



Healthy Living Series

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is important for managing emotions, thinking, communicating, learning, resilience, and building self-esteem. Lean into these tips to help improve personal, social, and emotional well-being. If you are in the U.S. and you or a loved one need someone to talk to immediately, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

How can we improve our mental health?

Walking

Exercise reduces stress, anxiety, and depression while improving mood and mental energy. Adults should aim to walk 20-30 minutes per day at a moderate pace (i.e. you can talk but not sing). The benefits occur early!

Mindfulness

Pay attention to how you feel while you walk and try to remain non-judgemental. Focus and avoid distractions. This helps control emotions and improves self-awareness, attention span, and impulse management.

Nutrition

Improve your diet by reducing salt, sugar, and saturated fat intake. Eat more fruits and vegetables and swap out sugary drinks for water. Healthy eating reduces depression and increases life expectancy.

Social Connection

Social support and connection improves coping behaviors and reduces stress. Avoid isolation and surround yourself with people that support you and care about you. Bring a friend or meet someone new at WWAD!



Sleep

Good sleep hygiene improves concentration, energy, and helps improve mood. Sleep helps your mind recover and learn new things! Adults should aim for at least 7 hours of sleep per night.

Avoid Stress

Avoid stressful situations when possible. Low stress decreases blood pressure and blood sugar. If you know you're going into a potentially stressful situation, approach it with a deep breath and positive attitude.

Seek Help

Know when to look for help with psychiatry and psychotherapy. Professionals help teach healthy coping mechanisms and change harmful thoughts. Proper medication can also be a complement to therapy.

Talk About It

Many people who have a mental illness do not openly talk about it, but there is nothing to be ashamed of! It is a treatable medical condition, just like heart disease or diabetes.

www.walkwithadoc.org

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness>
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/4/9/e005878>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29215971/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25208008/>
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