

Recession-Proof Your Personal Leadership.

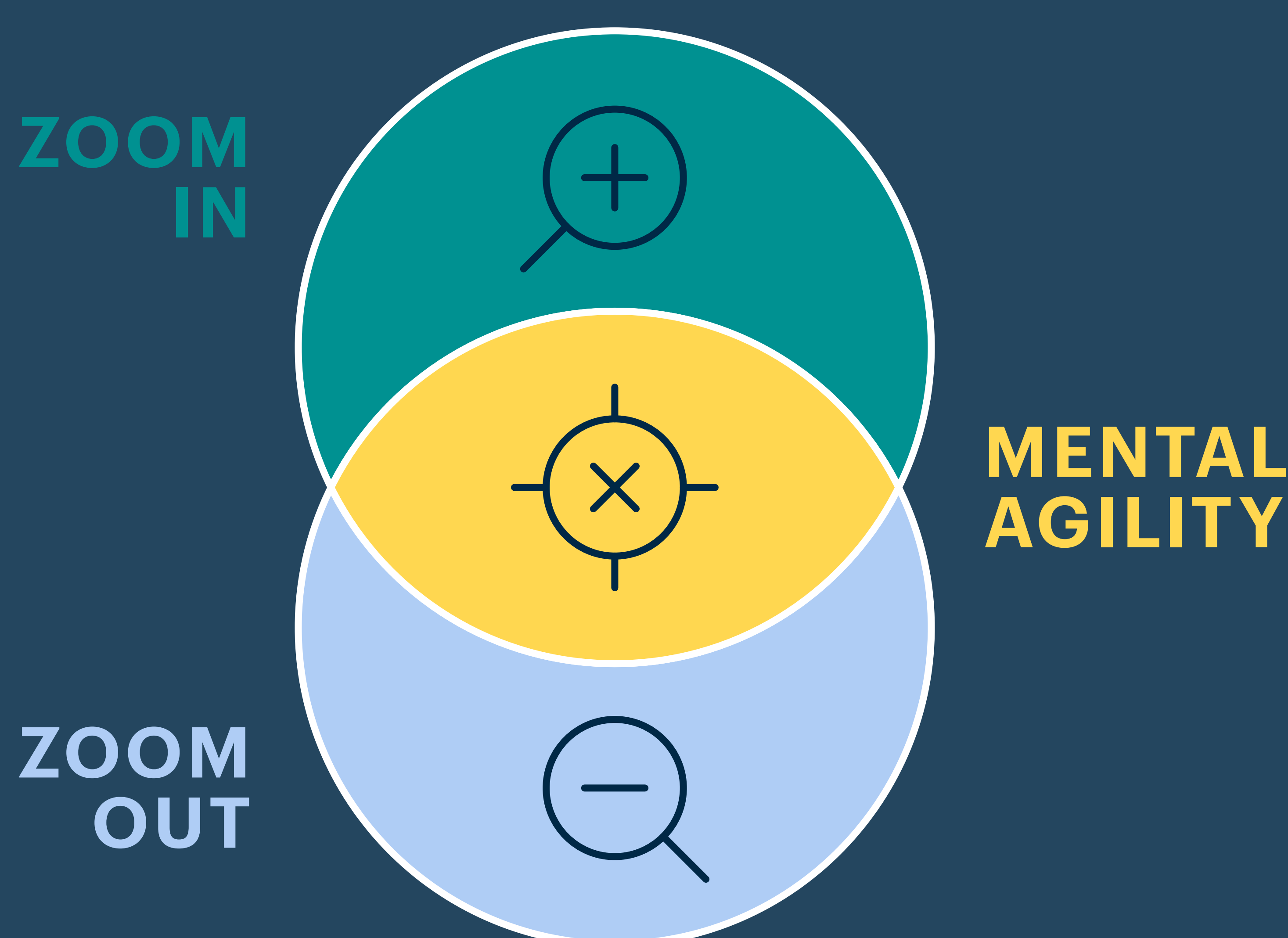
Mental agility is the critical skill for navigating the year ahead.



Most analysts agree that a global recession is looming for 2023, adding churn to already choppy waters.

Leaders can't control economic and political uncertainty, but they can determine how to face them.

To face the uncertainty ahead, leaders need **mental agility**, or the ability to both **zoom in** and **zoom out**.



Mental agility is the ability to shift between and to balance focus and awareness. Focus – or **zooming in** – is our ability to stay with single-pointed attention on the task at hand and effectively execute our priorities. Awareness – or **zooming out** – is our ability to look at the bigger picture, the future, and the changes ahead.

When facing uncertain crises like a recession, leaders often show a bias. Many leaders show a zoom in or zoom out bias. Both/And Leaders demonstrate mental agility.



**THE ZOOM IN
LEADER**

**STRENGTHS OF THIS
LEADERSHIP BIAS**

This type of leader is present and committed, focuses on critical details, engages with important tasks and priorities, and executes with discipline.

**CHALLENGES OF THIS
LEADERSHIP BIAS**

This type of leader can find it difficult to switch between priorities, can sometimes lose perspective and become addicted to just getting stuff done.



**THE ZOOM OUT
LEADER**

**STRENGTHS OF THIS
LEADERSHIP BIAS**

This type of leader detects and assesses changes, can separate signals from noise, makes fresh connections between different things, and keeps an eye on the larger landscape.

**CHALLENGES OF THIS
LEADERSHIP BIAS**

This type of leader can find it difficult to commit to a course of action and to move things forward, often jumping between tasks and multiple ideas.



THE MENTALLY AGILE LEADER
BALANCING BOTH/AND




Mentally Agile leaders are able to zoom in to keep things moving forward despite uncertainty and don't get bogged down waiting for perfect clarity to emerge.

Mentally Agile leaders are able to zoom out to strategize the "what next", seeing the context and bigger patterns at play. They maintain openness to change and the new skills they need to adopt.

THE BENEFITS OF BOTH/AND LEADERSHIP WITH MENTAL AGILITY

Mental agility increases your effectiveness as a leader during turbulent and uncertain times. Interestingly, it also correlates significantly with higher personal well-being.

LEADERSHIP METRICS (RELATIVE TO AVERAGE LEADER)

	<div></div> <div>THE ZOOM IN LEADER</div>	<div></div> <div>THE ZOOM OUT LEADER</div>	<div></div> <div>THE MENTALLY AGILE LEADER</div>
Leadership Efficacy	-7%	+7%	+19%
Tendency to Burnout	+26%	-1%	-37%
Satisfaction with Job	-10%	+4%	+22%
Engagement with Job	-11%	+6%	+22%
Level of Well-Being	-3%	+6%	+21%
Commitment to the Organization	-14%	-7%	+32%

- Across all metrics, Mentally Agile Leaders fare much better relative to an average leader.
- Mentally Agile leaders have 37% less tendency for burnout in their jobs, 22% higher satisfaction and engagement with their job, and 32% higher commitment to their organization.
- On the whole, Zoom In Leaders have the worst outcomes, with significantly higher tendency to burn out and lower satisfaction with their job and commitment to their organization.

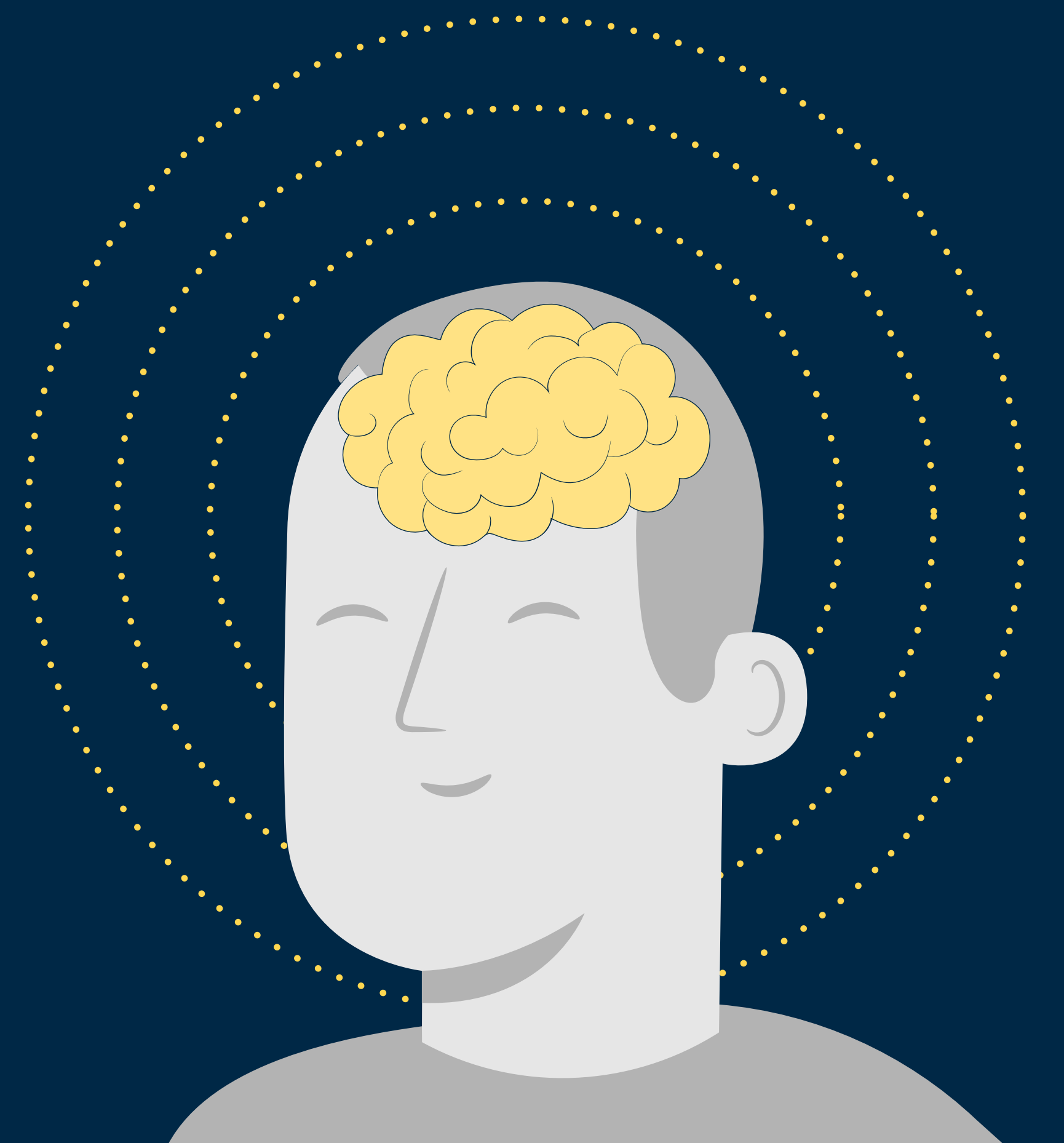
HOW TO CULTIVATE MENTAL AGILITY

Spend 10 minutes a day rewiring your brain for mental agility.



- Sit in a way that allows you to be both alert and relaxed.
- Allow your mind and the body to just settle.
- Now simply notice your breath and the experience of breathing. Don't try to control your breath; this isn't a breathing exercise. You are training your focus, and the breath is simply the object of your attention. Your only task is sustained focus on the breath.
- Notice when you get distracted by a sound, sensation, or thought (because you will get distracted). Be aware of this – “ah, my mind has wandered.” Then, let go of the distraction and return your focus to your breath.
- If it helps you to maintain focus on the breath, you can try breathing in and breathing out, and on each outbreath counting silently to yourself from 1-10.

See if you can do this for 10 minutes.



When you zoom in and focus on your breath — or anything else during the day — your prefrontal cortex is activated.¹ This is the “executive center” of the brain responsible for complex cognitive activities, such as planning and decision-making.

At some point, your mind naturally wanders off, and an evolutionarily old brain network, called the default mode network (DMN), is activated. When you zoom out enough to notice that your mind has wandered and redirect your attention back to your breath, you return to the prefrontal cortex.

Every time that you go through that zoom in and zoom out loop, your prefrontal cortex is strengthened, and your mental agility deepens.

¹Scientific American, November 2014.

Source: Potential Project / People illustrations by Storyset