



'Tis the season of resolutions and for many, better health (physical & mental) is the resolution for year 2024!

Proactively investing in your physical and mental health is crucial in our fast-paced world. This can involve incorporating exercise into your daily routine or engaging in hobbies and interests that contribute to long-term positive effects on your mental and emotional well-being. Thankfully, many of us are already on a journey to make our 2024 more healthy – mind & body. Nearly half of this year's resolutions revolve around getting in better shape, whether physically or mentally, according to research by Forbes Health. If you are one of those who have decided to focus on your overall health this year, keep reading to get some tips to stay on track.

According to WHO "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Physical Health

McMillan Health defines physical health, also known as physical wellness, as more than just how fit you are. Physical health is how well your organs and body systems function.

Physical health is the cornerstone of overall well-being, and serves as a vital foundation for a safe and productive life, both in your personal and professional life. Although physical health is the most obvious indicator of one's well-being, it is often taken for granted. Until we are sick, ill, or injured, many of us do not prioritize and invest time and energy in our physical health. Physical health includes various elements that together contribute to one's bodily state and ability to function optimally.

Exercise: Regular exercise stands as a pillar of physical health, promoting cardiovascular fitness, strengthening muscles, and enhancing flexibility. Engaging in physical activity not only improves physical strength but also has profound effects on mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression while boosting mood and cognitive function. See the below chart to see some long-term benefits of physical activity.

Diet: A well-rounded and balanced diet plays a crucial role in supporting physical health by providing essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that fuel the body's processes and fortify its defenses against illnesses. WHO has an excellent diet guideline to help you plan a healthy diet.

Rest: Prioritizing sufficient rest and quality sleep is fundamental in allowing the body to recover, regenerate, and maintain its resilience against daily challenges.

Health Checkups: Emphasizing preventive measures, such as regular health check-ups, screenings, and vaccinations, serves as a proactive approach to identify potential health risks early and enable timely intervention and treatment.

Hygiene: Practices, including handwashing, whether you are home or at workplace creates an environment that minimizes the spread of illnesses, ensuring the well-being of all individuals.

Keeping physical health in the workplace top of mind not only enhances your ability to perform tasks effectively but also contributes to a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment overall. Understanding and advocating for the importance of physical health not only benefits you, but also serve as a cornerstone for a resilient and thriving community.

What is Mental Health?

The Canadian Mental Health Association defines Mental Health as:

"Mental health" is a concept similar to "physical health": it refers to a state of well-being. Mental health includes our emotions, feelings of connection to others, our thoughts and feelings, and being able to manage life's highs and lows."

DID YOU KNOW?

The Canadian Mental Health Association estimates that in any given year 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health crisis or be diagnosed with a mental illness.

Mental health is a crucial factor in your overall well-being, deserving the same attention and care as physical health within any workplace or community. It includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing how we think, feel, and act. Mental health impacts not just your mental well-being but can also influence your physical health. For example, depression can cause headaches, fatigue and digestive problems, and anxiety can create an upset stomach. Other symptoms can include insomnia, restlessness and difficulty concentrating etc.

If you are focusing on your mental health this year, registered psychotherapist Josh Zettel suggests:

- Getting more sunshine or supplement with vitamin D
- Better nutrition and exercise
- Document your progress
- Meditate
- Build on positive connections and relationships

Mental Health in the Workplace

Prioritizing mental health in the workplace is essential for fostering a positive environment where individuals can thrive. Here are some tips on how you can foster mental well-being at work:

- Work on eliminating/ improving job-related stress by asking questions, setting realistic expectations, undergoing training and upskilling.
- Request for help and assistance from supervisors and colleagues when something feels overwhelming.
- Cultivate a culture of support and understanding within teams so everyone feels included and supported.
- Encourage open conversations about mental health, providing access to resources like counseling services or mental health days, and implementing stress-reduction strategies.
- Focus on maintaining work-life balance in your team, especially if you are in a leadership role.
- As a leader, promoting awareness and education about mental health issues helps combat stigma and allows individuals to seek help without fear of judgment.

It is important to note that adopting strategies to prioritize mental health not only benefits individuals but also enhances productivity, creativity, and overall workplace satisfaction. Mental health is a spectrum, and everyone experiences challenges differently. By championing mental health initiatives, companies not only nurture healthier, happier individuals but also build stronger, more resilient communities within the workplace.

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Helps maintain a healthy body weight



Decreases risk of heart disease



Lowers blood pressure



Reduces the risk of certain cancers



Lowers the risk of Type 2 diabetes



Increases muscle strength & function



Improves bone health & strength



Helps promote positive mental health



Helps reduce the risk of dementia



Prioritize your well-being as a lifestyle, not just a resolution.

Have questions regarding this bulletin, or workplace health and safety?

Contact our operating partner at: safety@agilus.ca

