



# Get Active

“In a Nutshell”

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## 1. Get active

The links between having an active lifestyle and good mental health are clear to see – all the evidence suggests that taking regular physical activity helps to reduce your chances of depression, anxiety and cognitive decline.

Even small amounts of exercise are good for us, and you do not have to be a superstar athlete to start reaping the benefits – even relatively low impact, low intensity physical activity, like walking and stretching can help you feel better.

In addition to joining a gym or sports team, there are plenty of easy exercises ideas that you can do at work, including:

- Walking to work or to the shops instead of driving or taking the bus
- Getting off the bus one stop early, and walking the rest of the way
- Walking to a different department to talk to a colleague directly, rather than calling or emailing
- Going for a walk at lunchtime
- Taking the stairs instead of the lift

## 2. Connect with people

Humans are social animals and building social relationships and connecting with people is a vital part of maintaining good mental health.

In a busy work environment, it can be difficult to take the time to truly connect with other people, but there are a few things you can try to do regularly to benefit your mental health by developing your social relationships:

- Talk to your colleagues directly rather than emailing or calling them
- Try speaking with someone new, or someone you do not usually talk to
- Make an effort to ask how people are feeling, then actually listen to their answer
- Offer a colleague a lift to work, or see if you can share a lift with them
- Set some time aside at lunch to speak with your colleagues

## 3. Be aware and live in the present

In life, it can be tempting to spend time living in the past, or looking to the future, but studies have shown that being aware of what is currently happening and living in the present can deliver real benefits in terms of mental wellbeing.

Taking notice of your surroundings and taking time to enjoy both the moment, and your present environment can really help benefit your mental health.

As part of this, you could try the following as part of your working day:

- Visiting new places for lunch
- Changing up your routine
- Taking a new route to work
- Clearing out clutter from your workspace
- Taking more notice of your colleagues
- Getting involved with work activities

## 4. Get learning

Developing skills, taking on new knowledge and continuous learning are all really beneficial for protecting, maintaining, and improving mental health and wellbeing. As part of this, setting and achieving educational goals can provide a real boost to self-esteem, whilst encouraging the development of new social relationships, and a more active life.

There are learning opportunities everywhere, so you might want to consider:

- Enrolling in a night class
- Starting a new hobby
- Taking advantage of any workplace training you are offered
- Reading a book
- Learning a new language
- Researching a topic
- Gaining a new work qualification
- Even something as simple as watching a documentary or doing a crossword, Sudoku counts!

## 5. Start giving

Being a part of a community can provide a real boost to your mental health, and numerous studies have shown that people who take an active interest in helping others are much more likely to feel happier themselves.

As part of this, you might consider helping out at a local charity or community group, but you can also give more in your personal and work life. Studies have shown that even committing a single selfless act of kindness a week can help to significantly increase personal wellbeing.

