

# STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

## Tips for Improved Mental Health

Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social well-being. It is more than the absence of a mental illness — it is essential to your overall health and quality of life. The UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center offers free, confidential counseling services to address mental health needs. For more details, visit us online at [uab.edu/eacc](http://uab.edu/eacc).

Here are some self-care tips to increase your mental health:



### **GET REGULAR EXERCISE.**

Just 30 minutes of walking every day can boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.



### **EAT HEALTHY, REGULAR MEALS & STAY HYDRATED.**

A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Pay attention to your intake of caffeine and alcohol and how they affect your mood and well-being — for

some, decreasing caffeine and alcohol consumption can be helpful.



### **TRY A RELAXING ACTIVITY.**

Explore relaxation or wellness programs/apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other low-stress activities you enjoy, such as listening to music, reading or spending time in nature.

### **MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY.**

Stick to a schedule and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.

### **SET GOALS & PRIORITIES.**

Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say no to new tasks when you feel like you're taking on too much. Try to appreciate what you have accomplished at the end of the day.

### **PRACTICE GRATITUDE.**

Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down or replay them in your mind.



### **FOCUS ON POSITIVITY.**

Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.

### **STAY CONNECTED.**

Reach out to friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.