



ORACLEMED HEALTH



Six steps to a purposeful, productive life

*Want to create more balance and lead a more fulfilling, purposeful and productive life?
Here are six strategies to incorporate into your life for better overall wellbeing...*

The impact on Covid-19 on wellbeing

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a 25% increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide. This is according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), which believes that this is a “wake-up call” to all countries to step up mental health services and support. One major explanation for the drastic increase is the unprecedented stress caused by the social isolation resulting from the pandemic. Linked to this were constraints on people’s ability to work, seek support from loved ones and engage in their communities, just to name a few.

What can be done?

“We have an epidemic of anxiety and depression. Everybody feels it,” says Paula Gill Lopez, PhD, an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychological and Educational Consultation at Fairfield University in Connecticut. She believes that “the need for self-care is obvious”. Fortunately, there are day-to-day strategies that you can adopt at home that can make all the difference.

What exactly is self-care?

Self-care is anything you do to take care of yourself, so you can stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well. Self-care isn’t one thing, but rather a variety of practices that fall into six categories, each focusing on an area of life that we must regularly nourish. Basically, self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, you can do your job, you can help and care for others, and you can do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day.

Self-care helps to:

- Reduce anxiety and depression
- Minimise frustration and anger
- Improve energy
- Reduce stress
- Improve concentration
- Increase happiness

Aspects of wellbeing and self-care:

1. Physical wellbeing

This is so much more than simply taking care of your body. The mind and the body are interconnected, so when our physical health is good, our mind tends to feel better and clearer too. When your physical health is down, your mental health might be more fragile. Exercise is a key component to physical wellbeing. Choose something that makes you feel recharged and gets your endorphins going – and helps you with your overall health goals. Eating healthy and nourishing food (avoid highly processed options) is also a vital component of physical self-care. But don’t do everything else right and short change yourself on sleep. When you interrupt the stages of deep sleep, you deprive your body of the opportunity to regenerate and repair muscle and other tissues. Long-term lack of sleep even puts you at risk for chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure and heart attacks. Without 7-8 hours of sleep per night, you might also suffer from ‘brain drain’ and struggle to complete even the most basic daily tasks, so make sure that you prioritise sleep too.

2. Mental wellbeing

Stimulating our intellectual side and engaging our minds in activities that cultivate a healthy psyche are the best way to achieve mental wellbeing. As we age, keeping our minds active becomes even more important. Reading, crosswords, sudoku, puzzles, Wordle (the latest craze!) and chess are all easy ones to start with. But you can also learn a new skill or watch a documentary, as these also work towards your mental wellbeing.

3. Emotional wellbeing

By practising emotional self-care, we can become more at ease with expressing and regulating emotion ☺ and we can then work through negative emotions, such as anger and anxiety and stress. Start by jotting down a few check-in points with how you feel ☺ at the end of each day. Talking to your partner or a close friend about how you feel ☺ or seeking professional help from a psychologist, life coach or any kind of counsellor when you feel overwhelmed ☺ can make all the difference. Saying no to things that cause you unnecessary stress and giving yourself permission to simply ‘take a pause’ should also be top of the list. Making time for leisure activities will also go a long way towards your emotional wellbeing.

Don't forget about:

4. Social wellbeing

As social beings, humans need to foster close connections with others in order to thrive. Nurturing our relationships with like-minded people helps open up new avenues for healthy activities and deepens our sense of community. Small things like a quick call or message to loved ones who are far away, and making family dinner at the table every night a non-negotiable, are great ways to start. Most importantly, let go of the relationships that no longer serve you; spend time with those who uplift and fulfil you instead.

5. Spiritual wellbeing

Taking time for the spiritual means developing a deeper sense of meaning and understanding with the universe around us. Taking a walk in nature, attending a religious service, meditating, practising gratitude and incorporating regular acts of kindness into your day are all forms of spiritual self-care, as they help you find inner peace and give you some perspective to your (potentially monotonous) day-to-day life.

6. Practical wellbeing

This is admittedly the more boring, but no-less worthy side of self-care. Practical self-care is about keeping the core aspects of your day-to-day life in order to prevent future stress. They are the underestimated ‘sanity savers’ to get you through a busy week. It’s everything from using the weekend to plan ahead (and get ahead) so that you are calm and present, as you start your busy week. It’s also about including bigger tasks such as sorting out your taxes, budgeting, or decluttering your space to help get

“If you’re really struggling to sleep at night, make sure you book an appointment with your doctor. They will be able to rule out if there is a physical problem you are unaware of, or simply help you to create better sleep patterns going forward. As one of the key pillars that benefits your overall health, it’s imperative that you make your sleep a priority.”

David van der Knaap, CEO OracleMed Health



For any further information please contact
David van der Knaap CEO, OracleMed Health (Pty) Ltd.
Tel: +27 82 892 9555 or e-mail: david@oraclemed.com

www.oraclemed.com

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