

10 Habits That Can Support **Your** Mood

Feeling a bit down or grumpy? Dragging yourself through the school day? Making a few small changes in your life can improve mood, reduce stress and provide an extra boost of energy.



Here are 10 habits that can help you improve and maintain your mental health:

1. **Value and embrace your culture.** A strong sense of cultural identity is essential for mental well-being. Celebrating your heritage and participating in cultural practices can foster a sense of belonging and pride.
2. **Protect your energy.** Connecting with others is important, but be aware of people who consistently drain your energy or make you feel off-balance and doubt yourself. Spend time around people you can be yourself with. Pay attention to situations or environments that can feel too stimulating (e.g., crowds, noise, bright lights), and find ways to protect your senses (e.g., earplugs, taking short breaks).
3. **Focus on what is in your control.** Scary or stressful things sometimes happen in the world, and we can't control them. When this upsets you, try focusing your energy on what you can do. What do you want to learn about or get better at? What can you do to support or stand up for others?
4. **Move and fuel your body.** Regular exercise has been proven to lift mood, giving us some of those feel-good endorphins. So listen to music and dance alone in your room. Find an app or YouTube channel to guide you through some gentle stretches. Ride your bike or take a walk outdoors, spending time in nature.

When you're busy and stressed, healthy eating habits often go out the window. Too much caffeine or sugar can make you feel jittery and light-headed. Think of your body and brain like a car that needs high-quality fuel to run properly. Eating a snack with protein every few hours and drinking water throughout the day can help keep your energy up and your mood steady.

5. **Find at least one way to manage stress.** Yoga, meditation, exercise, baking, making art, doing crafts, and journaling are all great ways to reduce stress. Take a stress self-test and find out more about stress and how to cope at [Foundry](#).
6. **Take social media breaks.** Every day, give yourself permission to take some time off social media. You don't have to be accessible to others or on-call 24/7.

- 7. Make sleep a priority.** Did you know that sleep helps you “download” and retain all the information you have been studying? Another good reason to catch those zzz’s is that a consistent lack of sleep can make us more vulnerable to anxiety. Find out more: [How Can Sleep Affect a Teenager’s Education?](#) (Matthew Walker, video, 1:14); [Healthy Sleeping](#) (Mental Health Literacy, fact sheet), [What Happens When a Night Owl Wakes Up Early](#) (Insider Science, video, 3:30).
- 8. Focus on the good.** We all have days when it’s especially hard to get out of a bad mood. But focusing on the good things in life, however small, can soften strong emotions like resentment, envy and frustration. Each night before bed, try writing down three things you are grateful for. Make this a nightly habit to improve your overall well-being and help you sleep better. Find out more: [The Science of Gratitude](#) (Tremendousness, video, 2:07).
- 9. Learn from Indigenous knowledge.** Indigenous communities have a rich history of knowledge and practices related to mental health and wellness. Learning about and incorporating these perspectives, perhaps through having conversations with Elders or attending cultural events, can provide valuable insights into holistic well-being.
- 10. Recognize that mental health is holistic.** Indigenous conceptions of mental health don’t separate the mind and body. They view well-being as a balance between our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. It’s important to remember that all these parts of ourselves are connected and influence one another.