

BACKSTAGE EXPERTS

6 Easy Ways to Improve Your Physical Wellbeing Today

BY CASEY MINK |

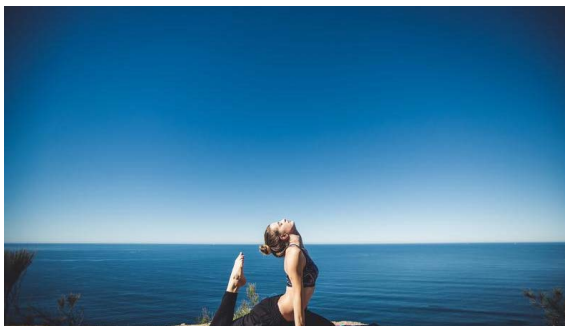


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This time of year, you are surely not alone if you're feeling the need to kick your physical fitness and training into gear. Maybe you hit the eggnog a bit too hard this holiday season, or it's been a few months (or years) since you've stepped foot in a gym. We've all been there—life happens!

What's important to remember, particularly for actors as so much rides on physicality, is that it's never too late to devote more time to your physical wellness. Jumpstarting, however, can be challenging, which is why we consulted some of [Backstage's Expert](#) fitness gurus for pointers on achieving a healthier you in the new year.

1. Prioritize strength over vanity.

"No matter what size you are, health from the inside makes you glow from the outside. It is no longer about being a size 0 twig onscreen. You need to have strength to be up all night for a night shoot; you need to have a silhouette to look good whether you are doing a nude scene, a seminude scene, or are in a suit head to toe. When I work with actors especially, we assess the role. We assess what the goals are, what the character is." —[Astrid Swan](#)

2. Always set goals which you can stick to.

"The first step is deciding what your goals are. Write them down—short-term goals and long-term goals. Once you have them, you have to take action." —[Mark Langowski](#)

3. It is true: you are what you eat.

"I think the first, easiest step is looking at your diet before you walk into the gym, looking at what you're eating [and] when you're eating it. Is it alcohol that you need to revisit and change the relationship you have with it? Or is it sweets? Or carbs? Little changes like that will go a long way to maintaining a healthy wellness balance—nothing too extreme." —[David Kirsch](#)

READ: ["5 Exercise Tips for the Healthy Actor"](#)

4. Try yoga to improve both your physical and mental capacities as an actor.

"Though far more than a fitness technique, yoga's physical and spiritual components are both—and perhaps equally—invaluable to performers. The ancient practice is a staple course at many drama conservatories and acting studios, and brings all the pros of effective exercise along with improved breathing technique, strong and flexible limbs, mental awareness, and discipline. Studied in many forms all over the world (and for thousands of years,) there is no one way to practice yoga. Seek a style that works for you, and enjoy the life-long benefits." —[KC Wright](#)

5. Quantity has less value than quality.

"This may be the most persistent myth in fitness. And the more driven and hardworking someone is, the more likely they are to fall in this trap. If something is working, it makes sense doing more will work even better. Unfortunately, this is rarely

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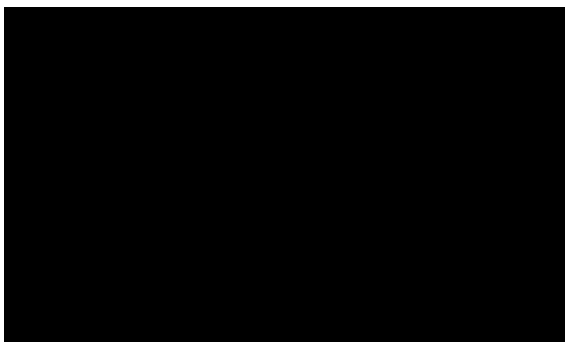
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the case. Taking two aspirin means no more headache, but taking the whole bottle means no more headaches ever again! It may seem reasonable that doubling your exercise will double your results, but the body can only adapt so quickly. For most people most of the time, three to five hours per week of training is enough." —Mark Fisher

6. Try out fight training to deepen your scene analysis.

"Understanding why and how characters engage in physical violence gives us opportunities to apply dramaturgical thought in a pragmatic setting (I call this fightaturgy). What would cause your character to cross the line and assault someone? How would your character react to that kind of violation? How will that incident inform other interactions? In what cultural context does the play take place, and does that dictate how the violence will take place at all?" —Meron Langsner

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Casey Mink is the staff writer at Backstage. When she's not writing about television, film, or theater, she is definitely somewhere watching it.

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