



Do you ever feel like life is moving too fast? Has there ever been so much on your plate that you don't think you can take a break? Between school, extracurricular events, friendships, and family time, the life of a teenager can be jam-packed with activity and excitement.

It's important to remember to take care of yourself. Slowing down to focus on wellness and self-care can actually help you be happier and more productive in the long run.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health has been a hot-button topic lately, so let's review the facts to make sure we're all on the same page.

Mental health is a general state of well-being that enables us to cope with life's ups and downs. Strong mental health helps us realize our abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to our communities.

MENTAL HEALTH: MYTH VS. REALITY

MYTH

"Mental health" and "mental illness" are the same thing.

People with mental illnesses are dangerous.

Asking for help with mental health is a sign of weakness.

It's easy to tell when someone is struggling with a mental illness.

REALITY

"Mental health" refers to a person's overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It's a part of everyone's life, whether they feel good or bad.

"Mental illness" is a broad term for a group of conditions that require a professional diagnosis. A mental illness can limit a person's ability to function, so it's important for a person with a mental illness to get help. Unlike mental health, not everyone has a mental illness.

Most people with mental illnesses are not violent or dangerous. Stereotyping people with mental illness can lead to stigma and discourage them from getting support.

Reaching out for help takes strength and courage. Everyone needs support sometimes.

Mental illness doesn't have a "look," and lots of people hide their struggles. That's why checking in on your friends and taking mental health seriously is important.



WHAT'S A COPING STRATEGY?

You saw the words “coping strategies” in the introduction, and you’ll see them a lot more over the next sixty or so pages. But what exactly is a coping strategy? How does it work? Basically, a **coping strategy** is a method a person uses to manage stress and difficult situations.

There are two categories of coping strategies:
problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.



A **problem-focused** coping strategy involves actively addressing the source of your stress. For example, if you’re stressed about an upcoming test, you could study extra hard so that you feel ready to tackle the exam when the time comes.



An **emotion-focused** coping strategy aims to regulate the emotions you feel during times of stress. Keeping with the test example, an emotion-based coping strategy might mean journaling about why you’re stressed. Are you worried about grades? College? Letting yourself down? Naming these feelings can help you tame them.

The coping strategies in this book are mostly emotion-focused strategies, such as breathing exercises and journaling activities. Some might feel a little funny at first, but give them a shot anyway — it never hurts to try! You might be surprised at what works for your unique brain.

WHAT IS WELLNESS?



Mental and physical health don't rely solely on each other, but they are connected. Being aware of how the two interact can help you improve your overall wellness.

DEFINITION

Wellness is a state of well-being in your mind and body as a result of focused effort.



THE EIGHT AREAS OF WELLNESS

There are eight core areas of wellness. Each one plays a role in your overall health and well-being. Take a look at the wellness wheel and consider which areas in your life are going well and which could use some focused effort.



Emotional

Being aware of your emotional needs



Financial

Understanding your resources and feeling satisfied with your income, debt, and savings



Intellectual

Keeping your brain active and engaged



Spiritual

Having strong personal beliefs and a sense of purpose



Environmental

Being safe and secure in your space



Physical

Developing healthy physical habits



Occupational

Participating in activities that feel meaningful and reflect your values



Social

Building healthy one-on-one relationships and surrounding yourself with people who support you



WELLNESS TIPS

You don't have to change your whole life to improve one or more areas of wellness. Little adjustments throughout the day and week can make a big difference! Here are a few examples of how you can work in more wellness without rearranging your schedule.



Emotional

Taking a break to do a breathing exercise while you study



Financial

Setting a plan to save money for an expensive item you want



Intellectual

Listening to an audiobook or podcast instead of scrolling social media before bed



Spiritual

Spending more time in nature — try taking a walk instead of driving if your destination is close by and safe



Environmental

Making your bed every day



Physical

Try yoga or chair yoga at your desk



Occupational

Writing down what's most important to you for your future career



Social

Scheduling a study date with your best friend

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

If you've heard people talking more about wellness lately, there's a good chance you've heard people talk about self-care, too. But what exactly is self-care?

Simply put, **self-care** is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve your own health.

Contrary to what you might see online, self-care isn't all about face masks, cozy blankets, and comfort movies — though those things are good, too! Sometimes, self-care also means doing hard things, like eating healthily, setting boundaries, and working hard to meet your goals.

Take a moment to write or draw your favorite self-care activities. Try to balance comforting and challenging practices.



COMFORT ACTIVITIES

(Example) Watching my favorite movie



CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

(Example) Cleaning my room



MY THOUGHTS MATTER



Free your mind and let the truth flow. Write down (or draw!) your answers to the following questions, and remember: There are no wrong answers.

Which area of wellness is going well for you right now? Why?

Which area needs a little extra work? What's one step you can take to improve that area of your life?





What makes me well?

What makes you feel not just good but well? Take a moment to write down some of your favorite activities that promote a sense of well-being or a long-lasting sense of satisfaction. In other words, what feels both fun and meaningful?

Circle your favorite activity above. How does doing this activity make you feel?

GOOD
VIBES

GUIDED GROUNDING



Being aware of the present moment can boost mindfulness and wellness. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or distracted by distressing thoughts or feelings, complete these grounding exercises to anchor yourself in your current state of being.

2

Tell yourself 2 encouraging or kind things.

4

Take 4 square breaths.

Breathe in for 4 seconds, then hold your breath for 4 seconds. Breathe out for 4 seconds, then hold your breath for 4 seconds.

6

Picture 6 people, places, and things that make you happy.

8

Flex 8 muscles for four seconds each.

10

Find 10 items of the same color.

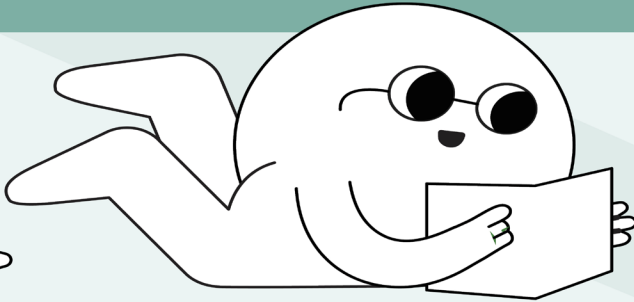


FIVE WAYS TO RECHARGE YOUR BATTERY



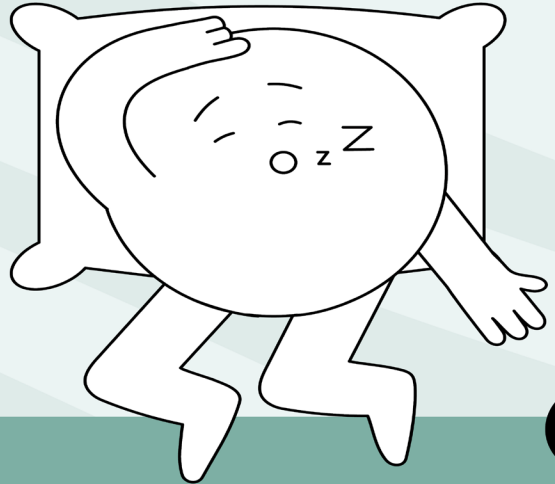
1

Take time to read — for fun!



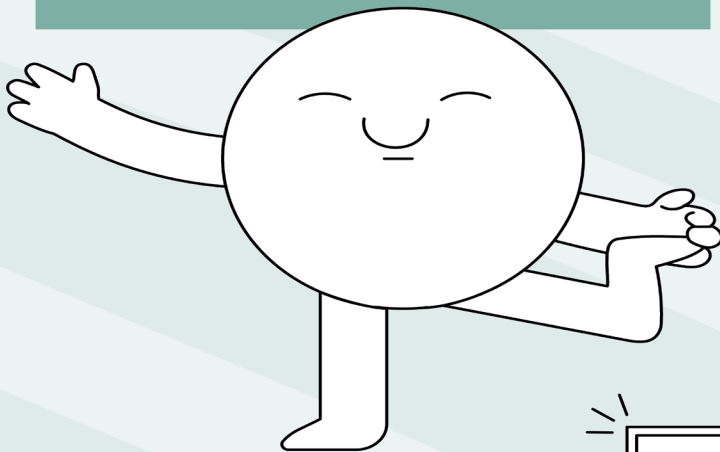
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Get 8 to 10 hours of sleep.



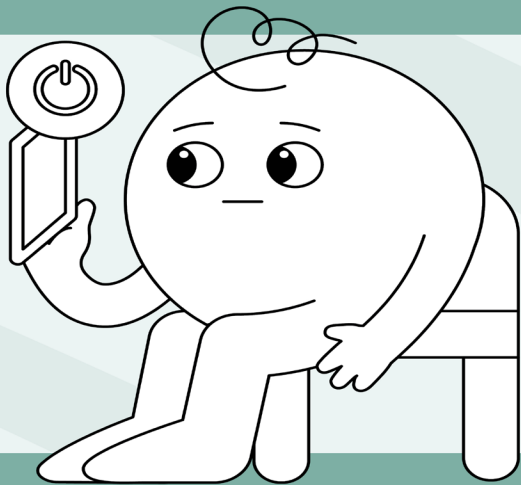
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Stretch or do a yoga flow



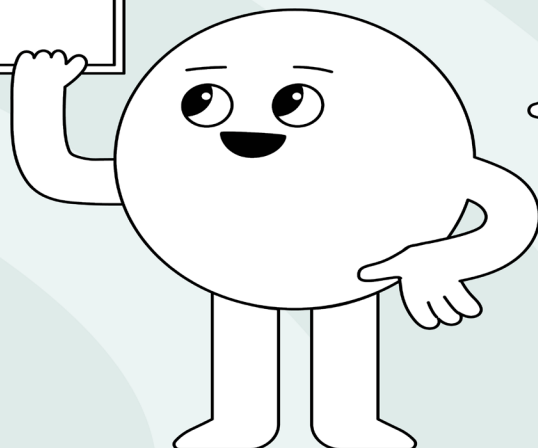
4

Take a break from your phone, tablet, and laptop.



5

Get creative — draw, paint, sing, dance, do your thing!



THERE'S POWER IN PAUSE



Breathe in and breathe out to unwind your mind, now let's focus on you!
What are three things you love about yourself?

Take a moment to pause and speak kindly to yourself.



**LOOKING FOR MORE?
HANG WITH US ON YOUTUBE TO
FIND MORE CONTENT CREATED
JUST FOR YOU. YOU'VE GOT THIS!**



**CUT AND DISPLAY THESE AFFIRMATION
CARDS IN A VISIBLE PLACE AS A REMINDER
OF YOUR INNER STRENGTH!**

**I deserve
love and
happiness.**

**I am grateful
for everything
my body can
do.**

**I forgive
myself
for past
mistakes.**

**I choose
to let go of
comparison
and embrace
my own
journey.**

**I believe in
myself and
my potential.**

**I am strong
and resilient.**