

Tips for good mental health

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Good mental health is more than just the absence of [mental illness](#). Here's 8 tips for building good [mental health](#).

1. Build relationships

Having good relationships with other people is the most important factor contributing to a sense of [wellbeing](#). This can include family, friends, workmates and others in the community. Investing time and energy in your relationships can lead to great benefits for all involved.

2. Exercise and stay healthy

[Exercise](#) has been shown to increase wellbeing as well as reduce symptoms of [depression](#) and [anxiety](#). Good physical health is related to better mental health so a healthy diet, avoiding excess alcohol or drugs and regular checkups with the doctor can all help.

3. Develop gratitude

Count your blessings. Try keeping a gratitude journal and write down three positive things for each day. This can lead to increased wellbeing.

4. Identify and use your strengths

We all have different strengths and weaknesses but finding out what you are really good at and using those talents can increase wellbeing. A strengths questionnaire is available at Authentic Happiness. Using your strengths to help others or contribute to the community creates a sense of meaning and purpose.

5. Create flow

Flow is the state of being so highly involved in an enjoyable activity that you lose track of time. This usually happens when the level of challenge is about right for your level of skill. Flow can happen during work, hobbies, creative arts or sports.

6. Give to others

Making a contribution to the community, however small, increases social wellbeing. Many people feel a sense of contributing through meaningful work, but this could also mean volunteering, helping a neighbour or doing small acts of kindness. Enjoy Take some time to do the things you really enjoy. Pleasant events can lead to positive emotions that can cancel out negative feelings.

7. Spirituality or religion

For some people, being involved in spiritual or religious practices can improve wellbeing, help in coping with [stress](#) and reduce symptoms of mental illness. This can include belonging to a faith community, [meditation](#), prayer, [mindfulness](#) or practices such as yoga and Tai Chi.

8. Seek help

If you are struggling to feel happy, cope with everyday life, find meaning or feel connected to others, see your doctor or a mental [health professional](#). One in five Australians will experience a mental disorder at some time in their life; [depression](#), [anxiety](#) and [substance abuse](#) are the most common disorders.