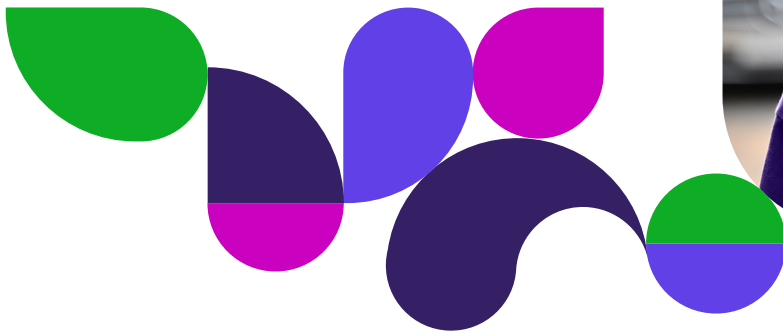


31 days of mental health mindfulness



Your mental health is important

It has been added as a fourth pillar of health, along with nutrition, sleep and activity.¹ And if your brain and mental state are not in good shape, the rest of your body can't work effectively. You may work hard to maintain strong muscles and a fit cardiovascular system. Your mental health requires the same kind of commitment and discipline.



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

In its honor, here are 31 days of activities to help prioritize your mental wellness.

Try to accomplish one activity each day. And even if you don't, these activities can help at any time.

1

Plan a good night's sleep

Fresh sheets and a regular bedtime routine can set you up for recharging your mind and body.²



2

Make a date with yourself

Do something you enjoy.² Visit a museum or see a movie. Taking time with yourself is a form of self-care.



3

Add flax seeds for flavor and crunch

They contain omega-3 fatty acids, fiber and folate, which can help boost your mood.³



4

Talk it out

Discuss your thoughts and feelings with a trusted friend. Or connect with a therapist.³ They may be able to better help you manage stress.



5

Let in the light

Aim for 30 minutes of natural sunlight each day to boost your mood while you are awake and help you sleep better at night.²



6

Start a gratitude jar

Write down three things you're grateful for on slips of paper and put them in a jar daily.^{2,6} Taking stock of what you have will change your perspective for the good.



7

Pay it forward

Show kindness. Buy a friend or stranger a coffee. They will get a jolt of happiness, and the social connection² is good for you too.



8

Reframe negativity

Find a positive angle.² Think of your challenges as opportunities to learn and grow.



9

Stay connected

Catch up with a loved one on the phone or a video chat.² Building and maintaining healthy relationships is good for your mental well-being.



10

Be mindful

Practice being aware and present in the moment instead of being on autopilot.²



11

Add edamame or fish to dinner

Help fight inflammation with the omega-3 fatty acids³ contained in them. They could help fight depression in some people.



12

Start a journal

It doesn't have to be long. Just put words to a page. Aim to "notice the good"² and add to it every day.



13

Add three more things to your gratitude jar

These notes can be about simple things—a cup of coffee, your cat or a favorite pillow.



14

Get your best rest

Limit electronics and avoid alcohol, caffeine, large meals or exercise too close to bedtime.²



15



Do an act of service

Volunteer at a school, food bank or shelter for a feeling of belonging² and being part of your community.



16



Take a 10-minute walk outside

Activity helps improve your mood and reduce stress.² Your body will thank you, and your mind will too.



17

Show compassion for yourself

Note your accomplishments. This fresh perspective can change your mood.²



18

Ask for help

Admitting you need help is one of the hardest things you can do. Having someone else step in, or talking to a mental health professional to work on ways to cope, could be best.²



19

Check in with yourself

Write down your feelings. Just a few words will suffice. Think about your beliefs, what is important to you and let them guide you.²



20



Dance it out

Put on some music and get your heart pumping. You'll relieve physical and mental stress^{2,5} and put a smile on your face.



21

Color your world

Invest in an adult coloring book. The repetitive action and expression of your creativity can have a calming effect.



22

Say no

Setting priorities and boundaries are healthy ways² to keep from taking on too much.



23

Spice it up

Many spices like turmeric, ginger, garlic and black pepper help fight inflammation, which some research suggests may be linked to depressed moods.³



24



Practice self-care

Do whatever will recharge you—a warm bath, manicure, a coffee or tea in a cozy café, or simply a walk through a neighborhood park. You deserve time too.



25

Shift your focus

Try not to dwell on what you can't control. When something outside of your power happens, concentrate on what you have the ability to fix.



26

Remind yourself why you're fortunate

Crack open your gratitude jar and read a couple slips of paper. These notes will give you a pick-me-up and remind you what's good in your life.⁵



27



Find the fun

Laughter brings about positive emotions, which reduce stress and improve your sense of well-being.⁵



28



Plan a meal with a friend

Eating together is a great way to stay connected with loved ones.



29

Try a 10-minute meditation

Be aware of your breath and take in sights and sounds. Let thoughts and worries leave your mind as you focus on the present.



30

Seek serenity

Look for opportunities in the day to pause, breathe and be mindful.



31

Give yourself a pat on the back!

You've reached the end of the challenge. Taking pride in reaching goals gives us a jolt of happiness, which releases dopamine and serotonin.^{4,5}



Congratulations! You are on the road to improving your emotional health.

Now, keep it going. Draw from what you've learned to stay in touch with yourself.

Learn how we can help support you on your wellness journey. To sign up or learn more, go to TeladocHealth.com/Smile/HEALTHYCOUNTY

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>

²<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

³<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2022/03/30/how-to-boost-your-mood-through-food>

⁴<https://www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/fats/what-are-omega-3-fatty-acids>

⁵<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8496883/>

⁶<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/>

Members must have primary insurance coverage through the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) plan offering the Livongo program. For Administrative Services Only (ASO) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO) only. Not available for Fully Insured (FI) or Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO).

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