**WELLNESS TIPS FOR EVERY AGE**

Mental wellness is about creating a lifestyle of balance and reducing the impact of stress.

**PHYSICAL SELF-CARE**
• Positive physical health habits help decrease your stress and increase your energy level.
  1. Get plenty of sleep. (Put devices away at least an hour before bed.)
  2. Stay active walking, hiking, biking, swimming, surfing, dancing. Physical activity releases tension, helps us manage stress, boosts our energy levels, fights anxiety and depression, improves our ability to sleep, etc.
  3. Spend time outside in the sun. Vitamin D that we get from the sun boosts energy, helps us sleep, strengthens our bones, enhances our mood, and supports our immune system.
  4. Fuel yourself with healthy food choices all day. (Balance your carbs, proteins, vegetables, and fats at each meal to manage your energy level and mood.) Drink plenty of water, reduce sugar, increase vegetables.
  5. Avoid late night snacking. When we give ourselves a 10 hour break from eating (ie: 9pm to 7am), it helps our body remain metabolically flexible, avoids blood sugar fluctuations that can interrupt sleep, and allows our gut lining to replenish itself.

**SPIRITUAL & MENTAL SELF-CARE**
• Allows you to get in touch with your inner spirit and nurture yourself.
  1. Learn to be in the moment. Practice mindfulness each day.
  2. Spend less time on digital devices, social media, and screens.
  3. Create work/school-life balance.
  4. Define your values and live by them.
  5. Set healthy boundaries, structure, and clear priorities for yourself. What are your non-negotiables?
  6. Practice breathing. Take deep breaths throughout the day.
  7. Spend time in nature. Pray and/or meditate. Do yoga.
  8. Take 10 minute breaks throughout the day to recharge. Take a walk. Eat lunch outside. Stretch at your desk.

**SOCIAL SELF-CARE**
• Positive social habits can help build connections and support systems to stay healthier.
  1. Make connections and spend time with friends.
  2. Have family dinners (without phones at the table). Share highs and lows (rose & thorn)
  3. Build healthy relationships. Share your feelings honestly. Ask for help when you need it.
  4. Set boundaries. Ask for what you need from others. Learn to compromise. And know that it is ok to say no.
  5. Take care of yourself while caring for others.
  6. Show compassion towards others. Practice active listening.
  7. Set a daily routine and allow flexibility. Try new things.
  8. Volunteer.

**EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE**
• Emotional wellness is our ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times.
  1. Allow yourself to feel your full range of emotions without judgment.
  2. Give yourself daily positive affirmations and compliments.
  4. Surround yourself with people who lift you up.
  5. Practice forgiveness. It will help you find peace within yourself.
  6. Talk to someone when you need support (a friend, a therapist).
  7. Take time to reflect and journal.
  8. Practice gratitude. Be intentional about finding 3 things each day that are good in your life.
  9. Created dedicated “me” time. Do things that bring you joy (play, read, draw, sing, doodle, listen to music, cook, watch a movie, play games, take a bath).

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES...**
BOOKS, VIDEOS & ARTICLES
• on parenting, mental health challenges, and more can be found on YouthWell.org/Books/
ADDITIONAL HANDOUTS
• i.e: Navigating digital devices • Communication Tips can be found on YouthWell.org/Materials/

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MY SELF CARE PLAN

Consider personal obstacles and figure out how to overcome these barriers that keep you from practicing self-care.

MY NON-NEGOTIABLES:

1.

2.

3.

I will make it a daily habit to take care of myself...

mental wellness
is about creating
a lifestyle of
balance and
reducing the
impact of stress.

nobody else has the power to make me happy.

set intentions, not resolutions.

MY INTENTS TO PRACTICE

SELF CARE

just breathe

BARRIERS THAT GET IN THE WAY...

physical

equal

emotional

spiritual & mental

things you CAN control

when you ask for help

how much time you spend on devices

what you put in your body

how you treat yourself

boundaries you set with others

your sleep routine

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1. You think well.
2. Well works.
3. Well works.
4. You think well.
5. You think well.
WEEKLY GRATITUDE JOURNAL
Create Routines
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Daily routines help family life run more smoothly. They also help families enjoy more time together. Routines and structure help children feel safe, develop life skills and build healthy habits. Routines help parents feel organized, reduce stress and find time for enjoyable activities. The past year with the pandemic has eliminated many routines, but we must adapt and create new or revised routines that can continue to evolve with the changing environment.

1. Morning Routines:
   a. Set expectations:
      i. With the kids night before or for the week - try to avoid telling them what you expect in the morning. Listen to their concerns or needs and address them before the morning rush if possible.
      ii. With significant other or roommates - address expectations or needs to better prepare for the day to come or week to come.
   b. Sleep Schedule: If you or the kids are NOT getting enough quality sleep, morning routines and honestly many times the entire day will be impacted. SLEEP IS EVERYTHING. Establish some time frames with your teenagers and younger kids that everyone can agree to. For college students, give yourself this gift of a quality night's sleep as often as you can.
   c. Make a List:
      i. Kids may need a list in the morning to minimize discussion - "check your list" instead of discussing
      ii. Parents can benefit from making lists to help stay organized and provide reminders.
      iii. A Morning Routine Chart can also be help
   d. Prep: Night before prep as much as possible - examples: prep for breakfast - frittatas, granola yogurt, smoothies - kids prep rooms etc.
   e. Allow for Extra Time: Wake up kids or kids wake up on their own with extra time - try to avoid the rush - which can create stress or chaos.
      i. A shower (possibly cold) [Cold Shower Benefits]
      ii. An outside activity
      iii. Morning stretches
      iv. Time with pet
      v. Time to snuggle with parent
      vi. Hearty breakfast
   g. Natural Light & Fresh Air: Encourage kids to bring light into the room (open blinds curtains)
   h. Go Outside: If kids can get outside for 5-10 minutes in the morning; this is a great enhancer for mental clarity to start the day. This is a good one to make a “non-negotiable”
   i. Breakfast: Eat balanced breakfast. Consider eating breakfast outside if weather permits.
   j. Responsibilities: Kids build confidence and resilience by having responsibilities and being accountable... Chores (make bed, empty trash), feed pet, walk dog, help make breakfast etc.
   k. Hugs and Connection: Try to engage in morning
   l. STAY FLEXIBLE: All these are tips and ideas to help bring some harmony and ease to morning - but it doesn’t always work -so we must remain flexible and go with flow when things are not going as you might have hoped. Try again tomorrow or the next day. Little by little - steps in the right direction.
2. Afternoon/Evening Routines:
   a. **Limit screen time** as much as possible after school hours. This is difficult because all homework is mostly on devices - so you have to navigate this the best you can.
   b. **After school**: Get outside - connect with friends - bikes, skateboard, walks, hikes. Let eyes have a break from screens.
   c. **Schedule family dinners** as much as possible - set expectations with kids.
   d. **Cooking Dinner**:
      i. Involve kids - everyone should help - prep, shop, cook
      ii. Idea - assign a night they are the chef - with your help as needed
      iii. Kids to provide ideas about the dinner menu - research recipes - shop for ingredients
      iv. Look to make dinner a family event a few times a week or more if possible.
   e. **Evening family walk** - before or after dinner or instead of dinner. Time to connect.
   f. **Bedtime**:
      i. Encourage no devices or screen time a few hours before bed.
      ii. Encourage a hot shower or bath
      iii. Encourage no late night snacking
      iv. Create comfortable room environment and temperature
      v. Encourage listening to music or reading a real book or listening to an audio book.

3. **Weekly Routines**:
   a. **Set expectations** as noted above - for the week.
   b. **Food prep**: Using Sunday night or another night to prep for the week helps so much. Get the kids involved - they are very capable in helping and learning to prep foods. See Meal Prep Handout for more detailed information.
   c. **Activity prep**: If there are activities kids should have their stuff together and be responsible for it and also know their schedule and not be asking you.
   d. **Calendar**: Talk through the weekly calendar as family and let kids understand your obligations as well - not just theirs. Maybe give them a visual of the calendar - white board or simple print out.
   e. **Activities**: Plan specific family dinners, or walks or ask the kids what they want to try to plan during that week. Maybe more free time, skate park, beach or something like that.

4. **Zoom School Routines**:
   a. Remove as many distractions as possible
   b. Clean uncluttered workspace
   c. Have supplies available and organized
   d. Comfortable supportive chair
   e. Natural light - open drapes/blinds and crack windows for fresh air if not too cold.
   f. Proper desk lamp - [try this one](#) or [this one](#)
   g. Encourage kids to stand-up at their desks for 5-10-15 minutes each hour if possible! Use a box to prop computers or books - no need for a fancy stand up desk if you don’t have it. Standing up is good for energy, circulation, focus, posture and so much more. Give it a try and work slowly to build up time standing.
   h. Encourage Blue Light Blocker glasses for evening and night time use.
   i. Keep water at your desk or work area and encourage kids to drink a certain amount each hour to stay well hydrated - which helps with focus, energy and fatigue.
   j. Squeeze ball to help with fidgeting or anxiousness.
   k. Encourage outside activities at lunch and on breaks.
How to Sleep Like a Pro
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Sleep deprivation can lead to so many health problems and will definitely contribute to anxiety, depression, stress, fatigue, and general lack of motivation. To feel your best, it’s vital to get proper sleep.

MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY
Before mentioning any other suggestions, it’s important to note that if you don’t allow enough time for sleep, nothing is going to change! The amount of sleep that is required varies from person to person, but research shows that on average we need anywhere from seven to nine hours per night.

To begin, start with allowing eight hours for sleep. However, if you’d like to be a bit more specific about how much you need, you can try the following experiment: How Much Sleep Do I Need?

1. Track your Sleep Duration—You’ll do this for everyday of the experiment
2. Test your reflexes—Go to humanbenchmark.com and test your reflexes for the first three days
3. Add 30 to 60 minutes of sleep for 30 days. You can do this by going to bed earlier (recommended if you tend to be a “night owl”) or waking up later
4. Test Your Reflexes (again)—Go to humanbenchmark.com and test your reflexes after 30 days longer sleep duration and see how they’ve changed. If they’ve improved, you’re on the right track!
5. See How Feel—Do feel better now that you’re getting more sleep? Probably! Track your symptoms as you go through the experiment to determine how much better you feel with extra sleep.

As you do this experiment, you’ll want to pay extra-close attention to the following factors that improve sleep quality:

CONTROL YOUR EXPOSURE TO LIGHT
Light is the primary determinant of our circadian rhythm and sleep/wake cycle, and thus controlling our exposure to light is a powerful way to regulate sleep.

The first step is to reduce your exposure to light at night by:

- Avoiding or minimizing the use of computers, TVs, tablets, and phones three hours before bedtime. Use programs like Flux to reduce the blue light emitted from these devices.
- Dimming, covering, or removing anything that emits light in your bedroom like alarm clocks
- Using blackout shades and/or an eyemask to make your bedroom as dark as possible
- Wearing orange glasses to reduce exposure to blue light* (try these if you need to fit them over eyeglasses)

Once you’ve reduced your exposure to light at night, you’ll also want to focus on getting exposure to sunlight during the day. You can do this by:

- Taking a short walk when you wake up in the morning
- Eating breakfast outside in the sun
- Using a light machine
How to sleep like a pro (2 of 2) continued...

**MOVE YOUR BODY**
It’s important to get adequate amounts of physical exercise for proper sleep. Make sure to pay special attention not only to exercise, but also the time that is usually spent being sedentary. Try a standing or treadmill desk, take the stairs, and walk more!

**OPTIMIZE YOUR SLEEP NUTRITION**
Some people do well eating a smaller dinner (especially those with digestive issues). Others do better with a bedtime snack, such as those who tend toward low blood sugar. In general, though, it’s best to go to bed neither overly full nor hungry. You should also make sure your diet isn’t too low carb or low fat, as these types of diets can also lead to trouble sleeping.

**CUT CAFFEINE AND ALCOHOL**
These two items can have a profound effect on sleep, so they’re best left out if you’re having sleep problems. Remember that if you are currently drinking a lot of coffee, it’s best to wean yourself off rather than cutting it out cold turkey.

**MANAGE YOUR STRESS**
It’s incredibly important to manage your stress effectively when trying for good sleep. Many of us tend to run around all day like chickens with their heads cut off and then wonder why we have trouble sleeping. Make sure to calm your system by implementing stress management techniques like deep breathing, meditation, yoga, tai chi, and more for good sleep.

**CREATE A RELAXING SLEEP ENVIRONMENT**
Creating a bedroom that makes you relaxed and ready for bedtime is very helpful when it comes to getting quality sleep. You can do this by:
- Only using your bedroom for sleep and sex – avoid using electronics in the bedroom
- Controlling the temperature of the room – most people sleep best in a slightly cool room
- Getting a comfortable bed – your sleep isn’t going to be great if you find your bed uncomfortable!
- Reducing the noise level – if there’s a lot of noise outside your bedroom, use earplugs or a noise machine to block it out

**NOTE: BLUE LIGHT**
A certain amount of blue light is good for us. The main source of blue light is from the sun. Being outdoors during daylight is where many of us get most of our natural exposure to it. In its balanced form, blue light from the sun helps our bodies determine day from night, and thus, when it’s time for sleep. Blue light exposure during daytime hours helps maintain a healthful circadian rhythm that controls appetite, energy, mood, sleep, and other body-mind functions. Additionally, research has shown that blue light boosts alertness, helps memory and cognitive function, and elevates mood.

Blue light from devices indoors - is minimal compared to the sun - however, because of the extensive amount of time on devices this type of blue light exposure can be harmful, because it can disrupt the production of melatonin, circadian rhythm and delay the onset of sleep.

Blue light blocking glasses seem to be most beneficial at night - these should likely have an orange or red tint. You want to filter all blue light at night. For this, you need glasses or screen protectors which are proven to filter 99% of the full spectrum of blue and high energy wavelength light.

In summation, be mindful that daily LED light exposure and/or staring at your television, computer, tablet, or phone before you go to bed is having a negative impact on your eye health and a good night’s rest.
Fighting Fatigue
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Fatigue is a term used to describe an overall feeling of tiredness or lack of energy. It isn’t the same as simply feeling drowsy or sleepy. When you’re fatigued, you have no motivation and no energy.

Find the triggers and identify how you might be able to manage them. In our current environment, fatigue is triggered by many things - some that you may not even be aware of the impact on you. Some examples could include:

- Work
- Covid
- Politics
- Housework and cooking
- Remote learning and zoom fatigue
- Constantly having to pivot and adapt etc.
- Having the news on or reading the news too often
- Conversations about all the “what ifs” and uncertainty
- In general-social media can contribute to high levels of fatigue and anxiety

Elevated levels of fatigue seem to be more prevalent than ever and can apply to everyone - parents and children. Many times for kids/children it might be difficult to articulate what they are feeling or know that it is simply fatigue. Find the triggers and then begin to eliminate, reduce or modify these choices where possible and also add strategies to help fight the fatigue.

1. Find things to help fight fatigue:
   a. Food - anti-anxiety/anti-fatigue choices - see list
   b. Stay hydrated
   c. Movement/Exercise
   d. Connection/conversation
   e. Sleep - critical - adults shoot for 8 hours and teens shoot for 8-10 hours
   f. Reduce screen time - no screen time 2 hours before bed if possible
   g. Rest - during day listen to body (tune out fatigue triggers)
   h. Sunlight/fresh air/ nature
   i. Cold water therapy - cold showers/ocean plunge
   j. Light therapy

2. Anti-anxiety, anti-inflammatory and fatigue fighting foods:
   a. Salmon
   b. Almonds
   c. Oatmeal
   d. Avocados
   e. Blueberries
   f. Green Tea
   g. Probiotic foods - yogurt kefir
   h. Drink citrus flavored water sliced lemons, limes, tangerines etc. (aim for 64oz)

3. Eliminate and/or reduce:
   a. Sugar
   b. Energy drinks
   c. Processed foods
   d. Fast food
What About Water?
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WATER FACTS
Water is a critical nutrient for human survival. Every cell needs water to function. Water comprises about 60 percent of the adult human body; that figure changes to 75 percent in infants and about 55 percent in the elderly. The average adult in the United States consumes about 39 ounces of water per day.

Water is needed to:
- Lubricate joints
- Flush waste from the body
- Regulate body temperature via sweating and respiration

We lose water via:
- Respiration
- Sweat
- Urine
- Feces
- Biochemical processes

Body fluid balance is also dependent on nutrients such as potassium, sodium, and magnesium. Humans can live about seven days without water, but this also depends on initial hydration status and the climate and temperature.

DEHYDRATION
Alcohol causes more fluid loss than it provides. Caffeine, in moderation (one to two cups per day), in most studies does not have a negative effect on body fluid balance as long as adequate intake is met on a daily basis. The average cup of black coffee has about 100 mg of caffeine. A cup of black tea has about 50 mg of caffeine and a cup of green tea has about 25 mg. Women of childbearing years are encouraged to consume less than 150 mg of caffeine per day. Children who drink caffeinated beverages may be more likely to have disturbed sleep patterns.

Signs of dehydration include:
- Headache
- Very dry skin
- Feeling dizzy/fainting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Rapid breathing
- Sunken eyes
- Lack of energy
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Not urinating or very dark yellow urine
- Skin stands up on the back of the hand after a gentle pinch test
- Depression of thumb pad remains depressed for several seconds or longer
- Losing more than 10 percent of body weight in water is a medical emergency

HOW MUCH WATER DOES THE HUMAN BODY NEED?
- This varies by age, activity level, and climate exposure.
- 3.7 L per day for men and 2.7 L per day for women to meet the needs of most people (remember, however, that physical exercise and heat stress can greatly increase daily water needs; individual variability between athletes can be substantial)
- Estimate fluid needs as body weight in pounds divided by two to get ounces of fluid needed
  Example: a person who weighs 175 pounds divided by 2 = fluid needs of about 87.5 ounces
- (There are eight ounces of fluid in one cup, so this means about 11 cups of fluid per day)
- *Keep in mind that women who are pregnant or breastfeeding will have increased fluid needs above the estimates for general adults.

What about water (p 2 of 2) continued...
What about water (2 of 2) continued...

**WATER TIPS**
If you are trying to increase your fluid intake and notice you are using the bathroom more, realize this will improve as your body resets to your new fluid intake in about three to five days.

- Start each day with a tall glass of purified water.
- Limit fluid intake during meals so you do not dilute your stomach acid.
- Drink water and other fluids primarily in between meals.
- Add lemon, lime or citrus to your water to increase your intake

**SOURCES OF FLUIDS**

- Plain water is zero calories and pure, so it requires minimal effort to ingest and use
- Food
- Juice
- Milk
- Soup
- Fruits/vegetables
- Other beverages

**OTHER THOUGHTS AND TIPS:**
I have a hard time getting enough water daily. I drink a lot of tea, but actual water for me is hard. Several years ago, I realized water was easier to drink when it was infused with some flavor. So now we always have some kind of infused water in the fridge – from basic lemon water to a variety of delicious combinations.

We all know that getting enough water is important for our health for so many reasons that include digestionflushing out the body, regulating temperature and brain function to name a few.

There are a lot of reasons to stay well hydrated these days and always – so any tricks to make that easier go for it. There are some additional benefits to infused water aside from just increased hydration and detoxification, like vitamin C and other vitamins and minerals found in the vegetables, fruits and herbs you use to infuse the water.

So don’t wait for the next spa day for infused water! Create it at home – it’s easy and the benefits of drinking more water are undisputable. Enjoy!