



# MENTAL HEALTH, MINDFULNESS AND WELLBEING

# MENTAL HEALTH

Here are some things you can try that may help to look after your mental health and wellbeing:

## 1. DO THINGS WITH OTHERS

Spending time with family or friends, meeting new people and getting involved in activities can make a difference to how you feel. Get involved in group activities, kick the footy around, go for a bike ride etc.

## 2. DO SOMETHING CREATIVE

Activities or hobbies can keep you distracted, have a positive impact on your sense of mental health and wellbeing and can help increase your confidence and self-esteem. This could be building something, playing an instrument, gardening, art, doing a puzzle, painting, cooking, writing etc.

## 3. INVEST TIME IN RELATIONSHIPS

Connecting with people and investing in good relationships are important for your mental health. Get in touch with people who you trust or feel good around. Give them a call, send them a message or organise a catch-up with them.

## 4. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

Having positive thoughts can help you feel better. Positive Meditation & breathing.

## 5. TAKE TIME OUT

When you relax, you give yourself permission to let go of worries for a while. Relaxing gives your mind and body time to recover from the stresses of everyday life. Try some relaxation apps to guide you on how to relax.

## 6. SLEEP WELL

We cannot function properly without sleep. Sleep helps us to repair and restore our bodies and minds. Having good sleep is essential for mental health and wellbeing.

## 7. KEEPING ACTIVE

Your physical health plays a key role in keeping you mentally healthy. Being physically active can improve your mood and reduces stress.

Keeping active is important for your mental and physical health. It can help improve your sleep, reduce stress, help you relax and make you feel better overall.

Research has shown that physical activity is associated with better mental health.

Exercise releases feel-good chemicals including endorphins and serotonin, which improve your mood and make you feel good.

There are many benefits of exercise, some of these include:

- Boosting your mood, concentration & alertness.
- Improving your sleep.
- Providing distraction from unhelpful thoughts.
- Increasing your energy.

- Improving blood pressure, cholesterol and reducing your blood sugar.
- Giving you a chance to socialise and meet new people.
- Preventing or reducing anxiety and depression.

Even the smallest amounts of physical activity can make a difference. Here are some little things that you can do to increase your physical activity levels:

- Use the stairs instead of the lift.
- Park your car in a spot that is further away from your workplace or shopping centre.
- Walk or ride to school or work.
- Spend some time gardening.
- Housework, such as vacuuming.
- Other ways to keep you physically active, socially connected and to help reduce stress include:
- Finding something that you enjoy - football, swimming, walking, dancing, jogging, cycling etc.
- Start off gently and aim to increase activity by 10 minutes each day.
- Try different things such as group activities or sports.
- Ask a friend to join you to make it more fun and help you both commit to it.
- Spend time in nature and go for bush walks.
- Plan active outings such as bike riding, walking along the river or beach.



## 8. EAT HEALTHY

Nutrition and eating well can make a difference to the way you feel and in-turn may improve your mental health. Gut health also plays a key role in mental health. Remember, the body has 2 brains.

## MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a bit like marmite. While there are those people who absolutely swear by it – and want everyone to know about their latest month-long meditation retreat – for others, the word itself provokes a series of sarcastic eyerolls and deep, judgemental sighs.

Defined as “training present moment awareness and compassion both for yourself and others,” mindfulness essentially requires us to tune back in to our senses and be more aware of what’s happening in the moment.

And doing some meditation is only one of the ways you can practice it; mindfulness can actually be as easy as walking down the street and taking deep breaths. It’s dead simple.

Here are some simple ways to introduce Mindfulness into your daily routine:

### 1. SET A GOOD MORNING ROUTINE

We all know how important our morning routines can be when it comes to setting ourselves up for the day ahead, so why not make the most of that time by being mindful?

Starting your day with a routine that “anchors” you in. It could be taking a mindful walk, which is really easy to integrate into your routine, as we’re usually walking as part of our routine. To complete a mindful walk, simply practice being aware of the world going on around you. What sounds can you hear? How do your feet feel on the ground? What thoughts pass through your head? Checking in with yourself in this simple way may seem silly at first, but it can actually make a big difference. This can be done at any time in the day to recharge the mind.

### 2. ADD IN SOME QUICK EYES-CLOSED MEDITATION

If you can carve out some time in your busy routine, it’s a great idea to sit down and spend a little time really laying the foundation for your day by practising some eyes-closed meditation.

Practising eyes-closed meditation can help you start your day with more awareness. It then makes it a lot easier for you, as you pop between meetings or do different tasks throughout the day, to remember that mindful mindset, because you’ve already done it in the morning.

### 3. PERIODICALLY FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING

It’s surprising how powerful our breathing can be when we actually tune into it – especially when we’re feeling particularly stressed or agitated. In this way, taking the time to check in with

our breath throughout the day could be a great way to keep on top of how stressed we’re feeling and what we need to do to address that.

Really work on being present in whatever you’re doing. It might be as simple as when you transition from one thing to the next that you take a deep breath, or simply count your breaths.

### 4. GET AWAY FROM THE SCREEN

This one might seem obvious (after all, how many times have we been warned about the impact technology – specifically social media – has on our mental health?) but sitting in front of a computer screen actually makes us less aware of the present moment, making it easy to get stuck in our heads and obsess over our stressors.

After 30 minutes of looking at your computer screen, set a timer and get up and take a walk. As you’re walking, pay attention to the way your feet feel on the ground. It’s very, very simple routines like this that help people layer mindfulness into every day moments.

### 5. HAVE A CHAT

When we’re feeling stressed, it can be tempting to escape the constraints of the office and spend our lunch breaks hidden in the corner of a nearby coffee shop scrolling through Twitter – but that’s not the best mindfulness practice. Put technology aside during your lunch breaks and invest in social connections.



## 6. JUST EAT

While at first mindful eating might sound like another eye-roll wellbeing buzzword, it's actually another great way to ground ourselves and get out of our heads for a moment. Just eat and not multitask. Apply mindfulness to eating through mindful eating techniques, so before you dig into your lunch, just take a few minutes to look at it, observe the colours, think about where the food came from and focus on the tastes and smells.

## WELLBEING

### NUTRIENTS AND BRAIN FUNCTION

Nutrients from your diet play an important part in the development and functioning of the brain. The table below summarises the connections between brain function and nutrients.

Brain Function	Depends on Adequate Intake of	
Short-term memory	Vitamin B12, Vitamin C, Vitamin E	Vitamin B12: shellfish, liver, fish, crab, soy products, red meat. Vitamin C: oranges, broccoli, strawberries, capsicum, kiwi fruit, brussel sprouts. Vitamin E: spinach, avocado, egg, almonds.
Performance on problem-solving tests	Riboflavin, Folate, Vitamin B12, Vitamin C	Riboflavin: milk, yoghurt, broccoli, egg, liver, mushrooms. Folate: legumes, fruit, leafy green vegetables. Vitamin B12: shellfish, liver, fish, crab, soy products, red meat. Vitamin C: oranges, broccoli, strawberries, capsicum, kiwi fruit, brussel sprouts.
Mental Health	Thiamine, Niacin, Zinc, Folate	Thiamine: whole grains, pork. Niacin: milk, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, wholegrains, nuts. Zinc: red meats, whole grains. Folate: legumes, fruit, leafy green vegetables.
Cognition	Folate, Vitamin B12, Vitamin B6, Iron, Vitamin E	Folate: legumes, fruit, leafy green vegetables. Vitamin B12: shellfish, liver, fish, crab, soy products, red meat. Vitamin B6: meat, poultry, potatoes, legumes, non-citrus fruits, liver, soy products. Iron: red meat, fish, poultry, eggs, green leafy vegetables, dried fruit. Vitamin E: spinach, avocado, egg, almonds.
Vision	Essential fatty acids, Vitamin A	Essential fatty acids: nuts such as almonds, walnuts, eggs, olive oil, hemp, flax. Vitamin A: milk, cheese, spinach and dark leafy greens, broccoli.



# WORK WELLBEING IDEAS

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## 9. LOOSEN UP - 'TAKE 5'

Using the take 5 minutes initiative - The idea being that the user would take 5 minutes out of their busy work day to recharge the mind and gently loosen up the joints in their body by following some simple mobilisation and relaxation exercises. This in turn can help you to re-focus for your working day ahead. Hand out is on the 3d portal (appendix 20)

## 10. WALK & TALK

Members would go outside to get some fresh air and light exercise, completing a variety of different routes / distances depending on the time they had. They can go alone but would be more fun to go with others. They could then clear their head and be refreshed for the day ahead for more productive work.

The fitness & wellbeing team would research routes around the facility and surrounding areas to ensure safe (personally I used my fit bit watch with gps to get routes, steps, distance, time taken etc). Then I went on map my route, screen shot the map and put it on the route planner. The routes would have different distances depending how long the member had. Idea is everyone can do this, in groups to walk & talk.

## 11. HEALTHY HABITS CHALLENGE

This is a simple 4-week challenge to complete daily tasks. The end goal being to improve your overall health and wellbeing.

## 12. 14 DAY NUTRITIONAL CHALLENGE

Keep in mind, healthy body - healthy mind! Eating healthy will help to energise the body and mind to improve not only your work life.

This challenge is designed to give your body that extra kick to start a healthier diet. Try to stick to the rules for at least 14 days... you can always go for longer if you wish!

## 13. 1 POUND IN A POT CHALLENGE

Nice and simple this one - for every workout you complete, simply put a pound in a pot. At the end of the month - treat yourself! The more you work out, the bigger the treat!

