



20 Mind Power Tips for a Healthier You in 2020

Happy 2020! Instead of making hard-to-honor resolutions (like releasing those last 10 pounds by February or getting to the gym at 5:30 every morning), I recommend starting the New Year with a recommitment to your overall health and fitness.

In honor of the New Year and decade, here are 20 of my favorite ways to recommit—that have nothing to do with eating and working out. Because while good nutrition and exercise are important, equally important are calming your nervous system to curb emotional eating, becoming spiritually grounded to treat yourself with love and compassion, and using the power of your mind to follow through.

1. Choose a Theme for the Year

A theme (such as patience, forgiveness, courage, etc.) guides your growth and progress through the coming year. It becomes the lens through which you make choices. For example, if your theme for 2020 is self-compassion, think how you will bring self-compassion to your weight-loss journey every day. If your theme is health-first, how does that affect your daily habit?

See what I mean?

2. Ground Yourself

Use this easy and effective technique called “Four-Step Breathing” to settle yourself when triggered:

Slowly take in a deep breath as you silently count to four.
Hold the breath for four counts.
Slowly release the breath as you silently count to four.
Hold again for four counts. Repeat several times.



3. Choose Your Words Wisely

Eliminate the following words from your vocabulary: *Try, should, can't*. These disempowering words add struggle to your weight-loss journey and weaken your confidence. For example:

Change "I'll try to take a walk today" to "I will (or won't) take a walk today."

Change "I should eat a salad" to "It's good for me to eat a salad."

Change "I can't exercise this week" to "I choose not to exercise this week."

In the long run, being positive and honest with yourself keeps you strong.

4. Use the Power of Your Imagination

Success happens first in the mind. Take five minutes every day to visualize what it looks and feels like to release the next five pounds. Or imagine yourself reaching your goal weight. Especially important are the feelings—such as confidence or joy—associated with what you're visualizing.

For example, imagine yourself ten pounds lighter walking down the street with your head held high, feeling proud and at peace with yourself. Or visualize enjoying dinner with friends feeling content about making healthy food choices (and no longer thinking you're depriving yourself by skipping dessert). This inner work of *visualization with feelings* ensures the outer work of your daily actions take hold.

5. Create Your Reality

Don't listen to those who say weight loss is "hard" and "difficult." Remember, the quality of your thoughts creates the quality of your journey, so if you believe it will be hard, it will be. Choose to believe this instead:

"I reach my weight loss goals with ease and grace."

Similarly, move from thinking you're someone who "struggles" to lose weight, to believing you're someone who is becoming thinner and fit. This simple mind shift makes a big difference.

6. Plant Your Intentions Everywhere

When setting passwords for sites or accounts you frequently access, choose words or phrases that inspire you and reflect goals you want to reach. For example:

Iluvmybody

Iweigh__lbs (insert desired weight)

Iamhealthy



You type these every day, right? So, instead of the same old password, each time you write these you affirm your intention to release weight and live a healthy lifestyle.

7. Stop Complaining

It can be tempting, but don't join others in negative conversations about how "bad" your body looks or how "awful" it is to get older. These conversations poison your mind and body, shake your confidence and will become your reality unless you choose not to participate in such talk.

8. Choose Whether You “Release” or “Lose” Weight

I like to say "release" weight rather than "lose" weight—and people often ask me why. Practice this exercise to find out:

Get quiet. Close your eyes. Say to yourself a few times:
"I want to lose weight." Notice the sensations in your body.
Clear that thought and then say to yourself,
"I want to release weight."
Again, notice what that feels like. Open your eyes.

What did you notice? Many people feel a sense of lightness with "release" and some tension with "lose." What did you experience?

9. Keep a Success Journal

Tuck a notebook by your bed. Each night, before going to sleep, take a minute to write your answers to this question:

“How did I care for my mind, body and spirit today?”

For example:

“I parked away from the store entrance to walk farther.”

“I didn't beat myself up for overeating at lunch.”

“I took 'Me' time to read an inspirational book.”

Writing in your success journal trains your mind and brain to scan your experiences and find the healthy choices you're making. You shift from looking at what's not working and notice what's going well. Your memory becomes imprinted with images of taking good care of yourself, inspiring you to keep repeating those actions.



10. Affirm Good Health

Within your body and soul you already possess perfect health, unwavering strength, and profound wisdom. Affirmations help you believe this on a deep level. Repeat these affirmations, or ones that you choose, daily to call forth what's *already* there:

"I am healthy. I am strong. I am wise."

11. Embrace What Feels Hard

Sometimes the most important thing to do feels like the hardest thing to do, especially when releasing weight.

Even though it's hard...

Speak to yourself with compassion when you're upset with yourself for overeating.
Be patient when you feel demoralized about the time it's taking to release weight.
Send your body love when you feel especially ashamed about your weight.

Hard doesn't mean impossible. Be willing to do what feels hard and it soon will feel easy.

12. Make it Natural

If you've learned to "reward" yourself for "good behavior," or give yourself a treat for doing something challenging, this may feel counterintuitive, but...

Start to take your accomplishments in stride. For example, after eating healthfully for a few days or exercising after work, act as if this were a common occurrence. Say to yourself, "that felt so good" or "that was easy" instead of "Wow, I deserve a treat for getting to the gym today!" This way, you're creating an inner vision of new habits being something you do naturally and easily every day—rather than some extra-special feat. Over time this outlook helps you weave new behaviors into your life as the normal course of events.

13. Ask Your Body What It Needs

Take some time today—and every day—to get quiet, go within and ask your body what it needs from you. For example, close your eyes and draw your attention inward. Take a few breaths to settle yourself. Then, ask your body:

"What do you need from me today so you will feel loved and well-cared for?"

Listen and follow through with what you hear. Take that relaxing bath. Get up and go for that walk. Guidance that emerges from your body wisdom is more important than any information



you'll find elsewhere.

14. Think into the Future

Ask yourself: *"How do I want to feel one hour (or one day) from now?"*

This simple yet powerful question helps you anticipate the results of your choices, guiding you to choose wisely. I use it *all* the time. For example, when I'm debating with myself about going to the gym after a long day at work, I sit in my office chair and visualize walking out of the gym and back to my car *after* exercising. I capture the feeling of pride and accomplishment I'll feel in a few hours for overriding negativity and giving my body the movement it needs. It works every time because feelings are powerful motivators.

So, before entering a party with an abundance of food and worried about overeating, or when beginning to talk yourself out of taking a 20-minute walk on Saturday morning, close your eyes and visualize your desired result *and the feeling attached to that result*. Imagine walking out of the party feeling happy that you chose to eat in moderation. Imagine walking back home after your walk feeling invigorated and mentally strong.

Asking yourself, *"How do I want to feel later?"* empowers and inspires you to follow through.

15. Connect with Your Higher Power Daily

Spiritual writer Catherine Ponder, author of *The Dynamic Laws of Healing* and many other life-transforming books, gave this valuable advice more than 50 years ago:

Get quiet and close your eyes. Then, tune in to your Higher Power or the God of your understanding and say:

Please fill every cell of my body with radiant light.

Especially when you feel scared and alone, this simple prayer will help you feel embraced by your Higher Power. Your nervous system will relax and you—and your body—will feel soothed.

16) Organize Your Space to Calm Your Nerves

When you feel stressed, take ten minutes to declutter and organize a drawer, shelf, kitchen counter, or desktop.

Start with a small space. Set a timer. When ten minutes are up, decide if you want to take ten minutes more. The relief you feel after clearing out even a small area is palpable and you may find yourself wanting to organize more. If so, keep going.



This easy stress-buster strategy works because creating order on the outside helps you feel more ordered and calm on the inside. Anything you do to calm and quiet your nervous system helps your body and can curb emotional eating. And your environment gets a boost, too.

17) Clean Your Energy Field

Take a look at the objects in your home. Are there items that remind you of painful times in your life?

Consider those old journals filled with sadness and hurt. They served their purpose by helping you release your feelings. But holding onto them keeps the energy lingering in your home. Burn them. Or the family photo taken the day your parents fought and the police were called. Shred it. And what about the vase your friend gave you before she ghosted you and you still don't know why? Throw it away.

Any object that reminds you of pain and trauma no longer needs to live with you. Get rid of these things. When you clear your home this way, you clean your energy field. This helps you accelerate your healing and spiritual growth, too.

18. Hug Yourself

While hugs from loved ones are special gifts, you don't need to depend on others for support. Give your own hugs—to you.

Hugging yourself helps you feel grounded and stabilized when you feel sad or upset. It also helps release feel-good hormones in your body and offers the feeling of self-compassion.

Wrap your arms solidly around your belly and back. Take a moment to find just the right position that helps you and your body feel grounded and secure. Breathe steadily. Hug yourself for about 30 seconds, or as long as you wish. Tell yourself silently, "I love you." (If it feels hard to say this, that's okay. The hug itself conveys love to your mind, body, and soul.)

So the next time you feel out-of-sorts, give yourself the ultimate gift of self-compassion—a hug from *you*.

19) Create a Comfort Box

One effect of childhood trauma—and which often leads to emotional eating—is an overactive stress response system. This means your brain easily activates the fight-flight-freeze response: you feel anxious and tense, your heart rate increases, and you get a fear-based sensation in your gut. And then you head to the fridge. *It's not your fault.* It's just that



your brain and nervous system easily become dysregulated and you've learned that food quiets the fear.

Here's what will help: Create a go-to Comfort Box filled with your favorite self-soothing objects and activities.

Find a pretty box or basket. Fill it with items that soothe your mind and calm your body. For example: journal and pen to write down your feelings; favorite herbal teas; mandala coloring book; mini jigsaw puzzle; a knitting, crochet, or crewel project; inspirational book; stress ball; scented candle; soft shawl to wrap around you; or a list of special affirmations—whatever items help you feel composed and grounded. When you feel that urge to eat, head to your box instead of the pantry and give your mind, body, and spirit the true nourishment they need.

20) Offer Thanks—Always

One of my favorite quotes is from the 12th-century philosopher Meister Eckhart:

“If the only prayer you say in your life is ‘thank you,’ that will suffice.”

To live an inspired and spiritually-guided life, give thanks. Every. Single. Day. So, no matter how you feel right now and no matter what happened with your weight and self-care habits over the past year, be grateful you are on the path of healing and loving yourself.

Keep these mind-power tips handy so you can keep recommitting to your health and healing journey throughout the year. What's important is this present moment and the choices you make *today*.

Here's to creating a healthy, happy you in 2020... and always.

