



HEALTHIER HABITS TOOLKIT

TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES TO
SUPPORT THEIR WELLBEING

Toolkit Created by



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Welcome to our healthier habits toolkit. This is a short guide with some quick tips on healthy eating, physical activity, alcohol, mental health and financial wellbeing. This toolkit includes behaviour change principles and neurolinguistic programming to help make new habits stick.

So, before we even get into any healthier habits remember this short checklist:

- Be realistic.
- Be kind to yourself. Don't beat yourself up about where you are now and expect off days and setbacks along the way.
- Start slow and aim to keep it going and keep building on it. This makes it easier to get going and build momentum. You get to celebrate lots of little wins and feel like you're making progress, taking on tougher challenges only when you're ready for them.
- Break your idea for healthier habits into three stages:
 - Set a goal of what you want to achieve.
 - Choose actions that help move you towards your goal, and as above, start small. Make sure actions are positive, as in something you actually do rather than something you stop doing or don't do. It's usually better to focus on doing the new action instead of stopping the bad habit.
 - Measure it at a set timeframe, like two weeks or a month from now. If you passed it then great – think about a reward and setting the next action for the next month. If you didn't make it, dial it down or change it altogether for the next action.

Over the next few pages we've put together some simple tips on different areas with signposting to further information to help you get started. You are not expected to do all of this at once and you do not need to follow the tips we have listed, or use the signposting links, they are just there to help give you ideas so you can pick and choose what works for you.

EATING HEALTHY

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HABITS

Building a healthy relationship with food is always a good idea. Diving into the latest fad diet is not. Food has a profound impact on both how we feel and our health and wellbeing in the long term, so the focus should always be on eating well, and losing weight ends up being a pleasant by-product.

Five quick tips for you to try:

1. Write down everything you eat for a few days, then decide what you want to change. And just focus on one or two small changes at first. Take little steps.
2. When planning to make changes it's best to do it in this order:
 - When you eat
 - What you eat
 - How much you eat
3. Eat whole, real, natural food and aim to fill up at meal times. This will help you to naturally reduce processed food and unhealthy/unnecessary snacks. But don't cut way down on dinner then end up wolfing down two packs of crisps later in the evening because you're starving!
4. Have a treat when you want one! Plan in a cheat day, or a reward treat... or just have one because you fancy it.
5. Drink more water.

These are some useful places you can find more good information:

- [NHS live better health – lose weight](#) – free weight loss app and lots of advice and guidance
- [Healthy recipes from the NHS](#) – range of meal ideas for adults and families
- [British Nutrition Foundation](#) – healthy eating advice including the Eat Well Guide
- [British Heart Foundation](#) – healthy eating advice for a healthy heart including food labelling, fats and salt



STAYING FIT

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HABITS

They say if exercise was a pill, it would be one of the best medicines ever invented - with so many benefits for day-to-day wellbeing and physical and mental health. We should all be aiming to do 150 minutes or more per week (or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise). The latest advice says even if you can't quite get that much done, just doing some exercise is good for you. We're also learning more about the effects of sitting still for too long. So for those who work at a desk or behind the wheel, breaking up periods of sitting is really important for good health.

Five quick tips for you to try:

1. Be active outdoors, whatever the weather. Walking is brilliant for good health and wellbeing and it's free. Outdoor exercise is particularly good for mental health. It helps to improve symptoms of anxiety and depression.
2. Break up periods of sitting still with regular movement breaks, every 30 minutes. Even if you just stand up and stretch, this helps. Aim to move away from work areas for 5 minutes every hour.
3. Do something you like doing. Forcing yourself to do things you hate won't last. Try some new things, dance, play sport, jog on the spot while watching your favourite show... See the links below for inspiration.
4. Plan your time in the calendar. Most people cite time as reason they can't exercise so book it in and stick to it (with a back-up timeslot for if things go wrong).
5. Lift weights to lose weight. Resistance exercise helps to keep burning calories even on rest days and increases metabolism. We are all encouraged to get at least two days per week of resistance training. Combining weight training with cardio and healthy eating has been shown to be most effective for weight loss.

These are some useful places you can find more good information:

- [NHS Get Active](#) – free apps like Couch to 5k and Active 10, as well as lots more
- [Active Partnerships](#) – get into sport and activity in your local area
- [This Girl Can](#) – supporting women and girls to get inspired, get involved and get active
- [We Are Undefeatable](#) – a community to support those with long term health conditions to keep active
- [Nike Training Club](#) – free app with over 200 free workout sessions led by instructors to suit all fitness levels. Other sports brands are available!



DRINKING LESS

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HABITS

Alcohol is an area where many of us tend to overindulge, but can have a much bigger impact on health and wellbeing than we might realise. The good news is that making just small changes can have a big impact. We should all aim to consume less than 14 units per week, which is no more than 5-6 drinks. For those drinking more than this on a regular basis it's really beneficial to reduce intake and get as close to the guidelines as possible.

Five quick tips for you to try:

1. Check how much you are drinking. There are free unit calculators and apps available (links below) or just check the bottle or can as it will have units information on the label. Remember, we should drink less than 14 units each week.
2. Make gradual changes. The more you drink, the more important it is not to stop drinking suddenly. Cutting down gradually is an easier approach but still really beneficial.
3. Spread units across the week and have at least two drink-free days per week. Saving up drinks all for Friday night can be worse for your health than one or two drinks a few nights per week.
4. Make some swaps to save units and calories. Drink smarter by trying a light beer, a sparkling wine or a single measure of spirits instead of a double. It all helps. Using a tall thin glass makes it easier to drink less wine and a bottled beer instead of a pint does the same.
5. Space out alcoholic drinks with soft drinks or water. This helps to keep you hydrated (and hopefully avoid a hangover), saves money and can mean you drink less units overall.

These are some useful places you can find more good information:

- [Drink aware](#) – unit and calories calculator with further advice and information
- [NHS Better Health Drink Less](#) – help, advice and Drink-Free Days app free download
- [We are with you](#) – support for those with addiction problems including local support
- [Mind – alcohol and drugs](#) – info and support on the links between alcohol and mental health



SELF CARE

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HABITS

Mental health doesn't mean mental illness. We all have mental health, all the time. Mental health is a spectrum and can be good, bad, or in the middle. It will change over time just like our physical health does. And there are things we can do to maintain good mental health and to help improve it if we aren't feeling too great.

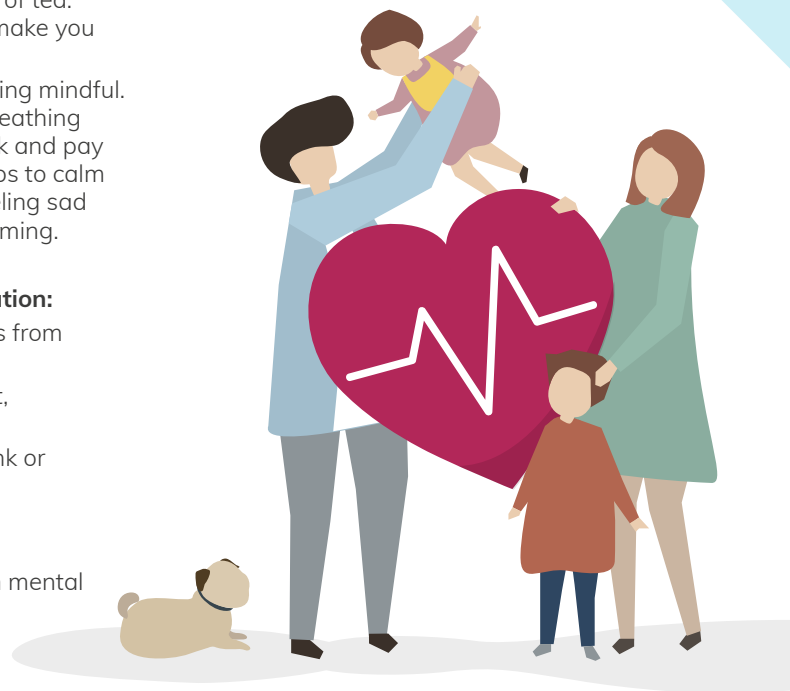
The five tips below are called the five ways to wellbeing, they form a framework which has been proven to help maintain good mental health and wellbeing. See how many of these five areas you can build into your daily routine. There are hundreds of ways to do this and the suggestions with each of the five ways are just examples, so do what works best for you.

Five ways to wellbeing for you to try:

1. **Connect** - Keep in touch with others, reach out to friends and family and if you ever feel bad it's really important to seek support and keep talking.
2. **Be Active** - Physical activity isn't just for physical health. Use the tips in the physical activity section to keep active this year. This helps to reduce risk and improve symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression.
3. **Keep Learning** - This builds confidence, self-esteem and helps us to feel good. Formal training and education is great, but five minutes of things like playing an instrument, doing a puzzle or reading up on your favourite topic is good too.
4. **Give** - Helping others is a good deed, but it makes us feel great too. You could volunteer, make a donation, or just make someone a cup of tea. Even just giving your time to really listen to someone else will make you both feel better.
5. **Take Notice** - This really means being in the here and now. Being mindful. You could try a short breathing exercise by focusing on your breathing slowly and deeply for a few minutes. Lift your head up and look and pay attention to what's around you. Being in the here and now helps to calm your body and realise that you're ok right now. Rather than feeling sad about what has already happened or anxious about what's coming.

These are some useful places you can find more good information:

- **Every mind matters** – wide range of support, advice and tools from the NHS
- **Mind** – the mental health charity with a wide range of support, information and get help now options
- **Samaritans** – support phonenumber for those in crisis. Click the link or call 116 123
- **Give Us A Shout** – text support for those who are struggling. Text SHOUT to 85258
- **Money and mental health service** – advice to help those with mental health challenges manage their financial wellbeing



FINANCIAL WELLBEING

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HABITS

The challenges and turmoil of the last few years have been tough on everyone's financial wellbeing. This can have a major impact on mental health and living a healthy lifestyle. While some things are out of our control, like inflation or the price of energy, there are lots of things that might help us manage finances and feel more in control.

It's important to mention, for legal reasons, that this section covers general information and is not financial advice. Please carefully consider any changes to your financial circumstances and it is recommended you seek independent financial advice before doing anything that could affect your financial situation.

Five quick tips for you to try:

1. Get to know your finances and don't bury your head in the sand, especially if you are worried you can't make ends meet. Keep a check of all your incomings and typical outgoings on a weekly or monthly basis.
2. Set a budget so you know what you have. Then work out what you need to spend on essentials and for paying bills. Save a little if you can, and see what you have left beyond that (if any). Aim to spend within your means where possible and if using credit, make sure you can afford repayments and interest.
3. Shop around. Compare prices on everything from weekly food to bills and contracts. Yes, it takes time but it can really make a difference. If you are struggling to pay bills, talk to your providers as soon as possible and ask if there is anything they can do to help.
4. Get support for managing your finances and debts. There is lots of free, impartial advice and support available to help manage money, from advice on pensions to reorganising debts (see below).
5. Check what benefits you are eligible for and make sure you are claiming everything you are entitled to from the government (see below). Check with your employer too to see if there are any perks or benefits available that might save you money.

These are some useful places you can find more good information:

- **Money Helper** – the government's free, impartial service to help you manage money. Includes free budget calculators, information on a wide range of topics and signposting to further support
- **Debt line** – free, impartial advice from a national charity who can help you manage debts. Cost of living hub with a wide range of information as well as online and telephone support from expert debt counsellors
- **Benefits checker** – free, anonymous calculator tool to check what you could be eligible for, what it could be worth and how to claim
- **GamCare** – free, confidential support and advice for those with gambling problems including webchat, phone support and lots of information
- **Money saving expert** – tips and advice on the latest money saving deals from Martin Lewis, with the option to sign up to a weekly newsletter





GET IN TOUCH

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