

▶ Top tips for ▶ improving your ▶ mental health

▶ The daily challenges of juggling family, work,
▶ the pandemic and everything else that life has
▶ to throw at us can add to the pressures and
▶ stress. In the same way that we take exercise to
▶ look after our physical health, it's important to
▶ consider the steps we can all take to look after
▶ our mental health too.

Here are some simple suggestions you can do to improve your mental wellbeing:

► ► Make time to talk

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled. Talking about your feelings isn't a sign of weakness. It's part of taking charge of your wellbeing and doing what you can to stay healthy.

► ► Get moving

Exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better. Exercise also keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy. Experts recommend that we should do about 30 minutes' exercise at least five days a week.

► ► Take a break

A change of scene is good for your mental health. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time'. Taking a break may mean being very active or it might mean not doing very much at all. Try yoga or meditation, or just putting your feet up.

► ► Eat well

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel, for example caffeine and sugar can give you an immediate, temporary boost. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.

► ► Ask for help

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help.

Your family or friends may be able to offer practical help or a listening ear. Local services are there to help you. Alternatively, speak to your GP. Over a third of visits to GPs are about mental health.

Resources:

There are also lots of great organisations who offer support and useful resources available:

- **Mind** - www.mind.org.uk
- **Samaritans** - www.samaritans.org
- **Mental Health Foundation** - www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- **Together for mental wellbeing** - www.together-uk.org

Taking positive steps to look after your wellbeing can help you deal with pressure, and reduce the impact that stress has on your life.

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