



Issue #5:

Tips for ensuring mental and emotional fitness



Good mental and emotional health helps us find our balance and stay in control, even during turbulent times. Here are some different options for you to practice mental/emotional fitness:

1. **Relax.** Give yourself a mini-vacation and allow your mind a break by becoming engrossed in a book, watching a movie, listening to music, taking a walk, working on a hobby, or spending time meditating.
2. **Daydream.** Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a dream location. Breathe slowly and deeply and let the comforting environment wrap you in a sensation of peace and tranquility.
3. **Be patient.** When you are going through change, realize it takes time to let go of the old and embrace the new.
4. **One thing at a time.** When you are out for a walk, for example, turn off the cell phone and stop making that mental 'to do' list. Take in the sights, sounds, and smells you encounter.
5. **Enjoy hobbies.** Doing something you enjoy can bring balance to your life and keep your brain active.
6. **Laugh.** Laughter is good medicine. When you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh, share it with someone you know.
7. **Volunteer.** Helping others makes us feel good about ourselves. It also widens our social network, provides us with new learning experiences, and can bring balance to our lives.



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- 8. Interrupt negative thoughts.** If you catch yourself having negative thoughts don't try to block them out (that never works), but don't let them take over. Try replacing negative thoughts with positive ones and make a list of five things you are grateful for.
- 9. Rest.** If you aren't getting a restful night's sleep, check out one of the many techniques available to help promote relaxation like rhythmic breathing.
- 10. Express your feelings.** If you are not clear about why you are feeling a certain way, try writing down your thoughts in a journal. Once you have identified your feelings, you may find it easier to share them with others.
- 11. Do it now.** When we continually put things off it can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem. It can be very satisfying at the end of the day to have accomplished a hard task or met a difficult situation head-on.
- 12. Exercise.** Regular physical activity has been shown to improve psychological well-being and reduce depression and anxiety.
- 13. Ask for help.** If you feel in need of emotional support, don't be afraid to talk it over with someone. Remember that professional help is available through your EAP.

Did you know that happy people are healthier?

Medical science now has evidence to support something most of us have known intuitively – happiness (including feelings of joy, pleasure, and contentment) are linked to our physical health.

Studies have shown that happiness leads to lower levels of stress chemicals, such as cortisol, which are linked to serious health problems like abdominal obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and autoimmune disorders.

A review of research studies on happiness from around the world found that having positive family relationships, support networks, and a sense of belonging were key aspects in ensuring peoples' happiness.

Source: Canadian Health Network website.

 Send us your questions, comments, and suggestions — lifelines@homewoodhealth.com

For more information, to arrange a counselling session, or to access any of your EFAP services, please contact a Client Services Representative. We are ready to speak with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in English or French. All calls are completely confidential.

1.800.663.1142

1.866.398.9505 (Numéro sans frais - en français)

1.888.384.1152 (TTY)

604.689.1717 International (Call Collect)

