

Our wellbeing could use some attention

This year when we countdown to 2023 and are ready to begin with a clean slate, let's take a minute to address our overall wellbeing — a sustained feeling of harmony, energy, safety, and peace.

Resolutions like “lose ten pounds,” “learn a new language,” or “quit smoking” are perfectly reasonable goals, but they each only address a small part of our wellbeing. It's not just our weight or our diet or our education that creates health and happiness. Try asking yourself a basic question: “What can I do to achieve more balance in my life?” Perhaps you are an avid exerciser, but you feel unfulfilled by your career. Or maybe you eat a well-balanced diet but feel lonely much of the time. Where in your life do you need to look to find wellbeing for yourself?

Wellbeing is a personal state that includes many aspects. Our relationships, for example, can affect us in larger ways that we might realize. Studies have shown that people with strong relationships live longer than those who stay isolated. But don't let that statistic frighten you if you don't have many friends—helping others out by volunteering or giving them



comfort when they need it can also boost your life expectancy.

Having a sense of security contributes to wellbeing by lowering levels of anxiety and fear, which have negative impacts on health. Ensuring the safety of yourself and others is an important part of fostering wellbeing. You can nourish your own sense of security by practicing preventative habits—like wearing a seatbelt or helmet—or actively engaging in your own healthcare by talking to your provider about questions you have.

Knowing our purpose in life calls us to examine our gifts, passions, and values, as well as the way that we can serve the needs of the world. Our purpose is where

we find meaning, and it can improve our physical health, lengthen our lives, and improve our relationships with others. For many people, finding purpose is an ongoing process throughout life, so do a check-in with yourself every once in a while. Ask: Do I feel fulfilled? Is what I do meaningful? Where do I feel a connection to something larger than myself?

Wellbeing is a dynamic process. Achieving wellbeing requires patience, self-compassion, and the willingness to try again. Take small steps along the way and trust that by nourishing yourself and those around you, a balance will emerge that's just right for you.

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Resolution broken already? Try this instead

(NC) Many of us make New Year's resolutions every January. But statistics show that nearly 80% of people who make them will have broken them by February.

If you feel like this is you, don't fret. Most of us can agree, especially with recent holiday indulgences, that improving personal fitness and nutrition is an intimidating idea. But the secret to getting motivated and keeping the momentum going into the spring is to follow these three simple guidelines: Don't try too much at once. When we first set resolutions, we're often inclined to make a goal to spend every day at the gym and eat clean 100% of the time. There is a reason these are too often broken – they are hard to accomplish. Listen to your body and do what feels good for you.

Modify your lifestyle to a healthy one that fits your needs and is one you'll be able to sustain throughout the year.

Keep a positive mindset. If you miss a day, don't stress about it, you can get back on track tomorrow. Staying positive about your wellness journey will keep you on track to reach your goals and maintain a healthy lifestyle well into the future.

Stick to it. Contrary to popular belief, it takes more than three weeks to form a habit, but don't let that stop you from trying. The time it takes for you to break a habit may depend on many things. For example, a person who is pregnant may have more motivation to quit smoking than others and will quit faster. Keep yourself motivated to achieving your goal by instigating a personal reward.

How to talk to your people about what you're feeling

It can be challenging to open up about your true thoughts and feelings with your family, friends or colleagues.

Even so, talking about what you're feeling, whether it's good or bad, can help you feel better, give you the support you need and strengthen relationships in the long run.

Here are some tips to help you share your feelings with people around you in a productive and healthy way:

- Schedule in time.
- Be thoughtful about when you have a serious discussion, but don't get hung up on waiting for the perfect moment.
- Set aside time for the important conversation and mark it in your calendar to help you commit. Practice what to say.
- Try writing down what you want to say ahead of time or saying it out loud in private.
- Walking through what to say in advance can help you get your thoughts in order.
- Writing it out can give you notes to refer to if you get flustered.

Focus on what you know

- State how you feel and what makes you feel that way.
- Avoid blaming and focus your words on your personal experience or situation.
- Try a formula of "I feel ..." + "when I ..."

Talk about the impact

- Consider speaking about how the emotions you're feeling affect your everyday life.
- For instance, if you're feeling lots of frustration, mention how it's harming your relationships or your ability to focus at work.
- This can help make your feelings understood by the listener.



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Trigger point therapy, an option for chronic pain

Do you suffer from chronic pain, tension headaches, or general pain in different body parts, and are you looking for some relief options? Scientific advancements have resulted in many different treatments to help you control your chronic pain so you can get back to the life you love. One of those treatments involves no medicine at all. It's called trigger point therapy.

Trigger point therapy is a bodywork technique that involves the applying of pressure to tender muscle tissue to relieve pain and dysfunction in other parts of the body. Trigger point therapy is also called myofascial trigger point dry needling, intramuscular manual therapy, and intramuscular stimulation.

Although it involves thin needles inserted into the skin like acupuncture, trigger point therapy follows science-based guidelines to identify and stimulate specific trigger points in the muscles, and to reduce tension in stressed muscles.

When your muscles suffer from overuse or trauma, painful knots can form. The fibres

in an overused muscle do not receive the adequate blood supply which will allow it to relax. The tissue near the muscle becomes more acidic, and the nerves become more sensitive, resulting in pain and discomfort. When a physical therapist inserts a needle into the trigger point, it can loosen the knot and help return normal blood flow into the area, releasing muscle tension.

Trigger point therapy usually works as part of a comprehensive treatment plan that may include exercise, physical therapy, massage, and other interventions which are designed to relieve mild to moderate pain and restore mobility.

Some patients experience relief right after a session. For others, it may take more than one session to feel better. Pregnant women are not advised to undergo trigger point therapy and other needle-based treatments, since clinical studies have yet to fully evaluate their effects on the mother and child. Also, individuals who are taking blood thinners and patients recovering from surgery should consult with a doctor first.

Before trying any new type of therapy it is always best to consult your health care professional.

Tips to boost your mental health

(NC) Alongside physical health, mental health is an essential part of our overall well-being. Being mentally healthy can help you enjoy life, while coping with its challenges.

Many factors can affect it, and they aren't all within our control. But we can take some actions to care for ourselves and help protect our mental health overall. Here are some ideas to help you boost your mental health on a day-to-day and longer-term basis.

Find what's meaningful to you: We all need something fulfilling in our life to help give it meaning. Experiment to see what activities or practices bring you joy or satisfaction and make them part of your routine. Re-evaluating your goals can be an important part of this process too. Learn to recognize your patterns: Do you binge on junk food when you're stressed and then feel guilty about it? Or forget to eat when you're overwhelmed? Maybe you tend to get snappy when you're feeling tired. Once you recognize common patterns in your own thoughts or behaviours you can try to plan to prevent them, like stocking up on healthy meals ahead of a busy season at work or doing your best to get enough sleep.

Remember what you can and can't control: Taking a few moments to be mindful, thinking about the big picture, and recognizing the things you can and cannot change can be valuable ways to shift perspective and get you thinking more positively. Consider working with a professional: If you feel like you're struggling with your mental health, there is help available. Seeking out extra support can help you get through whatever challenges you're facing in the moment.

While we all struggle from time to time, if you find you're experiencing long-lasting sadness, worry, loneliness or anger, or if these feelings are interfering with your daily routines, consider reaching out for help.

There are free and credible resources available online, including self-guided therapy, one-on-one counselling with qualified health professionals and moderated peer-to-peer support.

Find more information at canada.ca/mental-health.





Ways to adapt your workout routine to boost immunity

Working out regularly helps to maintain fitness levels, manage body weight, and improve mental health. Exercise can also benefit the body's immune system and prepare stronger defenses against colds, flu, and other viruses. A study published in the National Library of Medicine in 2018 indicated that the immune systems of test subjects were able to detect and respond to infections sooner. By adapting your workout routines in the following ways, you can prepare your body for attack from viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens.

1) Reduce the intensity

Physical activity triggers a physiological response within the body resulting in the generation of white blood cells. Circulating through the body, these cells improve the efficiency of the immune system making pathogens easier to detect and destroy. However, if physical exercise is too intense or for periods of longer than 60 minutes at a time, the immune system can be suppressed.

Age, fitness level, and other factors influence the ideal duration of workouts to boost immunity, but if you push yourself to exhaustion, you're probably doing more harm than good. Rest days are also important to allow the body to recover between exercise sessions.

2) Mix things up

Consistency is good for improving fitness levels, but a well-rounded exercise program is important for general health. If running, cycling, and other aerobic exercises are the foundations of your fitness, mix things up with some resistance training a couple of days a week. Any activity that raises your heart rate and gets you moving can benefit the immune system. Consider taking up dance classes, martial arts training, or swimming to experience a broader range of workouts.

3) Include stretching routines

As well as reducing the risk of injury, incorporating stretching into workout routines can give the body an immunity boost. Stretches lengthen muscles, detoxify the lymph, and help to bring your nervous system into a resting state.

4) Practice meditation and breathing exercises

The health benefits of meditation have been documented in numerous studies around the world. These include reducing blood pressure, helping to ease anxiety and depression, and reducing inflammation in the body.

5) Listen to your body

If you feel the early signs of an infection, cold, or virus coming on, take some rest from exercise. Warning signs can include a raised temperature, muscle soreness, and a loss of appetite. Trying to push on with your workout routines may result in needing a longer period of recovery.

6) Be aware of hygiene

If you exercise at a public gym or attend group fitness classes, be aware of the risks of picking up infections from touching equipment such as weights and yoga mats. Carrying hand gel and regularly washing your face and hands can reduce the risks significantly.

Signs of hearing loss you may be overlooking

Hearing loss is a pernicious problem, one that is not always evident even to the men and women who suffer from it. When your hearing starts to fade, you may not even notice it immediately, and it could take years before the problem becomes evident.

That's why it is important to watch out for the early warning signs of hearing loss, the symptoms that often go undetected for months or even years. Catching your hearing loss early can mean many more treatment options, as well as more effective help for your hearing loss. It's also important to note that any level of hearing loss has been linked to cognitive decline, and that correcting that issue can slow or halt that decline.

Here are some often overlooked signs of hearing loss you should never ignore.

Missed Phone Calls

If your friends complain that you never call them back, the problem could be your hearing. During the early stages of hearing loss, you may be unable to distinguish the unique ringtone from the background noises in your home, apartment or workplace.

Problems at Work

Sometimes hearing loss can manifest in unusual ways. Left unchecked, your failing hearing could be bad for your career. Missing parts of conversations, not hearing what is said in meetings, and seemingly ignoring your boss can all be very dangerous for your job future. If you have always been great at your job but are now having problems, you might want to ask your doctor to check your ears.

Ringling in the Ears

Tinnitus is a troublesome condition, but that ringing in your ears could also be an early warning sign of deeper problems with your hearing. If your ears have been ringing, it is important to talk to your doctor -- there may be a treatment available you were unaware of.

High Volume on the Television and Radio

One of the challenges of hearing loss is that it sneaks up slowly over time. Few people lose their hearing all at once -- they simply find themselves struggling more and more. If you have raised the volume on the TV, radio, or your favorite streaming service -- or are automatically turning on closed-captioning -- talk to your doctor about the hearing loss you have been experiencing.

It Seems Like Everyone Else is Mumbling

During the early stages of hearing loss, you probably can still keep up with the conversations going on around you. At the same time, it may seem like everyone except you is mumbling, as your ears are having trouble picking up certain tones, ranges, and specific sounds. If it seems like everyone around you is mumbling, it is time to have your hearing checked.

It is easy for hearing loss to fly under the radar, and sometimes the problem is not detected until it's quite advanced. If you are having a bit of trouble hearing, you may put it down to high levels of background noise or the simple effects of aging.

Even so, it is important to be on the lookout for the early warning signs of hearing loss, as early detection can increase your treatment options and give you time to adapt. If you recognize any of the warning signs listed above, your next phone call should be to your doctor.



What is alopecia and signs to look for

Nearly everyone knows someone currently or previously suffering from alopecia. Alopecia areata causes hair loss varying in severity, ranging from small, well-defined patches to complete hair loss. However, the initial signs of the condition are not always so obvious.

Here are several common signs of alopecia:

Sign #1: Bald patches in beard

The first sign primarily concerns men as it relates to facial hair. Often, the first place alopecia will be noticed on a man's body is in the beard. Here, one may notice bald patches where hair ceases to grow while surrounding hair continues to grow. These bald spots can vary in size but tend to grow with time in the case of alopecia.

Should you notice bald patches in your beard (or mustache), it may be worth talking to your doctor to confirm that it is, in fact, caused by alopecia and to learn possible treatment options if needed.

Sign #2: Loss of eyelashes

While it's normal for everyone to shed eyelashes, individuals affected by alopecia areata will notice more regular eyelash loss. According to Lash Affair, the average human eyelash will stay attached to the eye for around three months. This works out to be between one and five natural lashes lost daily. However, people with alopecia could notice that they lose more than multiple times this number of lashes, and in some cases, they will not grow back.

This can cause your lashes to slowly disappear or give off a thin appearance. In either case, if you notice that your lashes are gradually (or quickly) disappearing without growing back, discuss it with your healthcare provider.

Sign #3: Grey hair at a young age

Although grey hair can be seen in men as early as 30, it's not common before the age of 50. For women, this is often even later. However, grey or dead hair can be the result of alopecia. Of course, this does not mean you should worry about grey hair. This should only be a reason for concern if it appears quickly, with regular shedding from your head.

Sign #4: Receding hairline

Before losing significant amounts of hair, it's common for those with alopecia to begin losing hair closer to their forehead. This can cause their hairline to move farther back and give off the appearance of a larger forehead. Although often a common sign of aging, for younger people, it could be a way to tell that they have alopecia. Talk to your doctor before jumping to conclusions.

If you or someone you know is unsure if you or they are affected by alopecia, it is crucial to know the signs of the condition before jumping to conclusions. If you notice one or multiple of these signs, booking an appointment with your family doctor can help prevent further hair loss and find a solution to your condition.

Signs you might not be ready for marriage

Marriage is a life-altering decision, so it's important to dig deep and know whether you're ready for this commitment. Here are a few signs that you might not be:

You still have lingering feelings for an ex.

The first time you see your ex with a new partner, it's challenging. The old memories come flooding back into your mind and you wonder how things might have been. You're not alone in this thinking; everyone has it at some point. But if you have obsessive thoughts about the relationship, you may be revealing that there are unresolved issues between you and your former flame.

There is nothing wrong with taking time off from dating while exploring what went wrong or right in previous relationships. This will ensure your future partner feels secure knowing exactly where their needs lie when entering into another long-term commitment.

You haven't experienced rough times together.

One thing to remember is that marriage isn't always happily ever after. It's about working through the hard times together. If you haven't experienced rough times yet with your partner, it could signal you're not ready for marriage. You need to ensure that both your personal support system and your partner's family are there for you when things don't go smoothly. You also need to understand how your potential spouse reacts to stressful situations and circumstances. Without this knowledge, you could be in for rough times ahead.

You're marrying to escape a situation.

There are many reasons to get married but escaping a situation or circumstance should not be one of them. Marriage is a big decision that you should make for the right reasons, not because you are trying to escape something. Marriage is hard enough without adding the extra stress of trying to escape a situation. So, if you are thinking about getting married, make sure it is for the right reasons.

You're not ready to make sacrifices.

When you're considering whether to get married, be honest with yourself about what you're willing to sacrifice. Marriage is a partnership, and in any partnership, there will be times when you're called upon to make sacrifices for the good of the relationship. Being married means compromising. If you're not willing to sacrifice, then marriage may not be the right choice for you right now.

So, are you ready to get married? If you're not sure, that's okay! Marriage is a big decision, and it makes sense to do it at the right time. It's better to wait until you feel confident in your relationship and ready to take on the responsibilities of being a spouse.



Easy ways to add more grains to your diet

Grains are an important part of any healthy diet. Packed with essential nutrients that can be hard to get from other food groups, like iron, fibre, and B vitamins, they also help reduce blood cholesterol, may lower the risk of heart disease and keep you fuller longer. Yet many of us still aren't consuming enough grains.

Here are some quick tips and ideas to add more grains to your diet:

Check your plate. An excellent rule of thumb is to divide up your plate to make sure you're getting the right amounts of everything you need to stay healthy. Fill up half with fruits and vegetables, a quarter with lean proteins and a quarter with grains.

Try a new recipe. The cold weather is a great excuse to experiment in the kitchen with a new comforting recipe for a stew, soup or chili. Add foods like barley, whole wheat pasta, wheat berries, or brown or



wild rice for a filling and nutritious meal. Look online or through your favourite magazines for inspiration that's high in grains.

Boost your snacking. Instead of reaching for the vending machine at work, pack some appetizing snacks at home that will satisfy your sweet or salty cravings. Try mixing oats and soy butter in an energy ball or grabbing a couple handfuls of trail mix. Mixing your favourite cereal with pretzels, raisins and nuts satisfies the sweet and salty. You can also dip veggies, pretzels or whole wheat crackers in hummus

energyzone

Yuzu!



Yuzu (*Citrus junos*) is a hybrid citrus fruit also known as yuja. It originated in China over 1,000 years ago and now grows in Japan, Korea, and other parts of the world.

The fruit is small, with a diameter of .5-7.5 cm. It has a relatively thick yellow skin and is more aromatic and much sourer than other citrus fruits. Particularly popular in East Asian cuisine, its juice, peel, and seeds serve as gourmet flavourings for vinegars, seasonings, sauces, and marmalades. Yuzu oil is also commonly used in cosmetics, perfume, and aromatherapy.

Yuzu is low in calories and particularly rich in vitamins A and C. Yuzu contains powerful antioxidants like vitamin C and limonene, which help neutralize harmful free radicals and reduce inflammation in your body.

Your footwear can make you more productive

Have you heard the latest TikTok trend for boosting productivity? Listen up:

Wearing running shoes inside can trick your brain into focus mode to help you get things done, especially if you have ADHD.

What's the science around this? Some sort of magical foot-brain connection. "The shoes may be triggering people's brains for productivity because traditionally, they wear shoes when being active and productive," says licensed clinical psychologist and ADHD specialist Marcy Caldwell, PsyD.

Just like walking around the house barefoot or in slippers might chill you out and make you less productive, adds psychologist Sanam Hafeez, PsyD. What you're doing here is basically playing mind games with yourself... and it works! While there isn't evidence or research behind wearing shoes for increased productivity, anecdotally, Drs. Caldwell and Hafeez have both found this hack effective. "I find I can keep going with sneakers on but can't wait to kick off heels or other shoes," Dr. Hafeez says.

So, next time you need a little kick to get you going while working from home or trying to organize your closet, consider skipping the energy drink or super strong latte and putting on running shoes instead.

And for added health measures, keep your indoor running shoes for indoor activities only. That way you are not tracking in dirt, germs and other things into your home.

