



# My little toolkit

Building  
Healthy  
Habits



# Introduction

This wellbeing booklet has been developed by the National Mental Health Promotion Project with the aim of providing you with information on different wellbeing topics and practices that you can adopt to help increase your overall wellbeing.

Overall wellbeing is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and an ability to manage stress. Your own personal wellbeing emerges from your thoughts, actions, and experiences.

(Ref: Psychology Today [2021])



Ref: Vitalicious Living (2021)

**THINK** POSITIVELY  
**EXERCISE** DAILY  
**EAT** HEALTHY  
**WORK** HARD  
**STAY** STRONG  
**WORRY** LESS  
**DANCE** MORE  
**LOVE** OFTEN  
**BE** HAPPY

# Physical Activity

Physical activity is any bodily movement that requires energy.  
(Ref. WHO 2021)

**Recommendation:** Adults aged 18-64 should get 2.5- 5 hours of moderate-intensity, or 1.25 - 2.5 hours of vigorous-intensity exercise per week.

**Moderate Activity:** Increased breathing and heart rate, but still able to carry on a conversation.

**Vigorous Activity:** Breathing heavily, cannot keep a conversation going, faster heart rate, sweating and concentrating hard.

## Benefits

- Aids cognitive function
- Increased energy levels
- Reduces risk of chronic diseases
- Can help improve your sleep quality
- Produces endorphins – helps produce positive feelings

## Tips to increase physical activity levels

- Choose an activity you enjoy e.g., dancing, gardening
- Take the stairs instead of the lift/elevator
- Go for a walk on your lunchbreak
- Explore your surrounding areas (beaches, parks, woodlands, towns, and mountains)
- Join a club within your community or workplace

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*Exercise is the key not only to physical health, but to peace of mind*  
**Nelson Mandela**

# Nutrition

Nutrition means the foods we take into our body that are necessary for growth and health.

## **Key Messages to Eat Healthily**

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (5-7) servings a day – more is better! (1 serving of fruit would equate to 1 banana/apple)

## **Rich in protective nutrients and low in calories**

- Choose 4-5 (Female) or 5-7 (Male) servings of wholegrain cereals and breads, potatoes, rice, and pasta a day

## **Provide fibre and the best calories for your body**

- Fruit/veg, nuts, seeds and wholegrain starchy foods are good sources of fibre for our diet (25-30g a day)

## **Rich in calcium for healthy bones**

- Eat 3-4 servings of milk, yoghurt and cheese each day

## **Important for protein and iron**

- Choose 2 servings of either lean meat/poultry/fish/eggs beans or nuts every day

## **All types are high in calories**

- Limit the amount of chocolate, biscuits, crisps, fizzy drinks, cakes and sweets every day

## **High in calories, fat, sugar, and salt**

- Limit intake of fats, spreads, and oils. Always cook with as little fat/oil as possible – choose grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling, or stir-frying instead

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*Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence, all parts are interconnected* **T. Colleen Campbell**

# Hydration

Hydration is the process of replacing water in the body, i.e drinking water, eating high water content foods.

**Recommendation:** 8 glasses/2L of water per day

## Importance of Hydration

- Regulates body temperature
- Helps the flushing out of waste from the body
- Protects joints, tissues, and spinal cord
- Prevents constipation
- Aids digestion

## Tips to increase water intake:

- Carry a reusable water bottle with you
- Try to drink a glass of water with each meal
- Add a slice of lemon/lime to enhance the taste

## Coffee

- It is recommended that you should not consume any more than 4 cups of coffee a day – depending on strength
- Coffee consumption can affect the quality & quantity of your sleep

## Energy Drinks

- Avoid/limit intake of energy drinks
- Regular consumption may cause adverse health symptoms such as headaches, sleeping problems, irritation, and tiredness/fatigue

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*Water is the best natural remedy, drink your way to better health*

# Alcohol Consumption

**Mindful Drinking** is the practice of being aware of why and how much alcohol you drink.

- This can lead to having a better relationship with alcohol and less consumption. (Ref: Healthline 2021)

For drinking to be considered low risk the HSE advises	
Men	Women
Less than 17 standard drinks – spread out over the week	Less than 11 standard drinks – spread out over the week

## Examples of 1 standard drink



1 standard drink contains 10g of pure alcohol

Ref: Drugs.ie

## Benefits of reducing/cutting out alcohol consumption

- Improved immune system
- Reduced risks of accidents
- Reduced risk of cancer, high blood pressure and heart disease
- Overall better mental and physical health
- Saves money
- Better quality of sleep

“

*Take care of your body, it's the only place you have to live” Jim Rohn*



# Sleep

- Sleep is one of the most important parts of your daily routine
- It is directly linked to your overall mental health, physical health, quality of life and safety
- If you consistently fall short of sleep, this can have a negative effect on your daytime energy, productivity, concentration, emotional balance and even your weight

## **Remember!**

The way you feel when you awake, depends partly on the night's sleep you had before.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that an adult (18-60) gets 7 or more hours sleep per night.

## **Benefits of getting a full night's sleep**

- Helps to reduce stress
- Helps maintain a good weight
- Reduces inflammation
- Improves memory and concentration

## **Tips to help you sleep better at night**

- Don't consume caffeine late in the day
- Reduce screen time/avoid using technology late at night
- Try to wake up and go to sleep at consistent times
- Relax and clear your mind before bed (meditation, bath, read, podcast)

“

*Sleep is an investment in the energy you need to be effective tomorrow* **Tom Rath**



# Financial Wellbeing

Financial wellbeing is having a sense of security with your finances and having enough money to meet your needs.

## Ways in which you can improve your financial wellbeing

### Step 1

**Identify your income and expenses:** It will allow you to become aware of your spending habits and recognise if you are overspending. Identify all expenses and ask yourself, *do I need this?*

### Step 2

**Budget:** Make a list with all your income on the left-hand side and then list your expenses on the right-hand side. This will give you the opportunity to see if there are any expenses that you can cut down on and identify the most important ones

### Step 3

**Set up a savings account:** This will allow you to have a specific account dedicated to savings. Your income will determine how much you put into this savings account, but it is important to try put a small bit aside each week

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*Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving*  
**Warren Buffett**

# Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is a mental attitude in which you envision and expect favourable outcomes and results. A positive thinker looks at the positives and solutions in situations as apposed to dwelling on the problems or obstacles.

## Tips to be positive

- Surround yourself with positive people
- Focus on the good things!
- Check yourself, keep tabs on your thoughts throughout the day
- Turn failures into lessons
- Be open to humour

## Health benefits

- Increased life span
- Lowers risk of anxiety and depression
- Better cardiovascular health
- Better able to deal with stress
- Increased immunity

Is this glass  
**half empty**  
or **half full**?



## Positive thinking exercise – Positive Affirmations

Affirmations are statements that are repeated by an individual to encourage and uplift themselves. If repeated consistently, they can encourage a life and thought process filled with positivity and self-confidence and can also help you overcome negative thoughts.

### Task

- Make a list of negative thoughts or feelings that you want to let go
- Prioritise your list. Identify what impacts you the most and what you want to work on
- Write a statement which counteracts your negative thought
- Create an affirmation using this statement
- Repeat affirmation(s) for 5 minutes each day

### Tips

- Write clear and direct statements
- Use present tense
- Always use positive language

### Suggestions

- I am healthy
- I am worthy of love
- I am focused and productive with my work
- My mind is full of brilliant ideas
- I see beauty in everything
- My body is healthy and full of energy
- I am happy and I am motivated
- I achieve big things through small steps
- I am a good person

“

*The body achieves what the mind believes*



# Goal Setting

## Benefits of goal setting

- Allows you to set a direction for your future
- Sets your priorities
- Can help provide clarity when decision making
- Can help you use time more effectively
- Allows you to evaluate your success

## Steps to consider when goal setting

S.M.A.R.T Goals	Ask yourself
<b>Specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What needs to be accomplished?</li><li>• Who will be responsible for this?</li><li>• What are the steps that you are going to take?</li></ul>
<b>Measurable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By how much/how many?</li><li>• How will I know if I reached my goal?</li><li>• What will be my indicator of progress?</li></ul>
<b>Attainable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Am I capable of achieving this goal?</li><li>• Do I have the resources to achieve it?</li><li>• Have other individuals completed this successfully before?</li></ul>
<b>Realistic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reasons that this goal is important to me?</li><li>• If achieved, how will it contribute towards my long-term goals?</li></ul>
<b>Timely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When would I like my goal to be achieved?</li><li>• Have I set a deadline?</li></ul>

## Tips to stay on track

- Write it down
- Check in regularly
- Reflect on your progress
- Celebrate your achievement

# Support Options

## Family Resource Centres

Providing local support to over 120 communities. For more information contact your local Family Resource Centre.

**[www.familyresource.ie](http://www.familyresource.ie)**

## Emergency Services

**Phone 999 or 112**

## Samaritans Helpline

Provides emotional support to anyone in distress or struggling to cope.

**Helpline: 116123. Every day, 24 hours a day.**

**Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)**

**[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**

## Text 50808

A free 24/7 text service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through mental health or emotional crisis.

**Text HELLO to 50808, any time day or night**

**[www.50808.ie](http://www.50808.ie)**

## HSE

YourMentalHealth information line is a phone service you can call at any time. A member of the team can tell you about the mental health supports and services available to you and how to access different services provided by the HSE and their funded partners.

**Freephone: 1800 111 888**

The YourMentalHealth information line is not a counselling service

**[www.hse.ie/mentalhealth](http://www.hse.ie/mentalhealth)**

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National Family Resource Centre Mental Health Promotion Project  
Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre,  
Headford Road, Galway, H91PN50  
[www.familyresourcementalhealth.ie](http://www.familyresourcementalhealth.ie)



**Family Resource Centre  
National Forum**  
Supporting • Strengthening • Empowering



**National Office for  
Suicide Prevention**

