

January 2022

1/3/22 Mental Health in Young Adults

Recently, the CDC surveyed over 5,000 young adults and found that 75% had one or more adverse mental/behavioral health symptoms. Seeing a mental health counselor is certainly a pivotal step in overcoming these challenges, but there's one another step that could really help as well- physical activity. I'm Clarissa Moon with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service here to tell you more about the effects of physical activity on mental health.

- 1- Exercise increases "feel good" hormones and neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins.
- 2- Rewires the stress response
 - a. Normally, stress will trigger the amygdala, which is a primitive, reactive part of the brain. However, with exercise, stress will fire in the more logical/judgmental parts of our brains, the prefrontal cortex.
- 3- Improve self-esteem
 - a. Exercise offers physiological and neurological benefits that help us feel better about ourselves and have a more positive outlook on life.
- 4- Make Exercise fun!
 - a. Make it social by partnering up with a friend or joining a group fitness class.
 - b. Move *your* way with something you enjoy such as golf or dance
 - c. Highlight how it makes you feel- think about the weight loss and improved mental outlook that you experience after exercising.

Next time you're feeling down, consider taking an exercise pill! For more information, visit acefitness.org or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/7947/how-exercise-can-boost-mental-health-in-young-adults/>

1/10/2022 Brain Health and Fish

They say you are what you eat! Even if that's true, I don't recommend calling your friends heifers or sons of bucks. I'm Clarissa Moon with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and today, let's talk about our non-mammal food friends. When's the last time you had fish for dinner?

If I called you a *Darn Handsome Ally*, would you let it go to your head? Well, there is one form of DHA that I do hope goes to your head, but not the darn handsome kind. I'm talking about the DHA that's an omega-3 fatty acid. This Darn Handsome ACID is required to keep your brain functioning normally and efficiently.

DHA is associated with higher cognitive functioning and memory in your later years. To reap the benefits of this Darn Handsome Acid, you need to "save" and maintain it through consuming foods rich in DHA, such as fish.

Now, there's no need to completely change your diet and protein sources, just keep in mind that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 8 ounces of seafood each week. Fish is a great source of lean protein and can actually contribute to heart health as well as brain health.

Last but not least, for all of you land-lovers, it's possible to get DHA through other means as well. Ground flax seed, walnuts and chia seeds are also darn handsome sources of DHA.

For more info, visit eatright.org or panola.agrilife.org.

[https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthy-aging/brain-health-and-fish?utm_source=Social Toolkit&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=2021Q3](https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthy-aging/brain-health-and-fish?utm_source=Social%20Toolkit&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=2021Q3)

1/19/22: How to establish a good wake-up routine

You've probably heard the phrase "Carpe Diem" or "Seize the day". But some days, we all struggle to feel the good vibes and get our days going. I'm Clarissa Moon with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service here with some "Ready, set go!" tips on how to seize the day when you're not in a carpe diem kind of mood.

- Ready- The first step in starting a day off right is getting enough sleep!
 - Adults need a solid 7-9 hours every night.
 - Feel the rhythm: try to stick to a consistent sleep schedule, even on weekends and days off. Having a consistent sleep/wake time helps your biological rhythm keep at its best.
- Set!
 - This one is hard for me, avoid hitting the snooze button! It's no good for your brain to nod off and wake up every few minutes; it only makes you feel groggier when you actually get up.
 - Help out your circadian rhythm with lights. Research suggests that morning light can help you wake up more naturally and quickly.
 - Get moving- even just 5-10 minutes of exercise can give you a kickstart.
- Go!
 - Break the fast with a good breakfast-it's called the most important meal of the day for a reason!
 - Pep talks- if you have a daunting day ahead, or even just a mundane one, taking 5-10 minutes for your mental health can significantly reduce stress and anxiety.
 - Jump in- Once it's go time- try tackling the harder tasks first. Research shows that your brain is at its peak during mid-morning, plus by getting the big ones out of the way, the rest of the day will feel like a breeze!

I hope these tips made you Ready, Set, Go on your way to a carpe diem routine! For more information visit heart.org or panola.agrilife.org.

https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/sleep/how-to-establish-a-wakeup-routine-for-a-good-morning-every-morning?utm_source=healthy+for+good+fy+2122&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Healthy%20For%20Good%20-%2082821&utm_content=hero+cta

1/24/2022: Simple ways to Boost Your Child's Health

If you're looking to make some healthy changes in your family's life, it doesn't have to be complicated. I'm Clarissa Moon with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service here with 4 quick tips on improving your child's health.

1. Shop smart. Get your kids involved in choosing what you buy and what they eat. Set boundaries but give them options like saying "You need to eat a vegetable. Would you rather have celery or broccoli?".
2. Cook and eat together. This is another great way to include children in the meal process. Give your kids some age-appropriate tasks like washing the fruits/veggies or mixing or pressing buttons on the microwave. Sit down and share a meal as a family as often as possible.
3. Healthy Habits- be a good role model. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, buy whole grain options, and choose low-fat dairy for starters.
4. Get moving. Try exercising together as a family or encourage everyone to get exercise however they choose. Kids need 60 minutes a day, adults need 150 minutes a week.

There you have it, four simple tips on boosting your family's health! To learn more, visit food.unl.edu or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://food.unl.edu/newsletter/food-fun-young-children/simple-ways-boost-your-child%E2%80%99s-health>