



TRAINING your mind for peak performance is much like training your body: it requires hard work and enough rest.

Learning Quest director Dr Connie Henson, who is the author of *Brain Wise Leadership: Practical Neuroscience to Thrive and Survive at Work*, offers her tips for staying sharp.

1 IDENTIFY VALUES AND GOALS

We will work longer and harder and enjoy it more if the work is something we care about. Research on jobs as diverse as tele sales, radiology and the arts has shown that when we consciously make the

work meaningful we are more effective and happier with work.

2 DEVELOP THE RIGHT MINDSET

Different tasks require different ways of thinking. A analytical work needs focused concentration, while innovation requires openness to new ideas. Carving out separate times to work on different types of tasks will facilitate getting into the right mindset for the job at hand.

3 CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE

The research is clear—having good social

relationships at work is good for health and good for business.

Humans are social beings and our brains are wired to connect with others. Having good relations with a diverse group of people across different teams takes some effort but the reward is certain.

4 EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Inevitably some things will not go as hoped.

To build resilience people need to identify emotion and find sources of practical support. They also need to recognise and use natural strengths and coping strategies.

Getting enough exercise and sleep as well as eating healthily helps to build overall body and brain fitness.

5 GOOD LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Feeling safe is the foundation for strong thinking, high performance and individual wellbeing. Leaders who insist on civility, respect and fairness create an atmosphere for great work.

Seek out opportunities to treat others well. Not only will it improve teamwork but showing empathy towards others activates the brain's reward centre for the person doing it.