

AMi Blog

AMiable Solution #259: The Best Exercises for 2018

January 5, 2018



There's something about a new calendar year. It feels like a fresh start. Sure, you still have ongoing projects and expectations and needs, but January always brings with it a sense of "new" that leads to new chances and new opportunities to be and do better, both personally and professionally.

Although January television commercials overwhelmingly emphasize physical exercises to help you improve your body, we dare to recommend exercises that improve your mind and, consequently, your life both at work and at home:

Patience. Practicing patience can be tough, especially if you work in less-than-ideal circumstances, clash with your co-workers or neighbors, or simply start off each day with a ridiculously long commute. By forcing yourself to slow down and accept, process, and deal with the things that make you crazy—exercising patience—you'll not only improve your current, anxiety-producing situation, but you'll also benefit in other areas as well.

According to Kira Newman in her April 4, 2016, article "Four Reasons to Cultivate Patience" (Greater Good magazine, a University of California, Berkeley, publication) patience improves your mental health, makes you a better friend and neighbor, helps you achieve your goals, and contributes to good health. They sure sound like good reasons to practice patience to us.

Integrity. We understand. The demands of the job, the demands of daily living, can get to you. And we fear consequences, particularly negative ones. They make you want to stretch the truth a little: make your progress on a project sound more advanced than it is, a product sound more important than it is, or your resume more impressive than your actual job history supports.

But stretching the truth breaks trust. It damages your reputation and the reputation of your organization, and sometimes that damage can't be repaired. Exercising honesty, integrity, at all times not only ensures a happier, healthier now, but it also paves the way for a more successful, more fruitful later.

Amy Rees Anderson, Forbes magazine contributor, put it this way: "Integrity means doing the right thing at all times and in all circumstances, whether or not anyone is watching. It takes having the courage to do the right thing, no matter what the consequences will be. Building a reputation of integrity takes years, but it takes only a second to lose, so never allow yourself to ever do anything that would damage your integrity" ("Success Will Come and Go, but Integrity is Forever," Forbes, November 28, 2012).

Gratitude. Marketers know the importance of showing gratitude to customers. Doing so helps develop and maintain relationships that last, and every business or organization that intends to stay in business or organized wants long-lasting relationships.

But there are other advantages to showing appreciation to others—co-workers, partners, family members, friends. Exercising gratitude opens the door to more relationships, improves physical and psychological health, enhances empathy and reduces aggression, helps you sleep and improves your self-esteem, and increases your mental strength ("7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude," by Amy Morin, Psychology Today, March 14, 2012). Gratitude improves your outlook and your situation.

No matter what your condition now, we can all stand to get a little more fit in 2018. Start exercising your positive habits today.

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