

Although our physical and mental health go hand in hand, most of us take steps to improve our physical health and don't often consider what we can do to improve our mental health. Good physical and mental health will help us live a full and active life. Why not try out some of the top ten tips below to help improve your mental health and ultimately your life!

### 1. Balance your lifestyle

Develop a healthy balanced lifestyle that includes time for work, play, exercise, enjoying the outdoors and rest. Getting the balance right isn't always easy but trying your best can make a big difference to your mental health.

### 2. Be Active

By increasing your activity levels you can help reduce depression and anxiety. Being active can also improve your mood, coping skills and social interactions.

### 3. Eat Healthily

Maintain a healthy approach to food and try to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Eating nutritious, healthy food and drinking lots of water will help give you the energy to deal with daily stresses.

### 4. Avoid alcohol and drugs

Sometimes people use alcohol and illegal drugs to deal with stressful situations. More often than not this can make the situation worse. Try to keep smoking and alcohol to a minimum and avoid drugs.

### 5. Learn how to deal with stress

Try to identify the things that cause you stress as well as your reactions to stressful situations. There are many ways to help you deal with your stresses (such as Tai chi, exercise, a nature walk, playing with your pet, journal writing), so try some out and find what works for you.

### 6. Relax your body and mind

Quiet reflection can improve your state of mind and strengthen your sense of self. Try meditating, relaxation exercises or prayer to help improve your outlook on life. Relaxing therapies, such as massage, reflexology etc., are also great for helping you to unwind.

### 7. Spend quality time with family and friends

People who have strong family or social support are generally healthier than those who don't. Try to spend quality time with supportive family or friends or seek out activities where you will meet new people.

### 8. Give of yourself

Being involved in community gives a sense of purpose and satisfaction and helps you appreciate your own situation in life.

### 9. Broaden your horizons

Take time to nurture your own needs and value yourself. Decide what you would like to do for yourself - it might be taking a new class, visiting a museum, running a 5km race. Set goals to help you reach your aims.

### 10. Focus on the positive!

Give thanks for all the positive things in your life. Sometimes all it takes is for us to change how we think about something. Smile and see the humour in life!