



# 20 COST FREE Ways to Improve Your Mental Health & Feel Better

Better mental health can often lead to better physical health, and vice versa. The mind and body are interconnected, and research has shown that mental and emotional well-being can have a significant impact on physical health. Improving mental health is a multifaceted process that involves various aspects of life so it's worth giving various strategies a try to find what works best for you.

## BENEFITS OF IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH

- **Reduced Stress:** Chronic stress can weaken the immune system and increase the risk of various health problems, including heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Managing stress through techniques like meditation or therapy can improve physical health.
- **Improved Sleep:** Good mental health can lead to better sleep quality, which is essential for overall health. Adequate sleep supports immune function, metabolism, and cognitive function.
- **Healthy Habits:** People with good mental health are often more motivated to engage in healthy behaviors such as regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, and avoiding harmful substances like tobacco and excessive alcohol.
- **Stronger Immune System:** Positive emotions and a sense of well-being have been linked to a stronger immune response, which can help the body fight off infections and illnesses.
- **Better Cardiovascular Health:** Mental health conditions like depression and anxiety have been associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Managing these conditions can improve heart health. Heart disease is one of the main causes of death and disability in the UK, but it can often largely be prevented by leading a healthy lifestyle (body and mind).
- **Pain Management:** Mental health interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can help people better manage chronic pain, which can improve physical functioning and quality of life.
- **Longevity:** Studies have suggested that people with better mental health may live longer, healthier lives.

## YOUR MENTAL HEALTH CHECKLIST

Here are 20 things for you to try if your mental health needs a boost.

1. **Regular Exercise:** Physical activity helps release endorphins, which are chemicals that improve mood and reduce stress.
2. **Healthy Diet:** A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can support overall well-being. When you eat well, you feel good. If you don't know where to start with this, download my "BEGINNERS GUIDE TO GROCERIES" for some great tips.
3. **Adequate Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night to allow your body and mind to recharge. Try to settle down and get up at the same sort of time each day for best results.
4. **Limit Alcohol and Caffeine:** Excessive consumption of alcohol and caffeine can negatively impact mental health. They can both induce feelings of anxiety and depression.
5. **Stay Hydrated:** Dehydration can affect mood and cognition, so drink plenty of water throughout the day and always START YOUR DAY WITH 500ML before your tea or coffee. If you can't handle plain water, try flavoured water, water with some lemon or lime in it or some sparkling water instead.
6. **Manage Stress:** Practice stress-reducing techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.
7. **Set Realistic Goals:** Break down larger goals into smaller, achievable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed or disheartened.
8. **Seek Support:** Talk to friends, family, or a mental health professional if you're struggling. It's good to talk and often you will realise you're not alone.
9. **Stay Connected:** Social connections can provide support and a sense of belonging. A phone call, an email or coffee date with a friend or family member can all help.
10. **Limit Screen Time:** Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can disrupt sleep and contribute to anxiety and is often a distraction from dealing with any problems. Whilst this may be difficult at first, try replacing your screen time with something else such as reading, drawing or a podcast.
11. **Practice Gratitude:** Reflect on the things you're grateful for to foster a positive mindset. Studies have prove this to be very effective at boosting mental wellbeing and overall feelings of contentment. Write it down so you can read back over it.
12. **Volunteer:** Helping others can boost your mood and sense of purpose. Much like a random act of kindness, volunteering is giving your time or skills.
13. **Limit News Consumption:** Constant exposure to negative news can increase stress and anxiety. If you know this is triggering for you, limit it.
14. **Establish a Routine:** Having a daily routine can provide structure and stability. Humans thrive on routine and structure and it can help to promote a sense of calm and control which you are responsible for.

15. *Spend Time Outdoors*: Nature can have a calming effect on the mind and can help to reduce stress. It can also boost your levels of serotonin and dopamine (feel good hormones) and you'll also get a dose of Vitamin D (for healthy bones, gums and teeth).

16. *Learn to Say No*: This is a biggie! Set boundaries and prioritise your mental well-being. Setting boundaries is an act of self-love and by establishing boundaries around what you will and won't accept can help ensure you don't expend energy (physical or mental) on unwanted tasks.

17. *Engage in Hobbies*: Doing activities you enjoy can provide a sense of accomplishment and joy. This can also be useful in terms of reducing screen time, too. You could potentially revisit a hobby you used to enjoy when you were younger.

18. **\*\*Practice Mindfulness\*\***: Be present in the moment and focus on what you're doing without judgment.

19. **\*\*Limit Perfectionism\*\***: Strive for progress, not perfection.

20. **\*\*Seek Professional Help\*\***: If you're struggling with mental health issues, don't hesitate to seek help from a mental health professional.

I hope you have found these strategies and tips useful.

Sarah x