

## CREATING HEALTHY ROUTINES

Work, paying bills, cleaning, cooking, shopping, exercising, getting enough sleep, and taking care of children are just some of the things millions of people do each day and it is easy to be overwhelmed. It can feel impossible to get everything done, let alone take care of yourself – especially if you're already struggling with a mental health concern like depression or anxiety. By creating routines, we organize our days in such a way that taking care of tasks and ourselves becomes a pattern that makes it easier to get things done without having to think hard about them.

## **FAST FACTS**

- When it comes to diet, sleep and exercise, having good, strong routines is linked to improved mental and physical health. [1]
- People with more daily routines have lower levels of distress when facing problems with their health or negative life events. [2]
- It takes an average of 66 days for a behavior to become automatic (a habit), but for some people it can take as long as 8 1/2 months. Don't give up!. [3]

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Create the routine that is right for you. We don't all have the same schedules or responsibilities and some of us struggle with certain parts of daily life more than others. All healthy routines should include eating a nutrition-rich diet, exercising, and getting enough sleep, but no two routines will be exactly the same. In fact, your routine may not even be exactly the same every day.



**Start small.** Changing up your day-to-day routine all at once probably won't end up with lasting results. Pick one small thing each week to work on. It could be adding something new and positive, or cutting out a bad habit. Small changes add up.

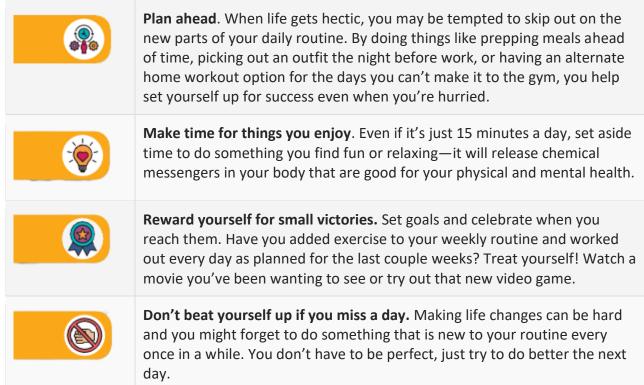


**Add to your existing habits.** You probably already have some habits worked into your routine, like drinking a cup of coffee in the morning. Try adding new habits to existing ones. For instance, if you want to read more, you could set aside ten minutes to read while you have your coffee (instead of drinking it on your drive to work).



**Make swaps**. Think about the things you do during the day that aren't so healthy and swap them with better behaviors. For example, if you feel sluggish in the afternoons and eat sugary snacks for a quick pick-me-up, try taking a brisk walk instead to get your blood pumping and endorphins flowing. Or if you find yourself having a few alcoholic drinks after a long stressful day, try sipping hot tea instead.





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