



# January 2016

## 16 Ways To Improve Your Mental Health In 2016

*If you're set on making a vow for improvement next year, add mental health to the top of your priority list. Here are some easy ways to do that:*

### **1. Talk to your doctor.**

The first initial step of any health transformation is to consult a medical professional about the appropriate steps to take.

### **2. Practice gratitude.**

Life's so much better when you're acknowledging the bright side.

### **3. Try meditation.**

Try just setting aside five minutes for meditation when you wake up or before you go to bed. You'll likely either start or end your day on a positive note.

### **4. Write in a journal.**

Putting pen to paper can be a liberating and cathartic experience. Try keeping a journal or even just writing your anxieties and tossing them in the trash.

### **5. Go to therapy.**

There are multiple methods, from talk therapy to behavioral therapy, and a mental health professional can help you figure out the avenue that works best for you.

### **6. Exercise at least a few times per week.**

When you exercise, your brain releases the feel-good chemicals, giving you an instant mood boost. Additionally, try to take your workout outdoors. Research suggests group walks (yes, walking is considered exercise) in nature can help ease depressive symptoms.

### **7. Lean on your support system.**

A 2011 study found that spending time with your BFF can reduce stress. Research also shows that social connection is imperative to mental health.

### **8. Educate yourself.**

Mental health conditions are much easier to manage when you know what's really happening inside the mind. Learn as much as you can about what you're dealing with or what your loved ones are experiencing.

### **9. Adopt a well-balanced diet.**

Eating well is key to overall health, including your mental well-being. Try incorporating fruits and vegetables in your diet more often along with brain-boosting foods like walnuts and spinach.



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## **10. Listen to sad music.**

Research shows sad songs may help you heal after a breakup. They also may prompt a few tears -- which science says is good for you. One recent study found that a good cry can help boost your mood.

## **11. Travel.**

Research suggests that planning a vacation can increase your overall happiness as you anticipate your trip.

## **12. Sleep more.**

Who doesn't love an excuse to sleep in? A lack of sleep doesn't just wreak havoc on your physical health, but it seriously messes with your mental health.

## **13. Do a digital detox.**

Research suggests that people can feel depressive symptoms from scrolling Facebook, likely due to the internal social comparison that's taking place. The antidote? A break. Ditch those devices every so often for the sake of your mental health.

## **14. Express kindness toward someone else.**

Want to feel good yourself? Make someone else feel good. Studies show that kindness can be cyclical. When you do a good deed for others that makes them happier, which in turns make you happier, too. Even the smallest gesture can make a difference. Pay it forward every so often and reap the benefits.

## **15. Learn to say no.**

It may be just two tiny letters, but this is your gentle reminder that "no" is a complete sentence. Burnout happens easily -- in the office and outside of it. Make sure to spend some time alone and prioritize your well-being. If you don't want to go to a party, don't do it. If you feel overwhelmed by your workload, speak up. Self-care is not selfish.

## **16. Talk to others about mental health.**

You never know who you may be helping by opening up about your own experience. Celebrities from Demi Lovato to Colton Haynes and brave projects like documentaries and photo series have all addressed mental health issues this year alone -- and our society is much better for it.

*Source: Lindsay Holmes Healthy Living Editor, The Huffington Post, 12/17/2015*