

TIPS FOR WELLBEING

Wellbeing refers to the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. Taking care of your wellbeing can help to enhance your overall quality of life. Below are some evidence-based ways to improve your wellbeing.



EXERCISE

Research shows that regular exercise can not only improve your physical health, but can protect your mental health.

Benefits of exercise include:

- Increased concentration, creativity and memory.
- Improved coping: when faced with emotional or mental challenges, engaging in exercise can help us cope in more healthy ways and increase your ability to manage setbacks.
- Improved sleep by allowing you to fall asleep faster and spend more time in deep sleep.
- Improved mood as it helps you manage stress, fight off symptoms of depression, and increase confidence.



Tips to get started:

- Start with small increases in levels of activity
- monitor your progress
- try different activities to find the ones you enjoy
- focus on long-term benefits
- try to exercise when you have the most energy in the day and focus on positive self-talk to motivate yourself.



MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose. When we are not paying attention intentionally, our minds often switch to 'autopilot' mode where we go about our daily tasks in a habit-driven way.

Mindfulness helps us to notice our thoughts, feelings and surroundings and be in the present moment. Practice mindfulness by bringing your awareness to your breath, focusing on one task at a time and giving it full attention.

When doing so, notice when your mind has wandered, choose to bring your attention back to the present moment and be kind and understanding towards yourself when this happens rather than being judgmental or self-critical.



GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the feeling of being thankful for and appreciating the good things in life. It is an easy and effective way of retraining your brain to focus on the positive.

Research has shown that practicing gratitude can help us develop stronger relationships and increase our physical health, feelings of happiness, and sleep quality. It does so by training our mind to focus on the positive parts of life, no matter how small.

Some ways to practice gratitude include:

- Listing three things you're grateful for, something that made you smile and something that you're looking forward to everyday.
- Writing a gratitude letter to a friend or family member listing all the reasons why you are thankful they are a part of your life.
- At the end of the day reflecting on what went well and why it went well.



By practicing gratitude, over time your mind will find it easier to notice the positive aspects in any situation.



READING

Reading for pleasure is a relaxing and fun way to spend leisure time.

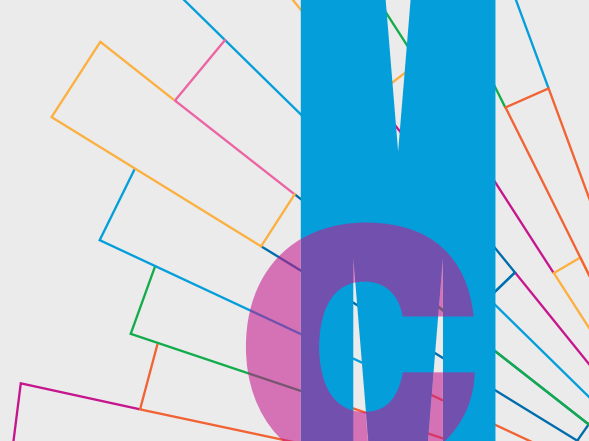
The benefits of reading include:

- Increased intelligence and language skills
- improved mood by fighting symptoms of depression and anxiety, alleviating loneliness and providing an enjoyable distraction
- increased empathy by helping us to understand the emotional experiences of others, which helps us to build and improve relationships with others
- reduced stress
- improved sleep through the calming effect of reading.



Try reading a physical book before bed as electronic screens interfere with melatonin production – the hormone associated with sleepiness.

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RELAXATION

Relaxation techniques are methods or activities that promote a state of calm in our body and mind. They can help to reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Learning how to relax is a skill that has several physical and mental health benefits including improved sleep quality and reduced fatigue and stress hormone activity.

By practising relaxation techniques, we can activate our body's natural relaxation response, which allows us to cope more effectively with challenging situations.

Some methods include:

- Deep breathing
- spending time in nature
- activities such as yoga, tai chi or qigong
- creating a playlist of relaxing music (slow tempos of 60-80 bpm have been shown to be effective)
- practice mindfulness.

You can speak to one of the Monash College counsellors about other methods such as progressive muscle relaxation or guided imagery. The more you practice, the more efficiently your body and mind will respond to these techniques in the future.



RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to adapt or cope when things go wrong. Rather than allowing challenges, failure or adversity to overcome them, people who are resilient are able to find ways to bounce back from these experiences and grow from them.

You can build your resilience by:

- Exercising
- eating well and reducing stress
- learning problem-solving skills
- spending time on your relationships to build your support network
- knowing your strengths and how to use them as research has shown that those who know their strengths are more confident, productive and motivated
- when challenges come up in life, instead of judging and criticising yourself, practicing self-compassion by acknowledging that you're going through a difficult time and being kind and understanding of yourself.

Lastly, think about how you overcame similar experiences from the past. What skills and resources did you use? Could you apply those to the current situation?