

Healthy Mind & Healthy Body: Why Both Matter

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Morgan Evans, Health & Wellness Intern & Ashley Yaughner, PhD, Health & Wellness Faculty



Have you ever noticed how everything seems harder after a few nights of poor sleep? You may feel more irritable, struggle to concentrate, skip your workout because you're too tired, and reach for quick comfort foods instead of nutritious meals. Before long, your body feels sluggish and your mood suffers too. It's a reminder that our minds and bodies are constantly influencing one another.

Your mental health and physical health are both closely linked. When one is thriving, the other often benefits. When one struggles, the other can be affected as well. For example, having a chronic physical condition may increase a person's risk of developing a mental health condition and vice versa.

While it may seem like many of the choices you make in life don't have an impact on your mental or physical health they often do. Choices in physical activity, diet, sleep, self-care practices, social connections, and avoiding harmful substances can lead to a big impact over time. The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2025) shares that even developing small sustainable habits across these areas can help you improve in your wellbeing.

Exercise

Physical activity is shown to help with sleep, better mood, and having an improved quality of life. Exercise not only

helps with your physical health but also has an impact on mental health. Regular physical activity can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety and can even lead to an improvement in mood and self-esteem. Exercise also helps to promote the release of endorphins and other neurotransmitters that can help to regulate mood and decrease stress (Mahindru et al., 2023).

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic exercise per week. Along with at least 2 or more days of muscle strengthening exercises per week. Being inactive can lead to numerous medical problems and can cause a decrease in muscle and bone density, leading to it being harder to do things you enjoy as you get older. Building muscle and doing regular physical activity can help you keep being able to do what you enjoy.

Eat a Balanced Diet

Eating well is also a factor in both physical and mental health. When you are eating well you can improve your wellbeing and mood, which can have a positive impact on our mental health and help in the prevention of many mental health conditions. When we have a healthy body, it makes it easier to support a healthy mind.

- Having a balanced diet is going to allow you to get the nutrients you need that are needed for optimal brain function. Which includes whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, getting enough fiber, while limiting ultra processed foods, foods with added sugars, and foods that are high in salt can help keep your body healthy. Focus on getting foods that are higher in healthy vitamins and minerals.

Sleep

Sleeping is the time where your body is able to repair itself and get ready for the next day. When you're not getting enough sleep, it can have harmful effects. It can raise your risk of chronic health conditions as well as impacting how well you are able to think, react, and learn (Solodar, 2025).

- Sleep hygiene are the regular habits that help keep your sleep restorative. Building up healthy sleep routines can help improve your sleep. For example, having a regular sleep and wake schedule, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, as well as sleeping in a cool and dark room are great ways to help improve

sleep quality and overall wellbeing. Adults should aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

Self-Care

Taking some time to do enjoyable activities regularly can help you take care of yourself and others. Self-care gives you some time to yourself and be able to de-stress.

- Explore doing relaxing activities such as meditation and breathing exercises, or other healthy activities that you enjoy like reading, listening to music, and being outside. Self-care can also include spending time with friends or loved ones. Ohrnberger and colleagues (2017) found that positive past social ties and interactions have been linked to better mental health along with a positive effect on physical health.

Your mental and physical health are closely connected, and caring for one helps support the other. Daily, healthy habits like staying active, eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax can improve your mood, reduce stress, boost your energy, and enhance your overall well-being. Remember, you don't have to change everything at once, even small, consistent steps can make a meaningful difference over time. Start today by choosing one healthy habit to focus on, and remember that every positive choice is an investment in a healthier body, a healthier mind, and a happier you.

Resources

- Find additional Physical Health Resources, here: <https://extension.usu.edu/healthwellness/physical/>
- Find additional Emotional Health Resources, here: <https://extension.usu.edu/healthwellness/emotional/>
- Explore Mental Health Education Resources, here: <https://extension.usu.edu/mentalhealth/>

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