

# HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY MIND

## MIND GAMES

October was mental health month and here at Hollard Health we're all for giving you the support you need to be your happiest, healthiest self.

Did you know that whatever is going on in your head, directly impacts the health of your body? And whatever is going on in your body, directly impacts what's going on in your head? It's all interconnected!

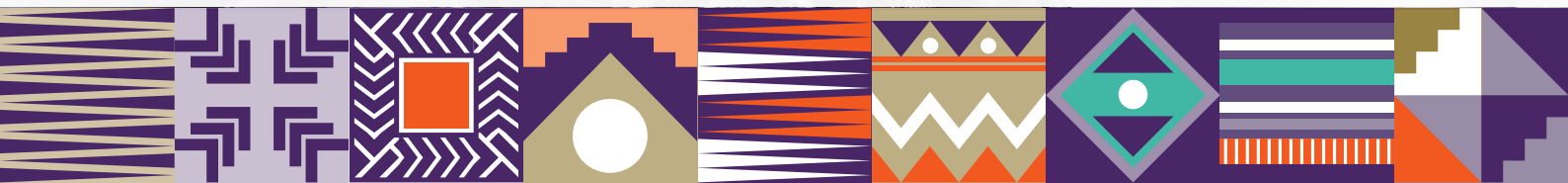
So what can we do to **feel better in our bodies and our minds?** There are two really simple things you can do each day to improve your mental, and therefore overall wellbeing. You can **exercise well and you can eat well.**

But before we get to the simple steps...there are times where medical intervention is absolutely necessary and a simple walk around the block isn't going to cut it. If you have a mental illness, struggle emotionally, or have mental health concerns – or know someone who does – there are ways to get help. Please reach out to us if you need to understand more about what your benefits include for psychiatric care.



EAT WELL

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# EXERCISE

## EXERCISE

Okay so we know that exercise comes with a number of benefits: stronger muscles, more energy, weight management and better sleep. Often the boost to mood is just seen as an added bonus but it's actually one of the most important components to exercising.

When we exercise, we produce hormones that help us to feel good. A small dose of exercise can improve your mood for several hours and even when it isn't immediately noticeable, if you do it regularly, becomes cumulative.

It has also been effectively used for treating clinical anxiety and even people who have been admitted to hospital with psychological disorders.

### HOW MUCH DO I ACTUALLY NEED?

The good news is that you need far less exercise to feel good than you do for weight loss. 15 to 20 minutes of moderate cardio can make a big difference – even stepping outside and taking a five minute walk each day, or choosing the stairs over the lift. The most important thing is to choose something that you really enjoy so that you feel good while doing it. Do you like to dance? Do you enjoy being in water? Do you like to stretch and breathe? Dance classes, swimming and yoga can all improve the mood – **take your pick!**



## FOOD FOR MOOD

So, can that burger you ate for lunch actually impact your mood? Simply put: yes. What you eat, directly impacts your mood – take a look:

### Six Foods that can make you happier

**Whole grains:** Whole grains are slower to digest therefore minimising the chances of blood sugar spikes that affect mood and increase inflammation. 3 to 5 servings of grains like brown rice, barley, steel-cut oats, millet or quinoa every day.

**Fermented foods:** These foods contain both pre and probiotics and help to super charge gut health by helping to balance good and bad bacteria. They have been shown to reduce cortisol which lowers stress levels and improves overall wellbeing. Fermented foods include kimchi, sauerkraut, pickles, kombucha, and kefir.

**Omega 3s:** Rates of depression in countries that consume higher amounts of fish are lower. The reason is believed to be because fish has high amounts of omega 3 fatty acids – these healthy fats help to develop healthy brain tissue, decreasing chances of depression and anxiety. You can also get these healthy fats from chia seeds, walnuts, and flaxseed.

**Leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables:** Leafy greens, like kale, spinach and Swiss chard, are high in folate which helps to regulate mood through serotonin and dopamine (the feel good chemicals). Meanwhile, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage have loads of fibre in them which support gut health by lowering inflammation and permeability of the gut lining. This can reduce symptoms of depression.

**Garlic and onions:** Garlic and onions are prebiotic foods, that feed your healthy gut microbiome. They also have flavanols that are powerful anti-inflammatories, preventing oxidative stress that has been linked to depression and anxiety.

**Vitamin D:** There are higher rates of depression in people with Vitamin D deficiencies. We get Vitamin D from exposure to the sun (there are healthy ways to do this) and from foods like eggs, mackerel, mushrooms, and vitamin D-fortified milk.



## SO WHERE DO I BEGIN?

**Start small.** Take a five minute walk in the morning or evening, or simply try to reach for your toes when you step out of bed each morning. Try and add an extra spoonful of vegetables or fibre to each meal or eat a teaspoon of fermented food daily. It's these small changes that eventually add up to BIG benefits...

YOUR MIND WILL THANK YOU!

And let us know how it goes. We'd love to hear from you.

The Hollard Health Team

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