



## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month serves as an important reminder of the significance of mental health in our lives. This month encourages open dialogue about mental health issues, helping to dispel stigma and promote understanding and gives us time to reflect on our own mental well-being. By spotlighting mental health, we aim to empower everyone to seek help when needed, emphasize the importance of self-care, and acknowledge that mental health is an essential component of a healthy, fulfilling life.

## 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. 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.

**Use the following calendar to try an exercise each day to help better your mental health and wellness.**

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

### Make a date with yourself

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



3

### Add flax seeds for flavour and crunch

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



4

### Talk it out

Discuss your thoughts and feelings with a trusted friend. Or connect with a therapist. 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.



6

### Start a gratitude jar

Write down three things you're grateful for on slips of paper and put them in a jar daily. 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 connection is good for you too.



8

### Reframe negativity

Find a positive angle. 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. 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.



11

### Add edamame or fish to dinner

Help fight inflammation with the omega-3 fatty acids 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" 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.



15

**Do an act of service**

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



16

**Take a 10-minute walk outside**

Activity helps improve your mood and reduce stress. 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.



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.



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.



20

**Dance it out**

Put on some music and get your heart pumping. You'll relieve physical and mental stress and put a smile on your face.



21

**Colour your world**

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



22

**Say no**

Setting priorities and boundaries are healthy ways 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.



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 neighbourhood 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

### Practice gratitude

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.



27

### Find the fun

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



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!

Take pride in reaching goals for a jolt of happiness, which releases dopamine and serotonin.



## 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.



# Hydration 101

Your body is composed  
of approximately

**60% water**

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**On average, how  
many ounces of liquid  
do I need daily?**

**Men:**

**124 oz**

**Women:**

**92 oz**

**Drinking water, especially plain water, has been found by studies to be associated with a lower prevalence of anxiety, depression and even smoking!<sup>1</sup>**

It helps your body remove toxins by flushing waste, which keeps your kidneys healthy and helps you stay regular. Water keeps your body temperature normal. And drinking enough water will help lubricate and cushion your joints and protect your spinal cord.<sup>2</sup> Not sold yet? Consider this: Even mild dehydration can impact your mood and memory.

## How much is enough?

Remembering to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water is helpful and healthful. Your total liquid intake needs, however, are influenced by age, activity level, environment and illness. More than water, liquids can come from other beverages, as well as fruits and vegetables that have a high water content. These include cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries, grapes, pears, celery, carrots, lettuce and cabbage.

## Consider these tips to stay hydrated:

- Keeping a pitcher of water on your kitchen counter
- Having a water bottle ready in your car
- Keeping a water bottle at your desk
- Setting an alert on your phone reminding you to drink throughout the day
- Stopping by the watercooler on your way to or from the restroom
- Getting a water bottle that has measurements on it so you'll know how much you've had to drink

## Choices in hydration:

Plain water is always best for hydration. Depending on where you live and your source, tap water could meet your needs. Visiting the beverage aisle at any grocery store will tell a different story. How do they differ?

### **Bottled water:**

It is simply that. In most cases, the water you find in bottles is tap water from somewhere that's been filtered or treated for consistency.

### **Sparkling, seltzer or club soda:**

Fizzy water is not all created equal. Seltzer or soda water is just plain carbonated water. Club soda kicks it up with the addition of minerals for taste. Sparkling mineral water comes from underground springs with natural carbonation.

### **Alkaline water:**

Contains a higher pH level than normal water due to a higher mineral or salt content.

### **Flavoured water:**

Contains some sort of flavouring, either natural or chemical.

### **Infused water:**

It gets its flavour right from the source. Herbs, fruits, and vegetables are steeped in water, then strained and served just like tea. The best part? You can make it yourself.

**Try the following combinations for making your own infused water or create your own.**



## Cucumber water

Add two thinly sliced medium cucumbers into a pitcher of water and ice. Looking for more flavor? Add slices of lime and a few sprigs of fresh cilantro. Let it steep for 4 to 8 hours and serve cold.

## Sweet orange and blueberry water

Add three sliced Mandarin oranges and 2 handfuls of blueberries to a pitcher of water. Let it sit overnight to infuse.



## Grapefruit and rosemary water

Add two grapefruits, cut into wedges with the rinds removed, to a pitcher. Fill halfway with water and press on the fruit to release its juice. Add 2 fresh rosemary sprigs and cover with ice and water. Let it sit overnight before serving.

## Ginger mango water

Add 4 1-inch pieces of fresh ginger root and 1 cup of mango chunks to a pitcher. Cover with water and ice and let it sit in the refrigerator for 1-3 hours before serving.



## Strawberry basil water

Add 4 slices of lemon, 4 strawberries cut into halves and a handful of fresh basil leaves to a pitcher. Cover with ice and water. Let it infuse for 2-3 hours.

## Grape basil water

Add 4 handfuls of thinly sliced grapes, 20-24 fresh basil leaves and a squeeze of lime to a pitcher. Fill with water and serve.



## Watermelon mint water

Add watermelon and fresh mint to a pitcher, cover with ice and fill with water. Let it sit for 2-8 hours and serve.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6147771/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/corporate/news/regional-news/western-sentinel/2021/08/facts-on-fluids-how-to-stay-hydrated.html>

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