

LIFESTYLE CONSIDERATIONS

HABITS TO ESTABLISH A HEALTHY LIFE



SLEEP

Your body craves consistency: set a bedtime routine. Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day.
Decrease or eliminate caffeine use.
Limit alcohol use: it worsens sleep quality and causes daytime fatigue.
Restrict the use of your bed: your bed is for sleep and sex only. Don't use the bed for work, eating, TV or other screen time.
Avoid screen time 1 hour prior to sleep.



HYGIENE

Good hygiene is important for social, medical, and psychological reasons. It not only reduces the risk of illness, but it also improves the way others view you and how you view yourself.



NUTRITION

Alcohol is a depressant: reduce alcohol intake for improved mood, sleep quality, and nutritional health.
Cut your sugar intake: high sugar and processed carbohydrate diets can increase cortisol levels.

Important nutrients for mental health:

- **Vitamin B-12:** found in fish like salmon and trout, and fortified cereals.
- **Folate:** found in dark leafy vegetables, almonds, dairy, and fortified cereals.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** found in fatty fish like salmon, catfish, and trout. Ground flaxseed, walnuts, and fortified eggs.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Exercise releases the “feel good” endorphin chemicals in your brain that provide a sense of well-being.

Start Small: Doing 30 minutes or more of exercise a day 3-5 days a week is ideal. *To get a start, smaller amounts of activity at a time can make a difference, even 10-15 minutes.*

Don't put too much pressure on yourself: Even a walk or housework counts!

Is exercise daunting? If exercise is just another “should” in your life that you don't think you are living up to, you'll associate it with failure. Rather, view physical activity like therapy sessions or medication to help treat mental illnesses to change your mindset. Try to find an activity you find enjoyable!



MEDITATION

Meditation helps with anxiety and depression, chronic pain, insomnia, and a lot of other medical conditions. Take as little as 5 minutes a day to help you feel more grounded and peaceful.

You can find free meditation on YouTube and Apps. *Below are tips for self-guided calmness:*

Deep breathing: inhale through your nose slowly for 4 seconds. Hold for 4 seconds. exhale for 6 seconds as if you are blowing out of a straw. Repeat a few times.

Mindfulness Meditation: Focus on your breath. Notice anything that passes through your awareness without judgment. If your mind starts to tackle your to-do lists, just return to focusing on your breath.

Visualization: Close your eyes, relax, and imagine a peaceful place - like a beach. Engage all your senses: Hear the waves, feel the warm sand, and smell the salty air.

