

My Mental HealthFirst Checklist

Taking care of your mental health is vital for overall well-being and resilience. This checklist offers simple yet powerful steps to help support a balanced and healthy mind.

REST MY BODY

1

Sleep is like a nightly reset button, helping your body and mind recharge. Aim for 7-9 hours each night and stick to a consistent routine - even on weekends. While extra lie-ins might feel good, they can disrupt your schedule and make Monday mornings harder. Prioritise rest and listen to your body because quality sleep is the foundation for everything else.

MOVE MY BODY

2

Movement isn't just for your body; it's great for your mind too!

- Move more: break up long periods of sitting with stretches or short walks.
- Move faster: pump up your heart rate with some cardio. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week (think brisk walks or energetic housework).
- Move stronger: don't forget strength training. You don't need fancy equipment - your body weight works just fine. It's easier than you think and so beneficial, especially as we age.

Plan exercise into your routine. Use a movement tracker as motivation; exercise with someone else for accountability.

NOURISH MY BODY

3

Food is so much more than just fuel. What and when you eat can significantly impact your overall well-being. Some top nutrition wins are:

- Watch your sugar: Swap refined sugars for whole grains and unprocessed carbs to avoid energy dips, brain fog, and cravings.
- Eat the rainbow: Load your plate with colourful fruits and vegetables to boost heart health, reduce inflammation, and support a healthy gut.
- Choose fresh and real: Opt for unprocessed, natural foods for better nutrition and flavour.
- Balance your plate: Fill half with veggies, a quarter with healthy carbs, and a quarter with lean protein, plus healthy fats for brain function.
- Time your food: Eat within a 12-hour window to boost metabolism and energy.
- Stay hydrated: Drink up to 2 litres of water daily for optimal health and mood.

KNOW MY LIMITS

4

Life gets busy, but saying "no" when needed and setting boundaries can be a game-changer. Protect your time and energy, delegate tasks, and make space for yourself - whether that's an evening walk, unplugging from screens, or just enjoying some quiet time.



CONNECT WITH OTHERS

5

Spending time with friends, family, or colleagues who lift you up can work wonders for your well-being. Laughing together, sharing a coffee, or just having a good chat - these moments help combat loneliness and counter stress.

MAKE TIME FOR TIME OUT

6

Taking time out isn't just nice - it's necessary. Short breaks, mindfulness, or even a quick walk rests your cognitive muscles and can reduce stress, boost focus, and improve mood. Don't feel guilty about stepping back; it's all part of taking care of yourself.

HAPPY HOBBIES

7

Doing something you love - whether it's gardening, dancing, or picking up a new skill - can be incredibly therapeutic. Hobbies provide a sense of achievement and can even help you forget your worries for a while.

GRATITUDE ATTITUDE

8

Taking a moment each day to appreciate the good things - big or small - can help build a more positive, resilient mindset. It could be a kind word from a colleague, a delicious meal, or just having some time to yourself. Keep a gratitude journal; say thank you to others; do something nice for someone else. Gratitude really does go a long way.

ACCEPT WHO I AM

9

Nobody's perfect, and that's okay! Celebrate your wins, laugh at your mistakes, and treat yourself with the same kindness you'd show a friend. Self-acceptance is about embracing who you are while giving yourself the space to grow.

ASK FOR HELP

10

It's OK to not be OK. If you're feeling overwhelmed, don't hesitate to reach out. Whether it's talking to a friend, a therapist, or a doctor, asking for help is a sign of strength. You're never alone in this journey.