

8 Qualities of Well-being Practice Them in 2020

With the start of a new year, many of us promise ourselves to become healthier, learn more and generally do better. Yet most of us have trouble achieving specific goals, such as losing weight or feeling more positive.

Long term, we are more likely to succeed with changes and sustain health by focusing on our overall well-being. Take a broader view and ask yourself: What can I do to achieve better balance and contentment in my life?

Start by learning the dimensions of well-being and practical ways to focus on each:



PHYSICAL

Nourish your body with balanced nutrition, daily exercise and proper rest. Get regular provider checkups and immunizations. Practice safety and drive defensively.



EMOTIONAL

Know your feelings. Try to find positives in worry and negatives by learning from them. Recognize unhealthy thought patterns and let them go while viewing the good things in your life daily. Relax and relieve the stress.



SPIRITUAL

Find purpose in life. Examine your beliefs and morals. Ask: Do I have fulfillment and meaning in my life? It's an ongoing process that can enhance your life and health.



INTELLECTUAL

Keep learning. Seek activities that offer different ideas and stimulate critical thinking, curiosity, problem-solving and creativity. Take a class or research a favorite subject.



VOCATIONAL

Build professional skills. We gain knowledge and personal satisfaction with occupations that move us forward. Explore different career and volunteer opportunities.



FINANCIAL

Manage short- and long-term goals. Start with small changes that add up to savings over time (e.g., make your own coffee rather than buying it). Reconsider unplanned purchases before buying. Build a savings account.



SOCIAL

Connect with others. Having trusted relationships can boost your self-esteem and buffer stress. Make time for friends or join groups where you can meet others with similar interests.



NATURAL

Enjoy nature every day. Take a walk outside, care for plants and notice the seasonal changes. Do your part to preserve the environment — reduce noise, pollution and unnecessary consumption.

Mental Training

Can practicing mindfulness help our mental health? Studies suggest it can change our brains in ways that produce positive thinking and engagement, and ultimately help us cope with physical or emotional distress.

In a study of 144 workers, participants completed an 8-week mindfulness training program with 2-hour classes each week at work and 45 minutes of daily meditation homework. Upon study completion, participants reported feeling less fatigue, stress and depression; improved relations with people; as well as better sleep and fewer aches and pains.

Mindfulness meditation involves focusing purposefully on what you're experiencing, in the moment, without judgment. This includes awareness of your body sensations as well as awareness of your thoughts and feelings. It uses breath and body practices that relax the body and mind to reduce stress. Think of it as a form of mental training, and value it as you do physical training.

15-minute easy ways to practice mindfulness:

1. Do a body scan focused on any tension or stress.
2. Meditate as you focus on relaxing your muscles.
3. Focus on your breathing and allow it to become relaxed as it relaxes you.





Winter Table Warm-Ups

As the temperature drops during winter, chances are you'll spend more time indoors — with more time to cook. For amazing meals, use your time wisely and plan. Consider cooking and freezing portions for future use, and you'll thank yourself later.

Warm soups, stews and pasta dishes are classic comfort foods. As you plan these meals, keep the plate model in mind. That means you ensure half of your meal is filled with vegetables, a quarter with grains, and a quarter with protein-rich foods, such as beans, fish, tofu, poultry, eggs, dairy foods or meat. What it doesn't mean is filling the entire plate with pasta with just a smattering of vegetables on top — that's not a balanced meal.

To make healthy comfort food:

- Add more vegetables or have salad as a side dish.
- Choose brown rice instead of white rice to serve with meals.
- Use oats instead of white bread crumbs in your meatloaf and burgers.
- Make sandwiches or subs with whole-grain bread.
- Try fish or poultry a few times a week instead of red meat every night.
- Try brown lentils or tofu in place of ground beef and pork in tacos, lasagna, chili and soups.
- Bake instead of frying chicken or pork chops.
- Substitute Greek yogurt for sour cream in recipes.
- Cut back on very salty condiments, such as soy sauce, fish sauce and BBQ sauce.



Winter is also the perfect season to put your slow cooker or pressure cooker to good use. Crockpot meals are hearty, easy and can be loaded with vegetables. Find recipes online for stews, curries, soups, casseroles and vegetable- and protein-packed pasta dishes.

4 Forms of Exercise: How They Work for You



Here's a well-known fact: Regular exercise can improve your health, your attitude and your odds against disease and disability. For specific fitness benefits, experts say we should focus on 4 primary forms:

1 Aerobic (cardio) exercise works your heart, lungs and muscles, helping to protect overall endurance and aid weight loss. Feel winded as you walk up a flight of stairs? Start regular brisk activities (walking, swimming, dancing, cycling). Good old-fashioned walking tops the list, as it can fit easily into your lifestyle.



2 Strength training maintains and builds muscle to power you through your days. Workouts help to protect your bones, control blood sugar, aid weight control and balance, and reduce stress and strain in your back and joints.

3 Stretching aids flexibility, the key to staying mobile and working well without pain or injury. Simple stretching during your workday can reduce muscle fatigue and stiffness, restore energy and improve thinking. For a calming routine, it's yoga.



4 Balance training keeps you steady on your feet and strengthens your core to help prevent falls, especially important as we age or gain weight. Try this: Stand on 1 foot for up to a minute; it's worth practicing daily. Choose tai chi for mind-body benefits.

Minimum exercise for health: Aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity — the equivalent of 30 minutes 5 days a week. Mix it up: daily chores, formal workouts and sports all count. Even if you can't get in 150 minutes a week, some activity is better than none.

Note: First get your health care provider's OK before significantly increasing physical activities.

Can you give blood?



January is National Blood Donor Month, a drive for blood donation that is especially important during the winter, which is a challenging season to collect enough blood to meet patient needs. As we begin a new year, the Red Cross reminds everyone who can to give blood now or whenever they can any time of the year.

Three health benefits of donating:

- 1 Free blood tests:** Your donated blood is tested, and you can request results.
- 2 Calories burned during blood donation:** About 650, close to an average spin class.
- 3 Reduced risk of heart disease or cancer:** Donation helps reduce excess iron buildup in your blood.

>>Learn more at redcrossblood.org.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Watch These Calorie Traps**, is at personalbest.com/extras/20V1tools.

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