



5 Steps to Good Mental & Physical Wellness

1 Pause & Breathe

1

Take several deep breaths

2 Reach Out and Connect

2

Talk to a friend or supporter
Hug a pet

3 Focus on Sleep

3

Create a sleep routine

4 Move More

4

Get Up and Walk
or
Move your Arms
(even just for a few minutes)

5 Eliminate Harmful Substances

5

Cut down
or Quit



5 Steps to Good Mental & Physical Wellness



Step #1: Pause & Breathe

- ⊗ Meditation and mindfulness activities help you manage and reduce stress.
- ⊗ Regular mindfulness practice improves mood and ability to focus.
- ⊗ Yoga, tai chi, and similar activities offer exercise, mindfulness, and relaxation, especially if you pay attention to your breathing and focus on the present moment.



Step #2: Reach Out and Connect with Someone

- ⊗ Talk to a friend or supporter—social support relieves stress and can even keep you healthy.
- ⊗ Hug a pet! Spending time with animals can be calming and make you feel less alone. Taking care of a pet can give you a sense of purpose.
- ⊗ Spend time around other people in your community.



Step #3: Focus on Sleep

- ⊗ Create a sleep routine. Be consistent with the times you go to sleep and wake up.
- ⊗ Sleep refreshes your mind and your mood, helps your body heal, and improves your memory.
- ⊗ Sleep in a cool, dark space. Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.



Step #4: Move More

- ⊗ Try walking just 10 minutes 3 times/day for 3 days out of each week.
- ⊗ Moving more may help you control weight, lower your risk of heart disease, and lengthen your life.
- ⊗ Walking and moving more can help improve your mood and reduce symptoms of depression.



Step #5: Eliminate Harmful Substances

- ⊗ Cut down or quit smoking, other types of tobacco and nicotine, alcohol, opioids, and other harmful drugs.
- ⊗ Many harmful substances cause mental and physical health problems
- ⊗ Many harmful substances are linked to depression and suicide.
- ⊗ Alcohol, and other substances can disrupt your sleep.
- ⊗ Many harmful substances are associated with cancer, liver problems, heart disease, difficulty breathing and more.



Resources: 5 Steps to Good Physical and Mental Wellness

Step #1: Pause and Breathe

- Relaxation techniques: Breath control help quell errant stress response
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response>
- National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health: Meditation In Depth
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>
- The role for mindfulness in public health
<https://www.globalhealthnow.org/2017-03/role-mindfulness-public-health>
- Russell & Siegmund: What and who? Mindfulness in the mental health setting
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5353507/>
- Yoga with Adrienne (a YouTube channel)
<https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>
- Use a free meditation app (like Calm, Insight Timer, Aura, or Simple Habit)
- You can find lots of guided meditations and relaxing music on YouTube

Step #2: Reach Out and Connect with Someone

- Cohen (2006): Social relationships and health
<http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~scohen/AmerPsycholpaper.pdf>
- Brooks et al. (2018): The power of support from companion animals...
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5800290/>
- How social support contributes to psychological health
<https://www.verywellmind.com/social-support-for-psychological-health-4119970>
- Find local groups focused on your interests
You can search for various types of groups on <https://www.meetup.com>
- Get to know your neighborhood
Search by your address (you do have to submit your email address) at <https://nextdoor.com/>
- Find a volunteer opportunity
<https://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/work/volunteering>
- Visit your local animal shelter or human society to help out and make some furry friends

Step #3: Focus on Sleep

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Sleep and chronic disease
https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/chronic_disease.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Tips for better sleep
https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/sleep_hygiene.html
- National Sleep Foundation
www.sleep.org
- Find a guided meditation that focuses on getting to sleep
Try an app like Calm, Insight Timer, Aura, or Simple Habit, or search on YouTube
- Use a sleep-tracking app to learn more about how you sleep
Examples include Sleep Cycle, Sleep Score, Pillow Automatic Sleep Tracker, or Alarm Clock Xtreme

Resources: 5 Steps to Good Physical and Mental Wellness (continued)

Step #4: Move More

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012): More people walk to better health.
<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/walking/index.html>
- SAMHSA.gov: Walking fact sheet (Program to Achieve Wellness)
https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/wellness_initiative/paw-walking-fact-sheet.pdf
- Scientific American: Regular walking can help ease depression
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/regular-walking-can-help-ease-depression/>
- Sharma, Madaan, & Petty (2006): Exercise for mental health
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470658/>
- APA Monitor: The exercise effect
www.apa.org/monitor/2011/12/exercise
- Check out YouTube for exercise videos, including dance, yoga, tai chi, and Pilates
- Search for free exercise apps that you can use on your smartphone
- Consider joining a gym—many offer low monthly rates

Step #5: Eliminate Harmful Substances

- Depression and opioid use go hand in hand
<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/external/2018/06/depression-and-opioid-use-go-hand-in-hand/>
- National Health Service (UK): Stopping smoking is good for your mental health
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/stopping-smoking-mental-health-benefits/>
- Find local 12-step meetings (search for AA, NA, GA, OA, and others). Here is a useful list:
<https://sobernation.com/list-of-12-step-programs/>
- Find AA and NA meetings using the Pink Cloud app (this app is ad free and allows anonymous use)
- Look for smoking cessation programs offered by a nearby hospital or the local American Lung Association
<https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/get-extra-help/speak-to-an-expert>
- Try a sober meditation or recovery support app or a collection of daily readings
Examples include 12 Step Meditation Daily Reflections, Sober Grid – Social Network,
- Track your progress
Examples include I Am Sober, Nomo – Sobriety Clocks, Quit That! Habit Tracker, Sober Time, Sober Tool

Please note:

Many free smartphone apps are funded through advertisements or require payment to access certain features, so check app reviews before downloading. Be cautious when using or signing up for web-based apps, especially if they require you to register. You can learn more about security when using apps from the U. S. Federal Trade Commission:

- <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0018-understanding-mobile-apps>

While we list online resources and smartphone apps, we recognize that websites often change and move and that smartphone apps come and go. If a link doesn't work, try a search using the title. We do not endorse any of the websites or apps listed—they are suggestions for beginning your search for what works for you. We do not accept any funding or other support from any of the resources listed.