

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR ACHIEVING WELLBEING

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
Health and Wellbeing Task Force

WELL
be

WELL
feel

WELL
function

What is Well-Being?



Well-being is the integration of positive feelings, meaningful doing, and sustainable connecting. Well-being, including the lack of well-being in our lives, is something we're all deeply familiar with, and yet it is still a complex, almost indescribable concept. Well-being is about flourishing in multiple domains of living, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. A community vision for well-being focuses on what we all need, both as individuals and communities, to function, feel, and be well.

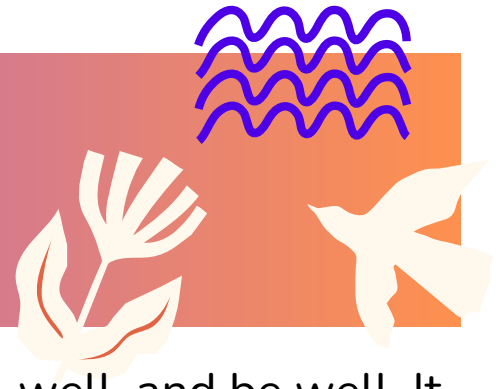
Elements of Well-Being

Most elements of well-being can be linked to universal human needs and desires that evolved in our bodies and minds over millions of years. Whether its connection, comfort, agency, and safety — or belonging, meaning, purpose, and pleasurable emotions— all of these are important to us modern humans because they have roots in our history, and were essential to our ancestors. In the last two centuries our world has changed so drastically that our well-being has been challenged as we depart from ways of living that make up our histories.

But how can we skillfully navigate our complex, demanding lives, and the desire to belong in a fast-moving world?

Developing our well-being is an active, lifelong process of choices, skill-building, and introspection that lead toward your own visions of health, fulfillment, and meaning.

What is Flourishing?



Flourishing is how we function well, feel well, and be well. It is a common term used in the social sciences to encapsulate all the things that make up our well-being. In practical terms, well-being and flourishing are the same—one's well-being is high when they are flourishing, and vice versa. Concepts like flourishing that attempt to describe the immense complexity of human experience differ across individuals and cultures as our deeply held values influence what it means for us to flourish.

Dimensions of Flourishing

Foundations

- Self Awareness
- Environmental Stability
- Growth Mindset
- Agency/Autonomy
- Spirituality

Psychological

- Self-Acceptance
- Self-Efficacy/Mastery
- Purpose/Meaning
- Engagement/Flow
- Hope/Optimism

Social

- Social Contribution
- Social Support
- Social Coherence
- Social Acceptance
- Social Hope
- Belonging

Physical

- Sleep/Rest
- Food/Eating
- Movement/Exercise

Emotional

- Positive Emotion

Mental Wellbeing



Practice Mindfulness

Take time each day to be present in the moment and focus on your thoughts and feelings without judgment to reduce anxiety and stress.

Manage Stress

Develop healthy coping mechanisms such as deep breathing, meditation, or engaging in hobbies you enjoy.

Seek Support

Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, or mental health professionals if you're struggling. You're not alone, and there are people who can help.

Set Boundaries

Maintain healthy boundaries in relationships to protect your own mental and emotional wellbeing. Learn to say no to activities or commitments that overwhelm you, and prioritize self-care.

Listen to Mental Health Podcasts

Explore mental health podcasts for insights and resources on topics like anxiety, depression, and resilience. Strategies and personal stories can inspire and support your mental wellbeing journey.

Anger Management

Learn strategies for anger control to maintain healthy relationships and reduce the impact of anger on your mental health.

Online Support Communities

Online support communities where individuals can connect with others facing similar challenges and share experiences, advice, and encouragement related to mental health and wellbeing.

Physical Wellbeing



Exercise Regularly

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Find activities you enjoy, whether it's walking, dancing, or playing a sport. Consider counting exercise hours as your work hours. Aim for a combination of aerobic exercise, strength training, and mindful movement.

Attend Wellness Events

Take advantage of wellness events which may include fitness challenges, nutrition workshops, and mental health screenings. Events like “Free Back Rub” provide opportunities for physical and mental relaxation, contributing to overall well being.

Access Wellbeing Resources

Universities offer comprehensive wellbeing resources to support students, faculty, and staff in various aspects of health and wellness. These resources may include fitness programs, counseling services, nutritional guidance, and stress management workshops.

Utilize Fitness Apps

Consider using fitness apps which provide a list of physical activity resources to help individuals stay active and healthy.

Eat a Balanced Diet. Stay Hydrated

Fuel your body with nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit processed foods, sugary drinks, coffee and excessive alcohol. Drink plenty of water throughout the day to maintain hydration and support bodily functions.

Get Enough Sleep

Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to support physical and mental health.

Social Wellbeing



Utilize Wellbeing Services

Resources such as peer support groups, social events, and community engagement opportunities to foster social connections and belonging.

Accountability Buddy

Pairing up with an accountability buddy or forming a “No Club” can help you stay motivated and committed to your social wellbeing goals. Whether it's exercising together, attending social events, or simply checking in regularly, having someone to support and encourage you can make a significant difference.

Cultivate Relationships

Invest time and energy in building and maintaining positive relationships with friends, family, and community members. Engage in group activities or hobbies that allow you to connect with others and build a sense of belonging.

Social Support

Share your feelings and experiences with friends, family, and supportive communities. Cultivate social connections and nurturing relationships to promote oxytocin release and mitigate stress responses.

Creative Outlets

Engage in creative activities such as painting, writing, or playing music to express yourself and relieve stress.

Practice Active Listening

Show empathy and understanding when communicating with others, and truly listen to what they have to say.

Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques



Mindfulness Meditation

Incorporate mindfulness meditation into your daily routine to reduce stress and promote mental clarity to harness the brain's capacity for neuroplasticity. Mindfulness promotes structural and functional changes in the brain, leading to enhanced stress resilience and emotional regulation. Regular mindfulness practice can strengthen neural circuits associated with stress coping mechanisms. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) provides information on mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.

Deep Breathing Exercises

Practice deep breathing exercises to calm your mind and body in times of stress. Incorporate controlled breathing exercises into your daily routine to modulate stress responses and promote relaxation. Try techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing or box breathing to alleviate stress and induce calmness. The American Psychological Association (APA) offers a simple breathing exercise you can try.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Learn PMR, a relaxation technique that involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups to reduce physical and mental tension. The Mayo Clinic provides instructions on how to practice PMR.

Engage in Visual Meditation

Incorporate visual meditation techniques into your daily routine. Visualizing calming scenes or positive outcomes can help dampen stress-related neural activity and promote psychological well-being. Try focusing on calming images or engaging in visualization exercises to promote mental relaxation.

Sleep



Sunlight Exposure

Align your light exposure patterns with natural circadian rhythms to optimize sleep-wake cycles and reduce stress. Expose yourself to bright light during the day to synchronize your internal clock and promote wakefulness, while minimizing light exposure in the evening to facilitate melatonin production and promote sleep onset. Spend time outdoors and expose yourself to natural sunlight, as light exposure plays a crucial role in regulating mood and circadian rhythms. It can boost serotonin levels, promoting feelings of well-being and reducing stress.

Blue Light Exposure

Create a conducive sleep environment by minimizing exposure to artificial light, especially blue light emitted by electronic devices, before bedtime. The blue light has detrimental effects on sleep quality and reducing screen time before sleep enhances sleep onset and duration.

Establish a Consistent Sleep Schedule

Prioritize quality sleep by maintaining a regular sleep-wake schedule. Aim for 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night to support optimal mental wellbeing.

Implement Sleep Hygiene Practices

Create a sleep-friendly environment by optimizing room temperature to support thermoregulatory mechanisms and enhance sleep quality. Keep your bedroom cool and comfortable to facilitate the body's natural cooling process during sleep, which is essential for restorative sleep and stress reduction.

The “No-Club”: Putting a Stop to Women's Dead-End Work



The book explores the concept of setting boundaries and saying "no" to commitments that do not align with one's values or priorities.

Prioritize Self-Care

Recognize that it's essential to prioritize your own well-being and mental health. This means being mindful of your energy levels, emotions, and personal limits.

Set Boundaries

Communicate your boundaries assertively but respectfully, and be firm in upholding them. This may involve saying "no" to requests or commitments that don't align with your priorities or values.

Practice Assertiveness

Develop assertiveness skills to express your needs, preferences, and limits effectively. Assertive communication involves expressing yourself honestly and respectfully while considering the needs of others. This can help prevent feelings of resentment or burnout and promote healthy relationships.

Learn to Delegate

Recognize that it's okay to delegate tasks or responsibilities to others when you feel overwhelmed. Delegating can help lighten your workload and free up time for activities that are important to you. Trusting others to help can also strengthen relationships and foster collaboration.

Reflect on Your Values

Take time to reflect on your values, priorities, and long-term goals. When faced with choices or opportunities, consider whether they align with your values and contribute to your overall well-being and personal success. Find information about the book [here](#).

Emerging Techniques for Achieving Well-being



Biofeedback Therapy

Biofeedback therapy involves using electronic sensors to monitor physiological processes such as heart rate, muscle tension, or skin temperature. By providing real-time feedback, individuals can learn to control these processes and reduce stress levels.

Mindful Movement

While mindfulness meditation has gained popularity, mindful movement practices like Tai Chi, Qigong, or Feldenkrais are emerging as effective ways to reduce stress, improve balance, and enhance body awareness. These practices combine gentle movements with focused attention and deep breathing.

Vagus Nerve Stimulation

The vagus nerve plays a key role in regulating stress responses and promoting relaxation. Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, singing, or certain types of yoga can stimulate the vagus nerve, leading to reduced stress and improved mood.

Sensory Deprivation Tanks

Also known as float tanks or isolation tanks, sensory deprivation tanks provide a relaxing environment where individuals float in saltwater in a dark, soundproof tank. This sensory deprivation can promote deep relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance mental clarity.

Forest Bathing and Ecotherapy

Originating from Japan, forest bathing, or Shinrin-yoku, involves immersing oneself in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest environment. Research suggests that spending time in nature can lower cortisol levels, reduce stress, and boost immune function.

Take a Break!

50 Ways to Take a Break

REST

- Take a Bath
- Listen to Music
- Take a Nap
- Go to a body of water
- Watch the clouds
- Light a candle
- REST your legs up on a wall
- Let out a sigh
- Fly a Kite
- Watch the stars
- Learn something **NEW**
- Listen to a guided relaxation
- Read a Book
- Write a Letter
- 2x More twice as slowly
- Take Deep Belly Breaths
- MEDITATE**
- Call a Friend
- Meander around town
- Buy some Flowers
- Find a relaxing scent
- Walk Outside
- Notice your Body
- Go for a run
- Take a bike ride
- View some ART
- Eat a meal in **SILENCE**
- Turn off all electronics
- Go to a park
- Pet a furry creature
- Create your own coffee break
- Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes
- Drive somewhere **NEW**
- Go to a Farmers Market
- Forgive Someone
- Read or watch something **FUNNY**
- Engage in small acts of **KINDNESS**
- Color with Crayons
- Make some **MUSIC**
- Climb a tree
- Let go of something
- Do some gentle stretches
- Paint on a surface other than paper
- Write a quick poem
- Read poetry
- Put on some music and **DANCE**
- Give Thanks

Source: www.horndog.com Art by [Paula Menden](http://www.ohmydays.com)

Useful Resources



1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers valuable tips and resources on how to cope with stress, relaxation techniques, time management, and seeking support from others.
2. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) offers information on mindfulness and mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.
3. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) provides tips on caring for mental health.
4. Mental Health America can help you assess your anxiety levels and provide strategies for managing them effectively.
5. The American Psychological Association (APA) provides guidance on understanding and managing anger.
6. Explore mental health podcasts for insights and resources on topics like anxiety, depression, and resilience.
7. Explore the Healthfinder by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) for a wide range of health and wellness resources, including tips on physical activity, healthy eating, and preventive care.
8. Become a Park Health Ambassador for The National Park Service that offers resources on the health benefits of nature and tips for incorporating nature into your routine.

Tips and Resources for Achieving Wellbeing

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
Health and Wellbeing Task Force 2024

THIS DOCUMENT IS COMPILED FOR THE USE OF MEMBERS OF THE AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION BY THE AAEA HEALTH AND WELLBEING TASK FORCE TO HELP MEMBERS IDENTIFY ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE WELLBEING.

In addition to the cited sources in the document, ChatGPT was used to outline the main themes in the sea of scientific literature on mental health and wellbeing to create a compact document to be used on-the-go.

Should you have suggestions or comments about the themes and resources in the document, please contact Nilufer Cetik (ncetik@asu.edu).