

Exploring Single-Move Exercises for Mental Resiliency



When is the last time you did anything over and over for 60 minutes without reprieve? If that sounds vaguely like wartime torture, you're not wrong in your thinking. But what many have found to be wildly helpful is repetitive motion exercise (or commonly known in the gym as single-movement-mind workouts) is the daunting gateway to deeper self-care and mental resiliency – toughness even.

Melissa Urban, the co-founder and CEO of the Whole30 program, says it best: ***"Sometimes the workout isn't really the workout at all."*** One-exercise workouts for mental wellbeing are just that – one move for an extended period, most often for an hour. They become an opportunity to reconcile differences between the mind and body as means to achieve harmony between the two.

It invites boredom into your life.

Studies show boredom is a gateway to creativity and unique solutions for our many challenges and it improves mental wellbeing overall.

It is unlike any other workout you will ever do. This repetitive exercise – initially intimidating to most and challenging to all – is 100% mental.

not physical. Since there is no variety, no changing momentum, no shifting in a circuit and there are no distractions, ***"there is nowhere for your mind to go except inward."***

Once you get going, it becomes automatic and "it's just you and your brain." The repetitive motion you choose – such as stepping up, stepping down, stepping up, stepping down – opens the door to physically process emotions, current challenges, worries and even past experiences. ***"That stuff stays in the body and is moved when you move. With every step, it comes up, and with every exhale, with intention, it comes out."*** We then have nothing to think about other than the things we might have been avoiding. We can then think them over, digest them, address them, begin to understand them, learn from them, and heal them. Regularly sorting through the mental mud is a strategy for deepening our self-care and self-love and can lead us to thrive both physically and mentally.

"It's not the destination; it's the journey." Listen to your body. Is it trying to tell you that you need to work some things out mentally and emotionally? Feelings and emotions, challenges and conflicts can manifest physically first – knot in the shoulder, headache, digestive issues, disrupted sleep. It's

also a perpetual dance – we need to move regularly to maintain mind-body harmony. Especially in this unique era, we are knee-deep in together – let's choose to show up for ourselves often.

"Home is wherever I am with you."

To paraphrase Peloton fitness instructor Emma Lovell, what if this quote was a message to ourselves rather than about someone else? This can be a reminder to regularly check in with ourselves physically and mentally to ensure we are maintaining that achievable mind-body harmony and creating a safe, confident, thriving "home" within ourselves – allowing us to live fully in the present and thrive where we are now on our own journeys. ***"Wherever you go, there you are."***

How To: Examples of one-hour single-move exercises for mental toughness include: weighted-ball slams (i.e., lifting the ball up and over your head and throwing it down to the ground), box steps, one-stair steps, lunges, squats, or for the advanced fitness champs – try any move you enjoy doing at the gym but with 50% of the weight you would typically use. **Please consult your primary care physician before attempting a new workout to prevent injury.**

HEALTHY MINDS

PREVENTING THE ONSET OF DEMENTIA

Ordinarily considered a disease for older people, Alzheimer's disease can also affect adults as young as age 30, although less common. When the disease affects anyone before the age of 65, this is known as early-onset Alzheimer's. If you're surprised, take a look at genetics. For example, if your grandparent or parent had Alzheimer's, you'll belong to the 10% of the population at risk for the disease.

But being "at risk" doesn't mean you're destined to develop Alzheimer's. In fact, prioritizing your health and mental wellbeing through a healthy lifestyle can greatly reduce your risk. By challenging your brain every day, eating well and exercising regularly, you can help prevent the onset of dementia as you age. Preliminary evidence suggests that brain-training games and exercises can help prevent Alzheimer's and dementia.

Laura Middleton, a PhD student from Dalhousie University, writes in her reviews that, "studies suggested that people who exercised had 10 to 45% less chances of being diagnosed with dementia. People who exercised during their middle age had [half the risk of developing dementia](#) half the risk of developing dementia with age."

Here are some ways you can keep your brain fit and reduce the risk of dementia:

- **Step it up by walking every day.** A Harvard study has shown that if you walk for 1.5 hours a week (or less than 13 minutes per day), you can [delay developing dementia](#) by at least 1.5 years.
- **Exercise with force.** Another Dalhousie University study suggests the more vigorously a person [exercises](#), the more they can reduce their risk.
- **Use saunas.** A University of Eastern Finland study has shown that men who use [saunas](#) more than four times a week reduce the risk of developing dementia by two-thirds.
- **Cut down on alcohol and tobacco usage.** Excess alcohol raises your blood pressure (BP) and cholesterol. Smoking narrows your blood vessels, leading to increased BP and the risk of developing heart disease, cancer and dementia.
- **Play brain-training games.** Games like Bingo, trivia and word puzzles can help improve your memory.
- **Try the DASH diet.** Observational studies on the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) have shown it can reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's by up to 53% as well as slow cognitive decline and improve verbal memory. The DASH diet's principals are founded on eating natural, plant-based foods while limiting red meat, saturated fat and sweets.

"15 simple diet tweaks that could cut your Alzheimer's risk," Angela L. Murad, [mayoclinic.org](#), Oct. 8, 2021.

"Preventing Dementia," Stanford Health Care, [stanfordhealthcare.org](#), Oct. 8, 2021.



Maple Roasted Butternut Squash

Hands-on Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 6

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash (3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried nutmeg
- salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 400 F.
2. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray or coat with olive oil.
3. Peel the squash and chop it into 1-inch cubes.
4. In a bowl, combine the maple syrup, olive oil, sage, nutmeg, pepper and salt. Stir in the squash cubes until they are well-coated.
5. Add the squash cubes in a single layer to the baking sheet.
6. Cook for 20 minutes, flip the squash, then cook for another 10 to 15 minutes or until the squash is tender.

Recipe adapted from: [chocolateslopes.com](#)