

IMPROVING WELLNESS THROUGH OCCUPATION

Health and wellness is more than not having an illness and disability. It is “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being” - The World Health Organisation.

Wellness matters because everything we do and every emotion we feel relates to our well-being. In turn, our well-being directly affects our actions and emotions. It's an ongoing circle.

Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life. What you do every day has an impact on your health and well-being! Making time to do what you love or something that is important to you can help to ease your stress, lift your mood and expand your social circle.



Wellness and Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy focuses on the importance of participation in meaningful activities and occupations and how these impact upon the health and well-being of an individual throughout our lives. The word occupation includes all the activities that people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves, enjoying life, and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities.

Oftentimes we get so busy with life doing the day-to-day tasks, rushing from one thing to another that we forget to stop and enjoy life. But taking the time to do things that we love and are meaningful is important –not only for our short-term happiness, but also for our mental and emotional well-being.

Engaging in meaningful occupations can:

GIVE STRESS THE BOOT AND IMPROVE HEALTH

Hobbies offer a break from the daily grind. But did you know hobbies also have physical and mental health benefits? Dancing or gardening, running or baking — it doesn't matter whether your chosen pastime is active or more relaxed. Both vigorous, physical activity such as walking, running, kickboxing and calming, rhythmic activity like painting, knitting or gardening releases tension.

Whatever your preference, research shows that when you engage in interests you enjoy, you're more likely to have lower stress levels, a lower heart rate, and a better mood. You're also more likely to engage in the world around you. That means less boredom — and less time to fixate on the stressors.

CHALLENGE YOUR MIND, BOOST YOUR BRAIN

Interested in learning something new? Evidence has shown that activities such as photography, learning a musical instrument, art & crafts and woodwork can reduce stress and enhance confidence. Check out classes offered in your local colleges, library and community centre.



MORE MOTIVATION

When you do something that you love every day your motivation will improve. Having something to look forward to, especially on those days when everything is going wrong can give you a much-needed boost of motivation to help you make it through the difficult times.

USE YOUR PASSION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Positive relationships can make us happier and healthier. When we're happy and feeling revived, we're able to spend more time and energy on others. Being able to take a genuine interest in others can lead to stronger relationships. When doing things that you enjoy, why not invite a friend or loved one to do the activity with you? This can be a great way to connect and will allow you to accomplish two things at once –developing relationships, while finishing things that are important to you.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Doing something you enjoy every day helps to make you more productive. When you have something to look forward to every day, your workload will feel lighter, and you will be more motivated to complete your tasks and deadlines on time. Almost like a small reward, doing something you love everyday will spur you on throughout the day, keeping you on track and working towards your goals.

A NEW OUTLOOK

Doing something enjoyable everyday can help to improve your outlook on life. Getting stuck in the same routine can lead to feelings of frustration and despair, but breaking out of routine to do something enjoyable everyday can leave you feeling refreshed, and ready to take on the world.



Obstacles to Occupation

If you encounter obstacles that prevent you from doing what you love such as chronic illness, fatigue, pain etc. there are several ways of breaking daily tasks down into more manageable steps (work simplification), preserving your energy for the activities you enjoy doing and decreasing the amount of energy required to complete those activities.

There are many aids/equipment for daily living to assist in everyday living and make activities easier, faster and more enjoyable to perform. These are simple low cost items that can be purchased from retail outlets, pharmacies, hardware stores, supermarkets, homeware stores and online.

BOTTOM LINE: Start enjoying all the health-related benefits that come with doing what you love. While you may be tempted to say you don't have time, or will do it later, it's important to make time to do things that you enjoy. No matter what it is, the important thing is that it will give you something to look forward to, provide a much-needed break from your usual routine and help to give you a stronger appreciation for life.



START IMPROVING YOUR WELLNESS TODAY....

What are the steps I need to take to get started?
