



Healthy Living

Life is not merely being alive, but being well

Marcus Aurelius

Paying deliberate, regular and ongoing attention to the basic lifestyle factors of exercise, nutrition and sleep, helps build the foundation for better mental and physical health. It can be difficult to make changes to our lifestyle and habits, but here is some information about the importance of being active, eating and sleeping well, and taking steps towards healthier living.

Exercise

Regular exercise has been shown to have very positive effects on mental wellbeing. Vigorous exercise releases endorphins (the happy hormones that also alleviate pain) into our bloodstream. Even gentle to moderate exercise increases serotonin, another brain chemical linked to mood and mental health. Other benefits include:

- Increased energy levels, concentration, sense of control and self-esteem
- Help manage stress levels, including providing distraction from worries and rumination
- Increased sleep quality
- Social support and reduced loneliness if exercise is done with other people

Tips for getting started and staying motivated:

While the benefits of exercise are well documented, there are several barriers preventing people from making time to exercise, such as life being too busy, shift work and feeling exhausted or overwhelmed due to stress. But remember, physical activity helps us perform and live better. Here are a few tips to get you going:

Make a plan, set goals, and review	Incorporate exercise into your daily routine
<p>Set realistic short-term goals for exercising (E.g. three 20-minute walks per week)</p> <p>Revise your goals regularly. If you weren't able to achieve your goal, ask yourself why. Do you need to revise your goal to make it more achievable? Is there anything you can do to make it more likely that you'll achieve your goal next week?</p> <p>Celebrate success!</p> <p>Writing down your goal and sharing it with trusted and supportive others makes it more likely you will achieve it.</p>	<p>Be creative with different types of physical activity such as walking to work or taking the stairs</p> <p>Schedule walking breaks in your workday</p> <p>Plan activities involving exercise</p> <p>Use a pedometer (step counter) or fitness app to help track your activity</p>

Get support	Make allowances for setbacks
Get a friend, family member or colleague to exercise with you	If are you feeling overwhelmed or exhausted, a five-minute walk is better than no walk
Get involved in team-based exercises or sports	If you haven't achieved your goal, be kind to yourself.
Consult with a Personal Trainer or Health Professional	Remind yourself of your goal and start again from where you left off

Nutrition

A healthy diet is essential for good health and nutrition, and it can protect you against many chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. According to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, a recommended healthy diet includes the five food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, lean meat/poultry and fish, and milk/yoghurt and cheese.

Tips for healthier eating:

Making changes to your current eating habits can appear a little daunting at first. Barriers to change can include the time it will take to make changes, the costs associated with purchasing, as well as knowing what to purchase and how to prepare it. Here are some general tips that may be helpful:

- Consider cutting back on foods with high sugar and salt content, saturated and industrially produced fats.
- If you do choose takeaway or junk food, try reducing the size of your meal and choose healthier options on the menu.
- Drink plenty of water – bring your drink bottle to work, and take it with you during your shift.
- Limit consumption of alcohol to no more than ten standard drinks per week, and no more than four standard drinks on any one day. Check the BlueSpace Wellbeing website for more tips on reducing your alcohol intake: <https://www.bluespacewellbeing.com.au/help-you/alcohol>
- Find ways of preparing your meals with healthier alternatives and different cooking methods – E.g. Using less salt, or grilling instead of deep frying.
- Plan ahead when shopping and stock your food cupboard and fridge with ingredients.
- Stock up at work on meals that are healthy, and easy to consume wherever you are. Having access to food such as packets of nuts, yoghurt, a boiled egg, or fruit such as bananas or apples will lessen the chance that you opt for less healthy or take away options.
- Don't stress about the timing of the meals but instead focus on how you will get all the nutrition you need.
- Try a health food delivery service or one that does healthy pre-packaged meals to start you off.

Sleep

When the quantity or quality of your sleep is affected, you may find yourself experiencing daytime tiredness, loss of energy, and apathy; problems with concentration and impaired judgement; difficulties managing stress, or feeling easily overwhelmed, irritable or frustrated.

Tips for improving your sleep:

Whether you're working different shifts, or just find it difficult to fall asleep at night, there are many things you can do to optimize your sleep pattern and feel more rested during the day. Check the Bluespace Wellbeing website for more detailed information on improving your sleep: <https://www.bluespacewellbeing.com.au/help-you/sleep>

When to seek help:

If you are finding it difficult to implement healthy changes in your life, or if you have specific concerns about making these changes, a healthcare professional can help you achieve your goals. You may want to discuss the best option with your GP, to create a safe and tailored plan to live a healthier life.



**Alcohol and Drug
Information Services VIC**
1800 888 236



Turning Point
www.turningpoint.org.au



Police Wellbeing Services
1300 090 995