



What's in your Mental Health Toolbox?

Managing your mental health can be a challenge and in difficult times it can be hard to think clearly to recall what steps you've taken in the past to help yourself out of the hole.

The Mental Health Toolbox is designed to help you think about what tools you need in your personal toolbox to help your mental wellbeing.

Fold 3

Not all of the tools set out will appeal to you but there should be a few things that can help – think of it as a pick and mix tailored to your personal needs.

Read the descriptions for each section and pick tools from the lists provided. Add your tools to the graphic on the next page, or add your own if you know there's a tool that will help you.

Keep your toolbox in a safe place and think about keeping it with you when possible.

1. Professional support

This can vary for different people – some may need to refer to websites to better understand their issues, while others may need to seek assistance from a doctor or counselling service.

Pick at least three from this list to put in your toolbox that you would be most comfortable with approaching if needed.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • GP | • Support group |
| • Mental health supporters | • Carer |
| • Counselling | • Support numbers |
| • Employee assistance programme | • Websites |
| • Samaritans | • |
| | • |

2. Personal network

Strong relationships are important to our mental health and wellbeing. Not everyone feels comfortable with seeking professional support so it's worth identifying who is in your personal life that you can turn to.

It's also worth thinking about people who may be damaging your mental health and what value they bring to your life – do you need to stay connected to them, or would it help to take a break from them or end the relationship?

Pick at least three people from this list to put in your toolbox and name them.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| • Friend | • Colleague |
| • Relative | • |
| • Partner | • |
| • Religious leader | |

3. Activity

Physical activity has many benefits for mental health. Doing something physical releases cortisol to help us manage stress, releases endorphins to make us happier and feel good, and tires us out to help us sleep.

Find a physical activity that you enjoy and build it into your day. Most people should do about 30 minutes' exercise at least five days a week.

Pick at least one activity from this list to put in your toolbox.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| • Walking | • Gym |
| • Gardening | • Yoga |
| • Running | • Cycling |
| • Housework | • Pilates |
| • Swimming | • Dancing |
| • Active computer game/VR | • Exercise class |
| • Join a team | • |
| • Sport | • |
| • DIY | |

4. Places of safety

Knowing where you feel most comfortable or where you can go to clear your head can be important, especially if you reach a crisis point.

Pick at least two places to go if you think being there will help you in your time of need.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| • Local park | • Relative's home |
| • Your home | • Friend's home |
| • Place of worship | • Beach |
| • Garden | • Community centre |
| • Work | • Boots consultation room (for people living with domestic abuse) |
| • In your vehicle | • |
| • Gym | • |
| • Swimming pool | |

5. Daily goals

Setting yourself a routine can help you to manage your expectations and offers you a certain level of control.

Pick four goals from the list below, or add your own, that you will add to your daily routine and stick to.

Make sure your goals are manageable and achievable – stepping out of our comfort zone is important but don't push yourself further than you need to.

Try to add your activity into your daily routine too.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Walk the dog | • Make a list of long-term goals |
| • Cook a meal | • Tidy your home |
| • Practice mindfulness | • Get into bed at a set time |
| • Finish work on time | • |
| • Do the washing up | • |
| • Read a chapter of a book | |
| • Write in your diary | |
| • Contact a friend | |

6. Leave it out

As well as identifying the things that can help you when it's needed, it's important to understand the things that trigger the issues you face.

You can see long term benefits by taking time out to think about what affects your mental health and how you can reduce their impact or remove them from your life.

Pick from this list, or add your own, all the things you know have an impact on your mental health.

Don't add them to your toolbox but put them next to it and pledge to take time to better understand their effect on you.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Alcohol | • Smoking |
| • Drugs/medication | • Work/life balance |
| • Relationships, both personal or professional | • Issues/trauma from your past |
| • Debt | • Digital detox |
| • Your job or work environment | • Demands from others |
| • Body image | • Being away from home |
| • Diagnosed mental health issue | • Lack of sleep |
| • Eating disorder | • |
| • Addiction | • |
| • Living environment | |
| • Physical condition | |

 **Personal network**

 **Daily goals**

 **Activity**

Leave it out 

 **Professional support**

 **Places of safety**

Mental

Health

Toolbox

