

PRACTICE TIPS



WORKING WELL

Are You Fit for Law?

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A fit lawyer is a more effective lawyer. Keeping active and staying fit will increase one's capacity to be productive and energized, and to cope better with the stresses of the practice of law. It takes endurance to run from meeting to meeting, make court appearances or the like. It takes stamina to endure the hours of research and preparation that goes into proficient lawyering. It takes clarity of mind and focus to ensure your competence and ethical decision-making as an attorney.

I am not surprised to see too many lawyers in an unhealthy physical state because of the pressures of the work and how making a time commitment to oneself is often the last thing on a busy lawyer's mind. I encourage you, however, to see that taking time for physical activity will enhance your cognitive abilities and make you a more efficient and competent attorney, not to mention a happier person. Indeed, a healthy lawyer will also promote a healthy work environment for others.

There are numerous studies which show that staying active and exercising is good for promoting clearer thought and the reduction of brain fog. When you exercise, your heart rate increases and breathing quickens; as a result, more oxygen is sup-

plied in your blood stream and to your brain. Research explains that in so doing, brain plasticity occurs and hence, learning and memory is enhanced.

Moreover, when you exercise, dopamine and serotonin are secreted, occurrences which are linked to the reduction of depression and anxiety, while improving your mood. Why not get started and improve the quality of your life as well as heighten your abilities to provide better service to your clients? Let's get moving!

Make a Concrete Plan. Make an appointment with yourself each day to do something physically active. Prioritize yourself—you deserve to be healthy and feel good. Your health is the most important thing you possess; without it, nothing else can flow from you.

Start Small. Beginning an exercise plan can seem daunting for a newbie. Set a reasonable goal of exercise that you can achieve, and gradually increase your efforts. It can be something as small as 10 minutes a day until you can add more time. The important thing is to get moving!

Monitor Your Goals. As your fitness level increases, challenge yourself with more exercise. For most healthy adults, ideally the long-term goal should be to move 60 minutes per day, 3 times a week, and 20-30 minutes per day, for the remaining days.

Ask a Friend. Perhaps a colleague would like to join you. Having a partner in an activity provides encouragement and it keeps you accountable. That being said, if your partner should bail on you, remember to not use that as an excuse, but to exercise on your own.

Mix it Up. It is great if you can make time to go to the gym or take a fitness class. But for most, that may not be possible. Instead, try taking a brisk walk and/or do calisthenics in the comfort of your own home. Tai Chi, yoga, golf or even pickleball, make it fun!

Stay Consistent. Consistency is the key to success in any fitness plan. You will be tempted to quit and/or to put other commitments above your own. Remind yourself that your health is surely worth more than any assignment. Trust that consistency will yield results. Stay focused and good luck!

**Remember to first consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise plan. ■*