

## Five ways to wellbeing

- **Connect**
- **Be active**
- **Take notice**
- **Keep learning**
- **Give to others**

**Connect:** Evidence shows that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need. Social relationships - both in and out of work - are critical to supporting our wellbeing. Aim to do something different today:

- Talk to a colleague rather than sending an email.
- Speak to someone new.
- Have lunch with a colleague.
- Take time to ask a colleague about their weekend or about the task they mentioned was proving a challenge – and really listen.
- Offer to give a colleague or neighbour a lift to work, or travel home with them.
- Make time each day to spend with friends or family.

**Be active:** As well as all the usual health benefits, regular physical exercise is also linked to lower rates of depression and anxiety – and is key to promoting wellbeing. Whilst you can do a tough gym workout, slower-paced activities, like walking, can provide the same protective benefits, and may also have the added bonus of building social connections. Here are a few ways you can get active today:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Go for a walk at lunch-time - and invite a colleague to join you.
- Sign up to (or start) a sports team or event.
- Walk to a colleague's desk instead of calling or emailing.
- Do some gentle stretches before you leave home in the morning.
- Get off the bus or train one stop early – and walk the rest of the way.

**Take notice:** Studies show that being more aware of the present moment - including your feelings, thoughts, body and environment – can positively change the way you feel and the way you approach challenges. Take advantage of 'mindful moments' whenever you can – on your commute or when you are starting to feel anxious or under pressure.

- Bring in a plant for your workspace.
- Take time out for yourself each day.
- Talk to a friend or colleague when you need support.
- Really 'stop and notice' all the good things in your daily life – whether it's savouring a square of chocolate, the sense of happiness when you finally get a seat on the train or sharing great feedback with your team.

**Keep learning:** Learning new skills builds our confidence and self-esteem – and the linked practice of goal-setting is also associated with higher levels of wellbeing. What can you learn today?

- Register for a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - <https://www.mooc-list.com/>
- Read a book or watch the news.
- Research something you have always been curious about.
- Register for a course on something you always wished you could do or know about.
- Ask a friend, colleague or neighbour to share a skill with you.

**Give to others:** Research shows that a simple act of kindness once a week over a six-week period can lead to an increase in wellbeing. Even the smallest act can count – a smile, a thank you or a kind word – and can also help us to strengthen existing, or make new, connections. What can you do this week to spread some happiness?

- Volunteer in your local community.
- Ask a colleague how they are and really listen to the answer.
- Arrange a day out for you and a friend or relative.
- Support a colleague's development – informally or through a mentoring programme.
- Offer to lend a hand if you see a stranger struggling with bags or a pushchair.

### **Recommended reading . . .**

- *Mind over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think* by Dennis Greenberger and Christine A Padesky
- *Overcoming Perfectionism* by Roz Shafran, Sarah Egan and Tracey Wade
- *The Compassionate Mind* by Paul Gilbert
- *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E Frankl
- *Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems* by Colin Espie
- *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Fragile World* by Mark Williams and Danny Penman

### **Further resources**

- BBC Article (6 June 2014 by James Gallagher) "*Sleep's memory role discovered*"
- TED Talk by Shawn Achor (2011) – "*The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance*"
- TED Talk by Kelly McGonigal (2013) – "*How to make stress your friend*"
- FT Article (4 May 2014 by Harriet Agnew) "*Mindfulness gives stressed-out bankers something to think about*"

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