

# Think Well, Be Well

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## Daily Habits to Boost Mental Health

Amid the hustle and bustle of everyday life, mental health can be a critical concern for many Americans. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that more than half of adults in the United States will be diagnosed with a mental illness—a variety of conditions that affect one’s mood, behavior, feelings or thinking—at some point in their lives. This staggering statistic underscores the need for proactive and frequent measures to promote mental well-being.

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**According to the NAMI, 1 in 5 American adults experience a mental health disorder each year.**

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While therapy and medication certainly play vital roles in mental health management and treatment, integrating certain habits into your routine can also significantly contribute to your overall mental wellness. This article explores the importance of nurturing your mind daily and provides practical habits and activities to incorporate.

### The Importance of Prioritizing Mental Health Each Day

Taking care of your mental health isn't just a luxury; it's a necessity. Just as you would nourish your body with healthy food and exercise to maintain physical health, nurturing your mind is equally essential. Mental health influences every facet of your life, such as relationships, work performance and physical health. Neglecting it can lead to a myriad of issues, including stress, anxiety, depression and even physical ailments.

### Nurturing Daily Mental Wellness

Mental health plays a huge role in your overall health and well-being. It affects everything, including how you think, feel and act, and helps determine how you make healthy choices and cope with stress. Because it's such a crucial component of your wellness, focusing on maintaining or improving your mental health is important. Here are several ways to boost or prioritize your mental health every day:

- **Express gratitude.** Taking five minutes daily to write down the things you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels. It can also help you appreciate the small joys in life, shifting your perspective and improving your overall outlook.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Focus on the present moment for a few minutes each day, acknowledging your thoughts and feelings without judgment. Mindfulness meditation can reduce stress, improve mood and enhance overall well-being.
- **Get moving.** Engaging in regular physical activity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week can benefit brain function, reduce anxiety and improve self-image. Exercise also releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters.
- **Eat healthily.** A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats can fuel your body and mind. Certain nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants, have been linked to improved mood and greater cognitive function.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Getting outside, especially when it's sunny, can greatly improve your mood, which is beneficial for your mental health. Also, regular access to nature, specifically green spaces, has been connected to a lower risk of depression and improved concentration.
- **Engage in hobbies.** Make time for activities that bring you joy and fulfillment, whether it's painting, gardening, playing music or reading. Hobbies can provide an outlet for creativity, reduce stress and foster a sense of accomplishment.
- **Limit screen time.** In today's digital age, spending excessive time glued to screens is easy, especially on social media. Set boundaries around your screen time, especially before bedtime, as excessive scrolling can contribute to feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression.
- **Be kind.** Helping others and being kind not only helps the recipient but can also benefit your mental health. Simply holding the door for someone or giving a compliment can go a long way.

- **Connect with others.** Meaningful connections with friends, family and community are essential for mental health resilience. Try to make time for face-to-face interactions, phone calls or video chats to nurture your relationships and strengthen your support network.
- **Set boundaries.** Healthy boundaries, such as saying no when necessary and prioritizing your own needs, are vital for preserving your mental health and preventing burnout.
- **Get a good night's sleep.** Fatigued individuals typically experience drowsiness; mood changes; loss of energy and appetite; headaches; and a lack of motivation, concentration and alertness. Strive for seven to eight hours of quality sleep each night.

## Summary

Prioritizing your mental health is a journey that requires consistent effort and self-care. By incorporating these habits into your routine, you can take proactive steps to boost your mental health. Remember, small changes can make a significant difference over time.

Lastly, don't hesitate to seek professional help if you're struggling with your mental health. Therapists, counselors and other mental health professionals are valuable resources who can provide support, guidance and treatment options tailored to your individual needs. Contact a primary care doctor or a mental health professional if you or a loved one needs mental health guidance. If you need mental health-related crisis support or are worried about someone else, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available by calling or texting 988 and chatting online at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

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