

10 TIPS FOR STRONGER MENTAL HEALTH

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To stay fit and healthy it's important to take care of your mental health as well as your physical health. There are little things you can do each day that all contribute to your mental wellness.

Add these items to your daily routines and feel the difference:

1. **Get enough sleep.** A lot happens in your brain while you sleep - for both your physical and mental health. **Sleep also helps to regulate the chemicals in your brain that manage moods and emotions.** When you don't get enough sleep, you may start to experience feelings of depression or anxiety.

- Most adults thrive with 7-9 hours of good quality sleep each night. Experiment and see how many hours work best for you.

2. **Eat nutritiously.** Good food is good for our bodies, plus it's good for our mental health too. A deficiency in certain minerals, such as iron or vitamin B12, can negatively affect your mood.

- Eat a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, lean meat, and healthy fats like avocados. Avoid processed foods with unnatural chemicals. A healthy diet helps both your body and mind feel good.
- Limit caffeine, as this can increase feelings of anxiety.

3. **Avoid alcohol, smoking, and drugs.** These items can affect your mental health also.

- Drinking too much alcohol can leave you with a thiamine deficiency, which can cause challenges with your memory, coordination, and confusion.
- Withdrawal symptoms of smoking and drugs can lead to a host of issues. For example, you may feel irritable or anxious without having smoked, while withdrawal effects of drug use may include low moods and anxiety.

4. **Get some sunlight.** Your body needs sunlight because it is a good source of vitamin D. This vitamin helps our brains to release chemicals like endorphins and serotonin. It is these chemicals that help improve our mood.

5. **Try to reduce stress. Stress can sometimes be unavoidable but learning what triggers it and how to cope with it is key for your mental health.**

- You can learn to better manage your worries by making a list or schedule of what needs to be done. Prioritize the most important items and do those first. When you get used to doing this each day, you'll soon realize that your tasks are manageable, and you'll feel less need to worry.
- Once your important tasks are taken care of, find relaxation methods that work for you and let the stress of the day melt away.

6. **Make time to exercise.** Regular exercise helps to boost the production of chemicals in your brain that improve your mood. **This helps to eliminate low mood, anxiety, and stress.**

7. **Have fun.** Even if you are living a busy lifestyle, be sure to set some time aside for fun. Fun is actually very important to your mental health, life satisfaction, and a healthy outlook on life.

8. **Be sociable.** Having a few good friends is good for your mental health. They can support and encourage you in good times and bad, giving you inspiration and motivation to live your best life.

9. **Volunteer.** Helping others can be good for you too, as well as those you are helping. **A little community spirit can go a long way to making you feel good about yourself.**

- Find a charity that speaks to your heart and volunteer your time to help others.

10. **Ask for help.** Learn to recognize the signs that you aren't feeling good and need to ask for help. There's no need to feel ashamed about having to ask for help. We all go through tough times, but if you have support around you, you'll be able to make it through to the other side.

- If you feel as though your friends and family cannot help, or if your mental health issues have started to get too much for you to cope with, make an appointment to speak with your doctor.

Your mental health is important and, if not looked after, it may start to affect your physical health as well. Do the little things regularly that can help you to build strong mental health. You'll love the difference in the way you feel.