

# Supporting Our Well-being: Tips for a Balanced Life

Our physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health all have an impact on our overall health and well-being. Here are some actions that we can do each day to help us feel better and focus on other parts of our mental and physical state that may need more attention.

## Time for sleep

- Create a sleep schedule and try to stick to it each day
- Avoid drinking caffeine (coffee, pop or energy drinks) after 2:00 p.m.
- Don't look at your phone for at least one hour before bed
- Create a simple and consistent bedtime routine (drink tea, read a book, or have a warm shower)
- Try to keep your room dark when you are sleeping and cover up any lights



*When we sleep, we can learn new things or receive guidance and messages from our ancestors through our dreams. Sleep is also the time when our body heals and recovers.*

## Food is fuel

- Eat natural foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and beans, and avoid packaged or processed food
- Try to limit the five white gifts: flour, milk, sugar, salt, and lard
- You can find healthy foods on sale or use canned or frozen vegetables
- Find a friend or group that you can make healthy eating habits and shopping goals with
- Drink lots of water to stay hydrated – try adding some fruits and herbs to your water



*We can try to cook and eat traditional foods or maintain a diet similar to our ancestors. We can also come together with others during a feast where we celebrate our identity, culture and community!*

## Get moving

- Do an activity each day that gets your heart pumping (e.g., walking, online video workouts, or even doing chores as exercise)
- Find something that you enjoy – even if you are hesitant, give it a try and see how it makes you feel once you are finished
- Be kind with yourself – focus on what your body needs instead of doing exercises or workouts that don't feel good
- If you are having a hard time starting to exercise, start slow – you can even do an activity for one minute each day and then slowly build up over time
- Do things each day that make you feel productive – try scheduling your day to help you stick to a plan

*Connecting to our culture can be exercise too – like dancing, hunting, being on the land, foraging, or doing an activity with someone that you want to build a connection with.*

## Reflect on your identity

Take time to learn more about yourself:

- Where do I come from?
  - Who can I lean on for support when I need it?
- Where am I going?
  - What goals do I want to achieve?
  - What values are important to me?
- Why am I here?
  - What am I grateful for?
  - How can I help others?
- Who am I?
  - What do I like to do?
  - What do I love about my identity, culture and community?



*We can learn more about ourselves and receive guidance from others or the spirit world by spending time with our family and community, praying, or participating in ceremony or rites of passage.*

We can't do all of these things all of the time, but give it a try and start slow! It is important for our overall well-being that we prioritize our health.

Remember that you are not alone. You can talk with a medical professional if you are experiencing any significant issues with sleep, eating, or physical exercise. There are many people out there who are interested in making these changes in their lives too. **We can all work together to support each other as a community!**

This resource was developed by a team of experts, including young people and a Knowledge Keeper, with support from Indspire, Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario and Shkaabe Makwa at CAMH.



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