

10 WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH TODAY

START TODAY

You have the power to take positive steps RIGHT NOW to improve your resilience and emotional health. Don't wait until you're in a crisis to make your mental health a priority

1	Tell yourself something positive – research shows that how you think about yourself can have a powerful effect on how you feel . When we perceive our self and our life negatively, we can end up viewing experiences in a way that confirms that notion.
2	Write down something you are grateful for – Gratitude has been clearly linked with improved well-being and mental health, as well as happiness. The best-researched method to increase feelings of gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal or write a daily gratitude list.
3	Focus on one thing (in the moment) – Being mindful of the present moment allows us to let go of negative or difficult emotions from past experiences that weigh us down. Start by bringing awareness to routine activities, such as taking a shower, eating lunch or going for a walk.
4	Exercise – Your body releases stress-relieving and mood-boosting endorphins before and after you work out, which is why exercise is a powerful antidote to stress, anxiety and depression. Look for small ways to add activity to your day, like taking the stairs instead of the lift or going on a short walk. To get the most benefit, aim for at least 30 mins of exercise daily.
5	Eat a good meal – What you eat nourishes your whole body, including your brain. Carbohydrates (in moderate amounts) increase serotonin, a chemical that has been shown to have a calming effect on your mood. Protein-rich foods increase nor epinephrine, dopamine and tyrosine, which helps keep you alert. And vegetables and fruits are loaded with nutrients that feed every cell of your body, including those that affect mood-regulating brain chemicals.
6	Open up to someone (use phone numbers) – Knowing you are valued by others is important for helping you think more positively. Plus, being more trusting can increase your emotional well-being because as you get better at finding the positive aspects in other people, you become better at recognising your own.
7	Do something for someone else – Research shows that being helpful to others has a beneficial effect on how you feel about yourself. Being helpful and kind – and valued for what you do – is a great way to build self-esteem.
8	Take a break – In those moments when it all seems like too much, step away, and do anything but whatever was stressing you out under you feel a little better. Sometimes the best thing to do is simple breathing exercise. Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths. For each one, count to four as you inhale, hold it for a count of four and the exhale for another four.
9	Go to bed on time – A large body of research has shown that sleep deprivation has a significant negative impact on your mood. Try to go to bed at a regular time each day, and practice good habits to get better sleep. These include shutting down screens for at least an hour before bed, using your bed only for sleep or relaxing activities and restricting caffeinated drinks.
10	Do something you enjoy – Try to make time for doing the fun things you enjoy. Try setting aside time to enjoy something with someone or by yourself, ie walking, painting, puzzles, listening to music, watching special TV show.

Mental health information

Your GP / NHS24 – if you are in crisis and would like to access NHS care, you should phone your GP in the first instance. If it is outwith their normal hours and you cannot wait until they re-open, you can call NHS 24 on 111.

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: a 24-hour service providing community-based emotional and practical support to people over 18 who are using or have used mental health services in Edinburgh - and their carers - when they are facing a crisis. The centre provides a free telephone helpline as well as face-to-face support.

- website: www.edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk
- e-mail: info@edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk or crisis@edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk
- helpline: Freephone 0808 801 0414

Samaritans: If something is troubling you, get in touch: 116 123

Breathing Space: a free and confidential helpline for any individual who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. The phone line 0800 83 85 87 is open 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday - 6am Monday) and from 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday - Thursday).

Health in Mind: 0131 225 8508

Health All Round: Provides a range of services focusing on physical, social and emotional well being. Also offer counselling in English and Polish. Contact Anna Rogus-Keay on 0131 337 1376 or 07494 679674. Email: linkworker@healthallround.org.uk

Midlothian Wellbeing Access Point

Guiding you to support your wellbeing www.health-in-mind.org.uk

Mental Health Information Station: Thursday 11-3pm

Walpore Hall (Next to St Mary's Cathedral)

Palmerston Place

Edinburgh EH12 54W

ithrive: an information website where you can find out about mental health, treatment and care and services in Edinburgh. It provides a good list of support groups and other resources: www.ithriveedinburgh.org.uk

Useful websites

Living Life to the Full

Moodgym