

Mental WELLNESS

LiveWELL

May 2023



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This month presents an opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness.

LiveWELL Five tips to boost mental health

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Many Americans struggle with mental health, whether it be mild or severe. Here are five things you can do to help support mental health and well-being.

- **Eat well:** Studies show that about 95% of serotonin is produced in your gastrointestinal tract, which is the neurotransmitter linked to mood, pain, appetite, and sleep. That's why what you eat has such an important impact on your mental health. Aim for unprocessed, fresh foods.
- **Get enough sleep:** The mental benefits of sleep include the capacity to improve creativity and problem-solving; lower the likelihood of depression and other mental disorders; and even increase life expectancy.
- **Stay active:** When we exercise, neurotransmitters are released in the brain that help reduce stress, relieve pain, and improve mood. All of this is linked to lower anxiety levels and positive mental health. It also leads to other good habits like a regulated appetite and better sleep, which naturally promote positive mental health over time.
- **Nurture relationships:** Relationships are one of the most important aspects of our lives. People who are more socially connected to family, friends, or their community are happier, physically healthier, and live longer, with fewer mental health problems than people who are less well connected.
- **Set realistic goals:** Setting unrealistic goals is a fast track to disappointment, unnecessary pressure, and stress. When we set goals, we're actually able to achieve, we feel good about ourselves which promotes positive mental health.

Information derived from [National Institute of Mental Health](#)



"Mental illnesses are common in the United States. More than one in five U.S. adults is estimated to live with a mental illness (57.8 million in 2021),"
National Institute of Mental Health



PlayWELL

How exercise boosts mental wellbeing

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Did you know in addition to being good for your body, exercise can also help you deal with depression, anxiety, stress, and more? It also improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts your overall mood.

- **Exercise and depression:** As one example, a recent study done by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour reduces the risk of major depression by 26%.
- **Exercise and anxiety:** Exercise is a natural and effective anti-anxiety treatment. It relieves tension and stress, boosts physical and mental energy, and enhances well-being through the release of endorphins.
- **Exercise and stress:** Stress can manifest itself through tense muscles, headaches, tightness in the chest, and more. As well as releasing endorphins in the brain, physical activity helps to relax the muscles and relieve tension in the body.
- **Exercise and ADHD:** Exercising regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD and improve concentration, motivation, memory, and mood. Physical activity immediately boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels, which affect focus and attention.
- **Exercise and PTSD and trauma:** Evidence suggests that by really focusing on your body and how it feels as you exercise, you can actually help your nervous system become "unstuck" and begin to move out of the immobilization stress response that characterizes PTSD or trauma. Instead of allowing your mind to wander, pay close attention to the physical sensations in your joints and muscles, even your insides as your body moves.

Learn more at helpguide.org



WorkWELL

Practice wellness in the workplace

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At the Greater Phoenix Chamber, we have wellness breaks, which are 15-minute reminders to take a break at 10 am and 3 pm. Whether that be walking, stretching, or stepping away from your computer, this reminds employees to get their legs moving, take a break, clear their minds, and boost circulation. We encourage employers to add wellness walks to their days to boost mental and physical well-being.

Information from [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)





EatWELL

Brain healthy smoothie

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BLUEBERRY-NANA SMOOTHIE

Recipe from brainhq.com

Perhaps more than any other food, blueberries are associated with better brain health. Blueberries are a rich source of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory ingredients, making them a popular subject of studies on cognitive functioning. Many of these studies suggest that eating blueberries may protect against oxidative stress, improve memory and cognition, and even prevent cognitive decline.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- 1 banana
- 1 Tbsp coconut oil
- 2 tsps flaxseed oil
- 4–5 ice cubes

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine milk, blueberries, banana, coconut oil, and flaxseed oil in a blender or smoothie cup fitted with an immersion blender.
2. Add ice cubes and blend until desired consistency.
3. Pour into a glass and enjoy immediately.

WELL Community

Ask for help

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Sometimes we can do all of these things and still need a little extra support. That's completely okay. Solari Crisis and Human Services is an Arizona non-profit that has a Mental Health LifeLine and Crisis Intervention Specialists. The specialists work around and provide immediate and confidential support to anybody facing a personal crisis. If your crisis can't be solved over the phone, they will connect you to local agencies that can help.

The Arizona statewide crisis line number:
1(844)534-HOPE

National Lifeline: 988

Source: <https://crisis.solari-inc.org/get-help/crisis-line/>



www.WellnessAtoZ.org
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