

Top wellbeing Tips from Mental Health Matters

The 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' are five simple habits you can build that have been shown to improve your mental health and wellbeing.

1. Connect with others

Try to connect with the people around you: your friends and family, your colleagues, and the people you see day-to-day. Spend time developing these relationships. Talk to a friend you've not seen in a while, in person or over the phone. You could even have a short conversation with the next person who serves you in a shop.

You can also connect with your inner self through mindfulness and meditation. There are various apps available that aim to enhance wellbeing by helping you to meditate, such as Headspace, Live Happy, Mindshift and Thought Diary Pro.

2. Physical activity

If exercise is not currently part of your daily routine, try adding it. Exercising two to three times a week has been found to significantly decrease symptoms of depression. Don't think that you have to go to the gym to be active - go for a walk, cycle or play a game of football, dance or even do a spot of gardening! Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

3. Learn new skills

Continued learning throughout our life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Evidence suggests that engaging in work or educational activities can help lift people's mood. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing. You could try researching something online that you're curious about; do a crossword or Sudoku puzzle; or read a new book.

4. Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy! Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an

increase in wellbeing. Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

5. Pay attention to the moment (mindfulness)

Be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. Notice the little things; listen to the sounds around you.

[This PDF](#) explains some basic mindfulness exercises you can try. This progressive muscle relaxation guide also explains one effective relaxation technique in more detail. Or why not try breathing for relaxation.

Support available:

Living Life to the Full provides lots of different online self-help courses that are highly recommended by mental health professionals, covering lots of different specific topics and groups.

You can also visit the [NHS 'Every Mind Matters' site](#) for wellbeing resources.

If you are trying to learn how to manage stress better, try completing [this stress management worksheet](#) to help you find ways of coping.