

## Top tips for improving how you feel

**Food and mood:** Nutrition has an impact on mental health and fuelling your body will not only give you energy but keep your mood stable and aid more restful sleep. Choose nutrient-rich ingredients, from all food groups, and during stressful periods go low on the refined sugars (tempting as they are at those times).

**Sleep:** our body can't function properly if you don't get enough sleep. If you're struggling to sleep, try and work out why (it could be as simple as too much caffeine or exercising late at night) and seek help if you can't find the answer.

**Digital detox:** Smartphones, tablets and laptops can overstimulate our brains, and if you never take any time out from them, you won't be doing your mental health any favours. Take a mini digital detox every week, even if it's just for a couple of hours.

**Drink sensibly:** Alcohol can cause depressive feelings, heightened anxiety, or feeling out of control in a way that feels unpleasant. It can also increase risk taking behaviours, so you need to know what your reactions might be.

**Determine and live your personal values:** Your values serve as an 'inner GPS system' that guides you through life. Knowing and living your values will lead to a sense of balance, confidence and fulfilment.

**Stay connected:** Even during these current times, where we are not allowed to spend time with anyone other than the people we live with, you can still stay connected. Make use of technology to set up group chats, or group video calls, pick up the phone or simply even send a text. You'll feel a lot less isolated if you share the experience of these unprecedented times with someone else.

**Keep active:** Your body releases stress-relieving and mood-boosting endorphins before and after you work out, which is why exercise is a powerful antidote to stress, anxiety, and depression. Look for small ways to add activity to your day, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or going on a short walk at lunchtime. To get the most benefit, aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise daily, Look online for inspiration and guidance on workouts you can do at home.

**Take the time to relax:** Make sure you have some downtime from the stresses of our current way of living. A hot bath, baking a cake, watching a film, yoga, whatever it is, think about the things that help to keep you feel calm or more content, and make them part of your routine.

**Don't be afraid to get help:** it is better to act early if you feel rising levels of stress. There are a range of online resources and apps available plus the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free and confidential support service which is designed to give you access to information, advice and emotional support to help you prepare for, and manage all of life's ups and downs, events and challenges.

Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, expert advice is offered whenever you need - online and by telephone - giving proactive, early access and intervention before issues get complex or to a point of crisis or ill health.

Contact details:

Free phone 0800 111 6387 or visit: [www.my-eap.com/login](http://www.my-eap.com/login)

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