



8 Tips for Boosting Mental Health

Engage in physical activities that you enjoy.

Exercise improves self-esteem and increases endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters that increase pleasure and help us cope with stress (Ten Have, de Graaf, & Monshouwer, 2011)

Be mindful of the food that you are putting in your body.

Good nutrition has been shown to impact the hippocampus, which plays a role in learning, memory and mood regulation (Jacka et al., 2015). It also has been found to reduce depressive symptoms (Jacka et al., 2017).

Create an environment that is conducive to sleep.

Getting a good night's sleep is fundamental to a healthy mind and body. Sleep impacts our immune system, mood and body functions as well as re-energizes cells (Xie et al., 2013). Those who have poor sleep hygiene are at increased risk of anxiety, depression and manic episodes (Goldstein et al., 2013; Buysse et al, 2008; Kalpan et al., 2014).

Connect with a loved one or spend time with a furry friend.

Good quality relationships are essential for mental health. They reduce stress, are associated with helping us recover faster from illnesses and are correlated with increased longevity (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010).

Take time to laugh by telling a joke or watching a comedy.

Sometimes, finding humor in a situation can lift our mood and help us overcome challenging events. Laughing increases activity in parts of our brain's reward system that release dopamine, producing feelings of pleasure (Mobb et al., 2003). It also decreases the stress hormone cortisol and helps build our immune systems, which reduces the risk of blood clots, heart conditions and other stress-related diseases (Yim, 2016)

Consider religion and spirituality.

People often find that attending religious services and engaging in spiritual practices (e.g., prayer or meditation) helps them cope, reduces symptom severity and contributes to higher life satisfaction (Balbuena, Baetz, & Bowen, 2013; Mohandas, 2008).

Volunteer your time and talents.

Find an activity or organization that is meaningful to you. Volunteering can put you in a good mood, and connect you with others as you help your community.

Express your gratitude and journal your feelings.

Write a thank you letter to someone you appreciate or tell someone how thankful you are to have them in your life. Expressing gratitude can help us identify positive moments and people that are a part of our lives

Connecting with our emotions can also be helpful to avoid bottling up our feelings about experiences. This can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as help us organize our thoughts.

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