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THE JOURNAL

9 TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

IMAGE: [@ANTOINEJANS](#)

DR SIMONE LAUBSCHER PHD PROVIDES THE ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR A HAPPY MIND.

We know that the occurrence of toxic thoughts is the biggest cause of disease. Toxic thoughts can be unresolved issues like not feeling good enough, a negative body image, or self-loathing.

Everyone has an internal dialogue and research shows that when we think about something there is a direct physiological reaction. So if you think about something negative, your body sees this as a caveman fight or flight. Because it thinks there is danger coming, hormones are released as well as adrenaline and cortisol which is like a fat magnet.

In a healthy body your arteries and veins should be open rivers so nutrition can access cells and junk can be expelled. When we get stressed, the body thinks there's danger coming, so arteries and veins shut down, which means goodness can't get to the cell.

If you are always stressed or a worrier, you need to have some tools. Your brain needs to be like a beach, where negative thoughts can come and you have the choice of whether they can pitch a tent and camp there, or you send them on their way. It's really important to switch off, have a little bit of disconnect, and do things you love.

1. FORM A MORNING ROUTINE

"I meditate for about 20 minutes when I first wake up," says WelleCo co-founder Elle Macpherson. "Then I take 2 teaspoons of our SUPER ELIXIR Greens with water. It means my body has received all the nutrients it needs to power through the day. It puts me in a good space for the day ahead."

2. FORGIVE YOURSELF

"A good exercise is to forgive yourself in your internal dialogue," says Dr Laubscher. "When you catch yourself having a negative thought, try saying I forgive you, or thank you, and move on."

3. MOVE MOVE MOVE

"Going for a run along the beach is guaranteed to lift my spirits," says Elle. "It allows some brain space to gain perspective and getting those endorphins pumping is always a good thing."

4. EAT THE RIGHT FOODS

"Even a formula one race car needs optimum fuel, so our brains (which are far more superior to such a car) need optimum fuel through what we eat," says Dr Laubscher. "Eat low and moderate GI foods to keep your blood sugar levels balanced so your mood, memory and energy levels are better. Also, the brain needs EFA's so eating a diet of oily fish and essential fats like avocado are important for brain function and memory. The brain also needs the water-soluble minerals magnesium, calcium and zinc and if not eaten regularly they will be flushed out. B vitamins and vitamin C derived from wholefoods are also vital for brain function."

5. PRACTICE GRATITUDE

"Thank everything that happened in your day," says trainer Ricardo Riskalla from Rawfit Personal Training, "especially the hard and unpleasant things. They are all there to teach you some little things and improve your life. Gratitude is always the way."

6. EAT WALNUTS EVERY DAY

"Walnuts are high in vitamin E, alpha-linolenic acid, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which have now been shown to have great benefits for cognition and warding off Alzheimer's," says Dr Laubscher. "A study of 1000 people by a Californian University found that those who ate walnuts each day performed much higher on 6 cognition tests, regardless of age, gender and sex. I suggest aiming to eat around 6-8 walnuts a day to improve brain function."

7. ZZZ

"The first warning sign for me of stress is if I have trouble drifting off to sleep - it's part of the reason we developed our [SLEEP WELLE Calming Tea](#)," says Elle. "It's made with an effective blend of skullcap, hops and valerian that when combined, assist with anxiety, sleep and stress. I used to sleep for four hours a night, now I aim for a solid seven."

8. LAUGH LONG AND HARD

"I apply humour - it helps smooth the path," says Elle. "My other tactic is to apply neutrality - recount the situation to myself and others without using judgement or adjectives."

9. SWAP COFFEE FOR A SMOOTHIE

Studies show that caffeine can have a significant effect on the central nervous system that can modify moods and behaviour. If that second cup of coffee is depressing, try replacing with a banana smoothie made with [WelleCo NOURISHING PLANT PROTEIN](#). Your brain will thank you for it.



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