IN THE FACE OF PRESSURE-PACKED projects, like that last-minute office report or a toast for your best friend's wedding? Take a few minutes to buff up your resolve. Now, nobody's telling you to place your head on a StairMaster, but "getting emotionally fit enables you to solve issues faster and with less effort," promises psychologist Vivien Wolsk, Ph.D., dean of faculty at the Gestalt Center for Psychotherapy and Training in New York City. Next time you feel under the gun, try this action-inducing program:

- **Warm up your brain.** Before you tackle that monster report, spend 10 minutes doing a no-brainer task that has a definite result, such as straightening up your desk or surroundings. "This helps you gain a sense of control that translates to the daunting task at hand," Wolsk explains.
- **Do a power-walk talk.** You probably know that exercise can help you blow off steam. But when you also need a good-vibe boost, it's best to turn off your Walkman and make your own treadmill tunes. Try chanting "I'm powerful, I'm strong and nothing in this world can stop me." (Look out, Gloria Gaynor!)
- **Flex your ego.** For a quick confidence lift, hit the bathroom and do what psychologists call "mirroring," says Wolsk: "Talk to the mirror like it's your best friend, telling it how you're going to nail the problem." Yes, you may feel silly (check the stalls first!), but you'll encourage yourself to rise to the occasion.
- **Cool your concerns.** Skip the comfort candy bar and rock in a chair to release end-of-day tension (even better if you can also hug a pillow). The motion and soft sensation will ease anxiety, leaving you ready to take on tomorrow's challenges—no sweat required.

—Sandra Gordon

SELF HELP

A tasty summer stress buster: Brew peppermint tea, serve it on the rocks and feel that tension headache disappear.

Yes, you can make your mind as strong as your body.

Meditate your way to perma-pleasure

PERHAPS YOU'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MEDITATION AS A BUNCH of New Age hype. But what if we told you that it could actually rewire your brain circuitry, helping you load up on happy feelings? Groundbreaking research on the brains of Buddhist

monks, under way at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, may prove just that. Although scientist Richard Davidson, Ph.D., is keeping mum about his soon-to-be-published findings, SELF has the scoop that he's onto something big. "We know meditation produces positive feelings," Davidson hints. "For the first time, we're discovering how it affects the brain."

No Tibetan retreat in your near future? Worry not. Take your brain on a feel-good trip with tips from *Meditation Express* (Contemporary Books):

Master your mind. Sit down and conjure a pink elephant for one minute (use a timer). Then spend the next 60 seconds picturing anything *but* that elephant (harder than you think!). Learning to focus on whatever you want is the key to successful meditation.

Wash away worries. Imagine a mountain stream flowing through your mind. Every time a thought appears, throw it into the water and watch it float away. Stay focused on the stream, not the thoughts.

Get connected. Envision a big dot in the middle of your forehead, throat, chest, ribs, belly and the base of your spine. Take six deep breaths; with each inhale, pretend to link these dots, one by one. During a crazy day, this meditation will help you find your "center" again. —Julia Savacool

Tap in to your bliss zone.

