

Mindful Motion: A Guide to Mental Resilience

The Power of Physical Activity in
Combating Loneliness and
Boosting Mental Health



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Entering 2024, it comes as no surprise that fitness and mental health are back in the spotlight as the go-to resolutions. However, what often eludes the spotlight is the connection between feeling good both physically and mentally. The pursuit of both physical and mental well-being is an enduring pledge applicable to all age groups, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between one's physical condition and mental state.

According to a recent [Forbes Health/One Poll survey](#), a resounding 55% of respondents attested to the equal importance of physical and mental health. This finding underscores a truth we're often too quick to overlook — our bodies and minds are not separate entities but interconnected forces, each influencing the other in many ways.



This guide uncovers the missing link that bridges the gap between fitness aspirations and mental well-being goals – designed for HR managers seeking to crack the code to enhanced employee engagement, health plans looking for supplemental benefits to support the holistic well-being of your beneficiaries, and even Medicare Advantage carriers aiming to rejuvenate senior vitality through active living.

We'll explore the impact of physical activity on mental resilience, navigate the loneliness epidemic, and discover practical tips you can apply today to better support the mental health of your workforce, members, or clients.

Mind and Motion: The Symbiotic Relationship

Understanding the mind-body connection

Whether you're aware of it or not, there's a special link between how you move and how you feel. In a world where everyone is attempting to tackle mental health, here's a bit of good news: physical activity is what you've been missing, and it's easy to implement.

It's not just about working out; it's about realizing that keeping your body healthy also keeps your mind strong.

Physical activity isn't separate from your overall well-being. From boosting your mood with feel-good chemicals to calming your stress, moving your body has benefits that go way beyond just getting fit, and studies confirm that the connection is real.

Parts of the brain that control movement are interleaved and connected with networks involved in thinking and planning, and in control of involuntary bodily functions such as blood pressure and heartbeat. There's a literal link between body and mind in the structure of the motor circuits in the brain.

[Washington University School of Medicine](#) in St. Louis Study

While it's important to personally establish and acknowledge the mind-body connection, when it comes to mental health support for your people, it's also important to contribute to a harmonious balance between physical activity and mental resilience.

Physical Activity & Mental Health: Navigating the Balance

Physical activity and mental health support are complementary, not competitive

Physical activity isn't a replacement for mental health support such as therapy – it's a benefit that can help. It's about creating a space where mental health is not only acknowledged but prioritized, ensuring that every individual feels seen, heard, and supported in their journey toward well-being.

By recognizing physical activity as a support tool for mental health, the following can happen:

- Employers can cultivate an environment that champions holistic well-being.
- Health plans can provide access to quality behavioral and mental healthcare, whenever and wherever beneficiaries need it.
- Medicare can offer support to seniors faced with mental health challenges, such as loneliness, anxiety, or depression.

Whatever age or goals, physical activity can directly impact mental health, leading your people to a mentally healthier lifestyle and even potentially prevent mental health problems.

The Impact of Physical Health on Well-Being

The positive effects of physical activity on well-being extend beyond the individual, influencing interpersonal relationships, work productivity, and the ability to partake in and enjoy various aspects of life. In short, **prioritizing and nurturing physical health is an investment in one's overall well-being**, creating a solid foundation for all other aspects of life. Here are just a few of the many benefits:

- Elevated mood & self-esteem
- Increased energy
- Decrease in cognitive decline in older people
- Lowered anxiety & stress levels
- Increased employee productivity
- Reduced healthcare expenses



Happier workers are 12% more productive.

[Source](#)

Breaking Down the Stigma: Mental Health in the Workplace

Just like remote and hybrid work have blurred the lines between work and life – mental health at work is now more commonly openly discussed through peers and “water cooler talk.”

It’s no longer a topic to be whispered about in hushed tones but a conversation that deserves a place at the forefront of every workplace.

Organizations are now recognizing the undeniable link between a healthy work environment and the mental resilience of their employees.

So breaking down the stigma is not merely a trendy initiative; it’s a strategic imperative for businesses aiming to foster a culture of support and inclusivity. **You might be thinking, where do I start?**

Here are a few areas of focus to provide mental health solutions for your people:

- **Leverage leaders as vocal advocates for mental health**, not only normalizing the conversation but actively participating in initiatives that prioritize the mental well-being of their teams.
- Offer resources such as **Employee Assistance Programs or mental health workshops** to provide open spaces for people to come together, share stories, and support.
- Invest in **comprehensive care for chronic conditions**. Stress is unavoidable – but managing chronic stress can help.

Mental health challenges can also be found beyond the workplace – trickling into the lives of seniors.

The Connection Between Loneliness & Physical Activity for Seniors

More than $\frac{1}{3}$ of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely & nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated.

[The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(NASEM\) Report](#)

As individuals age, they may experience life events such as the loss of a spouse, friends, or family members. Retirement, children moving away, and the death of peers can lead to reduced social connections, contributing to social isolation.

Loneliness and isolation are prevalent in the older population due to a combination of social, psychological, and physical factors that commonly accompany the aging process.



Loneliness is not something to be taken lightly as there are many health risks associated with feeling lonely. There are several key factors for Medicare carriers seeking to support the mental health of their senior members to consider:

- **Decreased Mobility:** Physical health challenges, such as reduced mobility or chronic health conditions, may limit older adults' ability to engage in social activities and maintain an active lifestyle. This limitation can result in feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Technological Barriers:** The digital divide can exacerbate feelings of loneliness among seniors. As technology becomes more integral to social connections, those who are not familiar with or do not have access to digital tools may find it challenging to stay connected with others.
- **Stigma of Loneliness:** Societal expectations often contribute to the stigma associated with loneliness. Older adults may feel embarrassed or hesitant to admit feelings of loneliness, leading to a reluctance to seek help or express their emotions.
- **Loss of Purpose:** Retirement and changes in roles can lead to a loss of purpose and identity for some older adults. This shift may result in decreased social interactions and a sense of isolation as individuals navigate their changing roles.
- **Cultural and Demographic Factors:** Cultural norms and societal structures can influence the prevalence of loneliness among older adults. Factors such as living arrangements, cultural expectations, and societal attitudes toward aging can impact the extent to which individuals experience loneliness.

Let's take a closer look at what you can do to better serve and support your older population as they navigate the loneliness epidemic.

Practical Tips to Help Seniors Build Social Connections Through Physical Activity

By offering a health and wellness platform built for today's modern senior – you can provide whole-health solutions to help your members get more active and connect with friends and family. Here are a few ways implementing a health and wellness platform can support seniors facing loneliness:

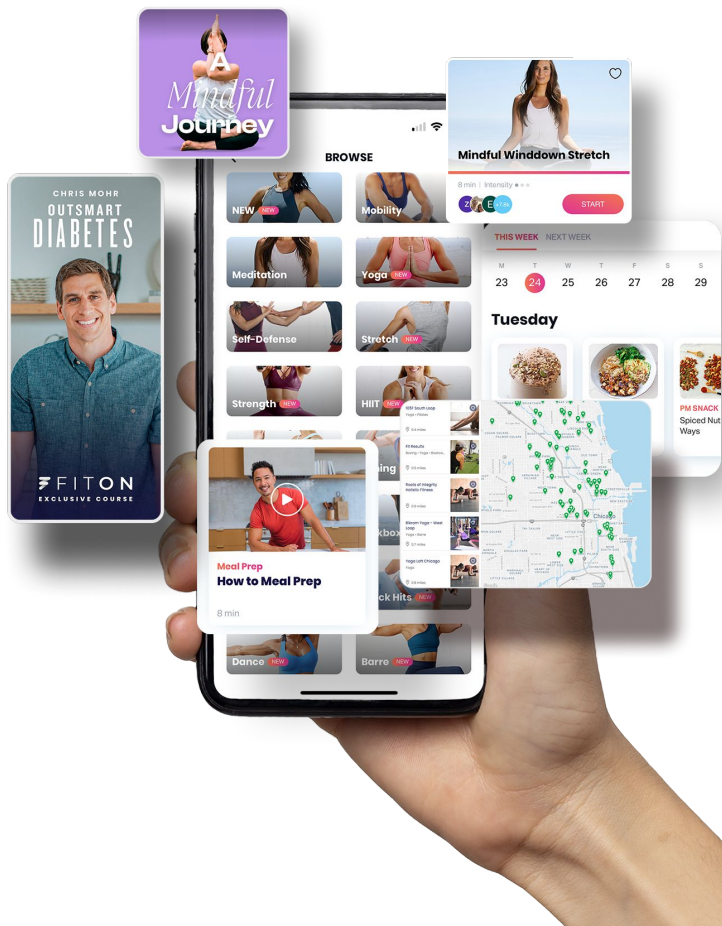
- **Group Fitness Classes:** Provide local senior-friendly group fitness classes to foster both physical activity and social interaction.
- **Walking Groups:** Join or form walking groups in the neighborhood, promoting exercise while engaging in meaningful conversations.
- **On-Demand Well-Being Classes:** Provide well-being on-demand, where seniors can enjoy personalized workout sessions, meditation exercises, and nutrition courses from the comfort of their homes, promoting both physical activity and mental well-being.
- **Digital Community:** Promoting an online community where seniors can share goals, post updates, and share similar interests can foster a sense of community and commitment.

Cognitive decline is almost 2x as common among adults who are inactive compared to those who are active.

[CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Embracing Mindful Motion for a Resilient Future

Discover how FitOn Health can champion the mental health journey of your people



Whether you're looking to better support yourself, your employees, or your members, an intentional well-being benefit that adds movement to everyday routine isn't just a boost of exercise, but also can flip a switch on the mental and emotional state of your people.

FitOn Health, a benefit designed to empower individuals in their pursuit of mental resilience through physical activity, offers a user-friendly platform that caters to diverse fitness levels and preferences.

49% of people intend to use technology like fitness apps to help create and stick to healthy habits in the new year.

[Forbes Health/One Poll survey](#)

How FitOn Health Supports Mental Health:



- **Personalized Workouts:** FitOn Health provides personalized workout sessions for every age, ensuring that individuals can participate in a fitness journey that suits their unique needs.



- **Community Connection:** The platform fosters a sense of community by connecting individuals with similar fitness goals. This community support is crucial in cultivating motivation, encouragement, and a shared commitment to overall well-being.



- **Accessible Wellness:** FitOn Health breaks down barriers to physical activity by offering accessible and convenient wellness solutions. Whether at home or on the go, individuals can engage in mindful movement, promoting mental clarity and emotional resilience.



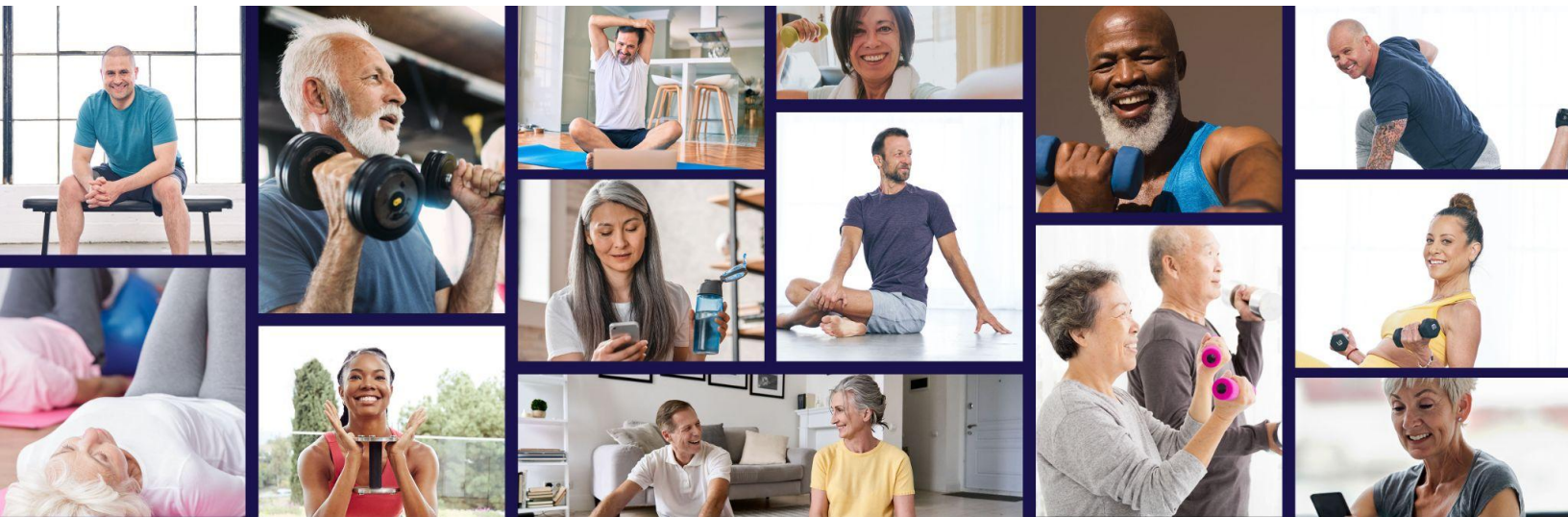
- **In-Person Experiences:** Access the largest national network of in-person experiences. From local small studios to big-box gyms, be empowered to personalize your fitness journey.



- **Holistic Approach:** Recognizing the interplay between physical and mental health, FitOn Health adopts a holistic approach, encouraging individuals to embrace mindful motion as a holistic solution for mental well-being.



**Join top health plans and
19K+ enterprise customers on
the path to a happier, more
resilient future.**



**Schedule a demo to see what
FitOn Health can do for your
people.**