TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELLBEING

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year.

We all have mental health, just as we have physical health and it's important that you look to take care of your wellbeing.



What can I do on a day to day basis to stay mentally well?

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing, and maintaining both is an important part of staying fit and healthy. This guide is to help you think about ways you can keep yourself well, what you can do if you are feeling overwhelmed and where you can go to find the right support for you if you need help. If you need support now or are feeling overwhelmed please turn over for more information.



Keep physically active

Doing regular exercise can be very effective in lifting your mood and increasing your energy levels. It doesn't have to be very strenuous or sporty to be effective – the important thing is to pick something you enjoy doing, so you're more likely to stick with it.

Build healthy relationships with people

Building and maintaining constructive relationships with people is an important part of staying mentally well. If you spend time around positive and supportive people, you are more likely to have a better self-image, be more confident and feel able to face difficult times. In return, if you are caring and supportive to other people, you are more likely to get a positive response from them. This is particularly important if working alone is a significant part of your job.



Relax

It is important to make time for yourself and relax. In order to look after others you need to first care for yourself. Self-care is not self-indulgent, it's essential. Do something you like, or even just take a five-minute break to look out of the window. Learning a relaxation technique, such as yoga, meditation or mindfulness (find out more at **bemindful.co.uk**) can also help you relax and reduce stress levels.

Diet

Explore the relationship between the food you eat and your mood.

Think about how regularly you eat. If your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and experience low mood. You need to eat regularly to keep your sugar level steady, and choose foods that release energy slowly like protein, nuts and seeds, oats and wholegrains.

Identify mood triggers

Keeping track of your moods in a mood diary can help you work out what affects your mental wellbeing and recognise changes in your mood that would be difficult to spot otherwise. For example, you may realise that seeing a certain person has an effect on your mood. Knowing what affects your moods can help you take steps to avoid these situations or mitigate against the negative impact a certain situation may have on you.

Are you having too much caffeine?

Caffeine is a stimulant. Having too much can make you feel anxious and experience low mood, disturb your sleep, or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly.

Caffeine is in: tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and other manufactured energy drinks. You might feel noticeably better quite quickly if you drink less caffeine or avoid it altogether.



Learn to accept yourself

One of the most important steps in maintaining mental wellbeing is to learn to accept yourself. If you value yourself, you are more likely to have positive relationships with other people and find it easier to cope with difficult times in your life.

Here are some tips to help you increase your self-esteem:

- Try not to compare yourself to other people.
- Acknowledge your positive qualities and things you are good at.
- Learn to identify and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Use self-help books and websites to help you change your beliefs.
- Spend time with supportive people.
- Be assertive – don't allow people to treat you with a lack of respect.
- Engage in hobbies that you enjoy.

Sleep

There is a close relationship between sleep and mental health. If you're finding it difficult to sleep – don't try to force sleep, get up, go to another room and try to relax there. Do something soothing, such as listening to music, until you're tired enough to go back to bed. If you are awake for long periods, repeat this process as many times as you need to.

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Need support?

Samaritans

24-hour emotional support for anyone struggling to cope.

24-hour freephone helpline: 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org
Samaritans.org

Mind Infoline

Confidential, independent and practical support, advice and signposting around mental health and wellbeing. The team provides information on a range of topics including:

- types of mental health problems
- where to get help
- medication and alternative treatments
- advocacy.

The Mind Infoline

Call: 0300 123 3393
Lines are open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays)
Email: info@mind.org.uk
Text: 86463

Mind Legal Line

The Mind Legal line can provide information and general advice on mental health related law covering:

- mental health
- mental capacity
- community care
- human rights and discrimination/ equality related to mental health issues.

The Mind Legal Line

Call: 0300 466 6463
Lines are open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays)
Email: legal@mind.org.uk

Local Services



Find your **Local Mind** and the services such as crisis helplines, drop-in centres, counselling and befriending they offer here **mind.org.uk/localminds**

NHS 111

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent problem. They can provide details of local crisis support services or advise on accessing your local A&E. **To get help call 111. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

What can I do when I'm feeling overwhelmed?

Try a breathing exercise

For example breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to keep your shoulders down and relaxed, and place your hand on your stomach – it should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.

Take a break

If it's possible, step away from what you are doing. You could read a book or a magazine, even if it's only for a few minutes.

Picture yourself somewhere you feel calm

Even if you can't physically get away, your imagination can transport you to somewhere you feel calm. Think of somewhere relaxing and peaceful. You might choose a memory of somewhere you've been, or a place you have imagined.

Listen to music

Really listen to the music. Can you hear a drum beat or a certain rhythm? Focus on the music, and let other thoughts fade away.

Try a grounding exercise

To reconnect you with your surroundings. Look for and find one thing you can see, one you can touch, one you can hear, one you can smell and one you can taste.

Stay safe

If your feelings become overwhelming, and you have suicidal thoughts or you think you may self harm, remember that you can pick up the phone at any time of night or day and talk to the Samaritans on their **24 hour Freephone helpline: 116 123**.

You might also find Mind's information on How to cope with suicidal feelings is helpful. **mind.org.uk/suicidalfeelings**



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