

31 WAYS

TO WORK ON YOUR WELLNESS

MAY IS
MENTAL
HEALTH
MONTH 2017

- 1 Track gratitude and achievement with a journal - include 3 things you were grateful for and 3 things you were able to accomplish each day.
- 2 Check up on your mental health. Take a screen at www.screening.org. It's free, anonymous, and confidential.
- 3 Set up a summer get away. It could be camping with friends or a trip to the tropics. The act of planning a vacation and having something to look forward to can boost your overall happiness for up to 8 weeks!
- 4 Work your strengths. Do something you're good at to build self-confidence, then tackle a tougher task. You've got this!
- 5 Keep it cool for a good night's sleep. The optimal temperature for sleep is between 60° and 67° F.
- 6 "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." -Martin Luther King Jr.
Think of something in your life you want to improve, and figure out what you can do to take a step in the right direction.
- 7 Experiment with a new recipe, write a poem, paint or try a Pinterest project. Creative expression and overall well-being are linked.
- 8 Show some love to someone in your life who you hold dear. Close, quality relationships are key for a happy, healthy life.
- 9 Boost brainpower by treating yourself to a couple pieces of dark chocolate every few days. The flavanoids, caffeine, and theobromine in chocolate are thought to work together to improve alertness and mental skills.
- 10 If you are living with a mental illness or in the recovery process, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike. Remember - you're not alone!
- 11 Sometimes, we don't need to add new activities to get more pleasure. We just need to soak up the joy in the ones we've already got. Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible.
- 12 Feeling anxious? Channel your inner child and do some coloring for about 20 minutes to help you clear your mind. Pick a design that's geometric and a little complicated for the best effect.
- 13 Take time to laugh. Hang out with a funny friend, watch a comedy or check out goofy videos online. Laughter helps reduce anxiety.
- 14 Go off the grid. Leave your smart phone at home for a day and disconnect from constant emails, alerts, and other interruptions. Spend time doing something fun with someone face-to-face.
- 15 Dance around while you do your housework. Not only will you get chores done, but dancing reduces levels of cortisol (the stress hormone), and increases endorphins (the body's "feel-good" chemicals).
- 16 Feeling tired? Go ahead and yawn. Studies suggest that yawning helps cool the brain and improves alertness and mental efficiency.
- 17 Relax in a warm bath once a week. Try adding Epsom salts to soothe aches and pains and help boost magnesium levels, which can be depleted by stress.
- 18 Has something been bothering you? Let it all out...on paper. Writing about upsetting experiences can reduce symptoms of depression.
- 19 Spend some time with a furry friend. Time with animals lowers the stress hormone - cortisol, and boosts oxytocin - which stimulates feelings of happiness. If you don't have a pet, hang out with a friend who does or volunteer at a shelter.
- 20 "What lies before us and what lies behind us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when you bring what is within out into the world, miracles happen." - Henry David Thoreau
- 21 Be a tourist in your own town. Often times people only explore attractions on trips, but you may be surprised what cool things are in your own backyard.
- 22 Try prepping your meals or picking out your clothes for the work week. You'll save some time in the mornings and have a sense of control about the week ahead.
- 23 Work some omega-3 fatty acids into your diet-they are linked to decreased rates of depression and schizophrenia among their many benefits. Fish oil supplements work, but eating your omega-3s in foods like wild salmon, flaxseeds or walnuts also helps build healthy gut bacteria.
- 24 Practice forgiveness - even if it's just forgiving that person who cut you off during your commute. People who forgive have better mental health and report being more satisfied with their lives.
- 25 "What appear to be calamities are often the sources of fortune." - Disraeli
- 26 Try to find the silver lining in something kind of cruddy that happened recently.
- 27 Feeling stressed? Smile. It may not be the easiest thing to do, but smiling can help to lower your heart rate and calm you down.
- 28 Send a thank you note - not for a material item, but to let someone know why you appreciate them. Written expressions of gratitude are linked to increased happiness.
- 29 Do something with friends and family - have a cookout, go to a park, or play a game. People are 12 times more likely to feel happy on days that they spend 6-7 hours with friends or family.
- 30 Take 30 minutes to go for a walk in nature - it could be a stroll through a park, or a hike in the woods. Research shows that being in nature can increase energy levels, reduce depression and boost well-being.
- 31 Make sure to enjoy 15 minutes of sunshine, and apply sunscreen. Sunlight synthesizes Vitamin D, which experts believe is a mood elevator.
- 32 "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." -Albert Einstein
- 33 Try something outside of your comfort zone to make room for adventure and excitement in your life.