

MISSION POSSIBLE: MENTAL HEALTH

Exercises for the Body and Mind



Engaging in activities to improve mental health is crucial for cultivating a balanced and resilient mind. These activities offer a powerful means to enhance emotional well-being and cope with the challenges of daily life.



Strengthening the connection between your body and mind may benefit all areas of your life. It can help:

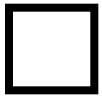
- **reduce stress**
- **promote better sleep**
- **better regulate your emotions**

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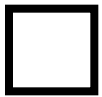
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Mental Health Toolbox: Tool #3

Try different exercises to find the ones that work best for you - and that you can add to your mental health toolbox.



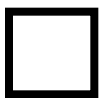
Belly Breathing Example: Put one hand on your stomach and start to inhale slowly. As you breathe in, imagine a balloon in your stomach filling up and continue to inhale until the balloon is very full. Put your other hand on your heart, feel your heartbeat. Hold your breath for 5 seconds. Now let your breath out slowly for 10 seconds - feel your belly flatten like a deflating balloon. Repeat this process 4 or 5 times and you should notice your heartbeat slow down and your muscles relax.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation Example: An exercise to reduce stress in your body by slowly tensing or tightening muscle groups then relaxing. Begin by taking a slow, deep breath then squeezing the muscles/body part as hard as you can for 5 seconds. Then exhale and slowly release and relax your muscles.

Try these muscle groups or listen to a guided [Progressive Muscle Relaxation from TELUS Health](#):

- **Forehead:** raise your eyebrows as far as you can
- **Eyes:** clench your eyelids tightly shut
- **Mouth:** open your mouth wide
- **Neck and Shoulders:** raise your shoulders up towards your ears
- **Arm:** bend your arms at the elbows, and flex your biceps
- **Hand:** clench your fists
- **Leg:** squeeze your legs together
- **Calf:** pull your toes up towards you
- **Foot:** curl your toes downward



Try these resources available from TELUS Health:

- [Mindfulness Tips on the Go Podcast](#)
- [Deep Breathing Video](#)
- [Body Scan Meditation](#)

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- Practice self-gratitude:** Being grateful for yourself, what you have, and the life around you, can promote positive thinking.
- Use positive affirmations:** Positive affirmations are statements that you repeat to yourself to help you stay positive and motivated. They can be a helpful way to challenge negative thoughts and beliefs.
- Enjoy nature:** Research indicates that being immersed in nature can help with mild depression and anxiety symptoms. For example, going for a walk or a hike in a natural setting can help you manage symptoms.
- Exercise:** Exercise relaxes muscles, provides the opportunity to focus on breathing, releases endorphins and improves sleep. Spend time each day to walk, run, bike, or whatever you can do to move your body.
- Simple Movement:** If a rigorous workout isn't your thing, the benefits of a walk outside, stretching and yoga can be just as powerful.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Write down any additional mind-body exercises or strategies that you can use.

MAKE TIME TO GET MOVING

Easy ways to add more physical activity to your busy life.



Being physically active is one of the most important actions you can take to improve your health. Any activity that gets your heart beating faster counts as aerobic. Even five minutes of exercise has some health benefit.¹

Get ready. Have comfortable shoes and clothes in your office, car or home. **Get set:** Mark your calendar with times to do fun physical activities. **Go:** You'll feel better in body and mind.

MAKE IT ACTIVE. MAKE IT FUN.

- › **Take the stairs.** Climbing stairs is a great way to increase your heart rate.
- › **Walk to work.** Or to and from the parking lot, bus stop or subway station.
- › **Dive right in.** Find a health club or community pool and start swimming laps.
- › **Take a class.** Make new friends in a yoga, spinning, dancing or other fun class.
- › **Get outside.** Work in the garden, rake leaves or go for a walk in the park.
- › **Family matters.** Play catch, ride bikes or take a walk before or after dinner.
- › **Join a team.** Sign up to play with a local softball, soccer or volleyball team.
- › **Mix it up.** Find some new activities and alternate them to keep it interesting.
- › **Get up early.** Greet the new day with 30 minutes of exercise.
- › **Take a break.** Leave your desk and walk around your building or on a nearby path.
- › **Move and watch.** Do some jumping jacks, lunges or free weights in front of the TV.

Together, all the way.®



Source:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition, 2018." https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf (accessed February 15, 2019).

This is general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice prior to undertaking a new diet or exercise program.

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