

Recipe for Mental Health Wellness

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What's new in mental health, is ancient. Wellness is primarily disease prevention and a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing. We can improve our wellness, physical and mental health, without spending lots of money and enjoying more of life.

Critical components include:

Mindfulness

Nutrition

Exercise

Sleep

Social Connectedness

Mindfulness:

Thousands of years ago meditation and spiritual connectiveness existed between ancient man, nature and the divine. Mindfulness is enhancing our innate ability to attend to what is happening presently without judgement or reactivity. Meditation is the path to boosting this brain muscle power. Multiple resources exist including apps: headspace, mindfulness, and stop, breath and think. Ten minutes or less a day benefits mindfulness practice.

Nutrition:

Our standard western diet (aptly abbreviated SAD) is counterintuitive to our ancient diet. Can you imagine the roman empire eating Cheetos?

The following are guidelines for a healthy brain and body that if followed can cut grocery bills, especially if eating out is reduced.

- Vegetables- 2-3 cups per day (esp. leafy ones)
- Beans- 2-3 servings per week
- Fruit- 1-2 per day (esp. berries)
- **WHOLE** grains- 2 per day
- Seafood – 2 or more per week
- Dairy- 1 or less per day
- Nuts – 5 or more per week
- Red meat- 4 or less per week
- Poultry- greater than 2 per week
- Oils- primarily use olive oil

Exercise:

Evidence indicates moderate exercise is critical to our brain and bodies. Exercise duration of 3.5 hours per week broken down in any way is of benefit.

Sleep:

Good sleep promotes good health. Sleep of 6-8 hours per night repairs our bodies. To improve sleep, try the following:

- Avoid electronics 60 minutes before bed
- Avoid naps

- No ambient light in the bedroom
- Regular bedtime and awakening
- No caffeine 10 hours before bed

Social Connectedness:

Research is clear- we are social beings! Socialization promotes mental and physical health and reduces psychological stress. Mental health issues can promote isolation, so stay engaged. Socializing need not cost money- call a friend, invite someone to have lunch, volunteer or walk outside with others.

Life can be stressful. Research shows these techniques can benefit our wellness. When combined these interventions are most impacting, however any one is of benefit. Pick one, two or more and get started!