



# MENTAL FITNESS FOR MEN, MADE SIMPLE: 5 EVERYDAY HABITS TO START TODAY

Looking after your mental health means staying connected and having real conversations, but it also depends on the routines and habits that shape how you feel each day. These five practical habits come from the Performance Habits programme, which uses Behavioural Activation (BA) to help men in demanding jobs build routines and coping strategies that work. Even small changes in what you do can disrupt negative cycles and make a real difference.

## WHY THESE HABITS WORK

These aren't random tips – they're grounded in BA, a proven approach for lifting mood and breaking cycles of stress and burnout by changing what you do, not just how you think. The principles are straightforward:



1. What you do shapes how you feel
2. Waiting for motivation doesn't work – action sparks it
3. Small steps create momentum you can build on
4. Making a plan keeps you going when willpower fades
5. Avoidance can ease stress now but keeps you stuck later

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?



This employee resource complements a guide for employers – *Supporting men's mental health in the workplace: A Practical Guide for Organizations*. Grounded in research and real-world learning, the employers' guide pulls together what works into clear, actionable steps for HR teams, leaders, managers, and wellbeing leads. Performance Habits is delivered in workplaces through coaching and guided self-help, built on proven methods used successfully with elite sportsmen, first responders, and frontline healthcare staff. Our approach is tailored to help men in high-pressure jobs take control of their mental fitness and wellbeing.

To learn more about how to offer the Performance Habits program in your workplace visit: [www.performancehabits.org](http://www.performancehabits.org)

## FIVE HABITS TO START NOW Pick one and start today



### MAP YOUR WEEK

**WHY:** You can't change what you don't notice. Seeing what lifts or drains you makes it easier to schedule more good stuff in.

**HOW:** For 3 to 4 days, use a notepad or notes app to write down your main activities. Rate each from 1 (drains me) to 5 (boosts me).

**EXAMPLE:** Skipped lunch = 1. Coffee with a friend = 4. Spot the patterns, then plan more 4s and 5s into your week.



### LOCK IN ONE POSITIVE ACTIVITY

**WHY:** Specific plans work better than vague intentions. Even one scheduled activity can bring structure and energy.

**HOW:** Pick something realistic and put it in your calendar. Commit to it.

**EXAMPLE:** "Walk the dog after dinner Monday and Thursday" or "kick a ball around with the kids after work on Tuesday."



### STICK TO YOUR PLAN ON LOW MOOD DAYS

**WHY:** Mood follows actions. If you wait to feel better first, you stay stuck.

**HOW:** On low days, just start. Completion isn't the goal – getting going is.

**EXAMPLE:** Planned to cook? Chop an onion. Planned to go to the gym? Grab your workout gear and drive there. Momentum kicks in once you move.



### BREAK ONE JOB INTO STEPS

**WHY:** Big jobs can look like mountains. Small steps get you moving.

**HOW:** Pick a task you've been dodging. Break it down to the tiniest first step and do it today.

**EXAMPLE:** Garage a mess? Step 1 = chuck empty boxes in recycling. Emails piling up? Step 1 = reply to one message.



### PLAN FOR PRESSURE POINTS

**WHY:** Stress scrambles your thinking. Having a default plan keeps you steady.

**HOW:** Think ahead to a likely flashpoint. Plan two helpful actions in advance.

**EXAMPLE:** Got a brutal week ahead? Plan "5-min break every hour" and "call a friend Friday after work." No thinking needed when you're in it.