



## Take important steps to keep up your mental fitness

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At one point or another in our lives we can feel overwhelmed by life's tasks, requirements and duties that we have owe our friends, family, employers and to ourselves. To ensure that we not only take care of our physical health, we must also make sure that we are accounting for our mental health as well.

Mental health professionals often talk about the correlation between mental and physical health, and I'm sure you can see the similarities as well. If we are physically ill, it wears not only on our bodies but also on our emotional state. We become tired, agitated, sometimes depressed and even possibly feel hopeless as we are unsure if the illness will ever end.

The same is true for our mental health. If we are suffering from stress, a mental illness or an addiction disorder, we may also be harming our physical health such as our hearts and other areas of our body. Either we are having difficulty coping and ignoring our physical health or we are letting our mental illness go untreated, which causes us to be incapable of making appropriate decisions for ourselves.

Mental Health America, the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives, is a great local and national resource for mental health education. The organization provides information on appropriate treatment, national facts on mental illness and spearheads the "May is Mental Health Month" campaign each year.

To stay up with evolving technology, the organization has designed a new website ([www.live.yourlifewell.org](http://www.live.yourlifewell.org)). This site includes an online quiz titled "How Stressed Are You?" and an "Are

you Depressed?" online depression screening.

In addition, the association provides 10 ways to live your life well:

1. Connect with others. People who feel connected are happier and healthier — and may even live longer.
2. Stay positive. People who regularly focus on the positive in their lives are less upset by painful memories.
3. Get physically active. Exercise can help relieve insomnia and reduce depression.
4. Help others. People who consistently help others experience less depression, greater calm and fewer pains.
5. Get enough sleep. Not getting enough rest increases risks of weight gain, accidents, reduced memory and heart problems.
6. Create joy and satisfaction. Positive emotions can boost your ability to bounce back from stress.
7. Eat well. Eating healthy food and regular meals can increase your energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and influence your mood.
8. Take care of your spirit. People who have strong spiritual lives may be healthier and live longer. Spirituality seems to cut the stress that can contribute to disease.
9. Deal better with hard times. People who can tackle problems or get support in a tough situation tend to feel less depressed.
10. Get professional help if you need it. More than 80 percent of people who are treated for depression improve.

All of these examples can be

incorporated into your life, even if they are done one item at a time. The important thing is to recognize areas in your life that you would like to improve and make an active plan for living your life well.