



5 Easy Ways to Cultivate Wellness at Home

Life can be a balancing act for families at the best of times; with work, school, extra-curricular activities and other commitments. With the added stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's more important than ever before to take care of our mental, emotional and physical well-being. Start small—choose activities that are realistic and achievable within your family structure and schedules. Here are a few simple things you and your teen can do to stay well at home.

Practice Mindfulness. Mindfulness is about being in the present moment, in a calm, non-judgmental way. It's about paying attention

to our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and to the space around us. Like other skills, mindfulness gets stronger with practice—try this mindful breathing or grounding exercise.

In its simplest form, mindful breathing involves taking one breath in through your nose, and out through your mouth. If your mind wanders, bring it back to your breathing. Try it first thing when you wake up or during the day when you transition from one activity to another. Try this for as long as you can and work up to 2 minutes or longer.

Healthy Teens

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To do a basic grounding exercise, think about your feet and how they are holding you to the floor. Pay attention to your breathing. Then look around you and name out loud:

- 5 things that you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Create calm and welcoming spaces.

Your home can be a great place to create a calm, inviting space for your teen. Reflect on your home environment and visualize a calm and welcoming space and work together as a family to bring that vision to life.

Tip: Bring nature inside by adding fresh plants to your space. You can even grow an indoor herb garden that your teen can care for. Bonus--you'll be able to incorporate fresh herbs into healthy recipes!

Move your body. Evidence confirms what we inherently know to be true--when you get moving and boost your heart rate, you improve your mood and reduce stress! Take time to move your body every day--your body and brain will thank you for it! Try to focus on physical activities you enjoy doing--you're more likely to stick with them. Some families find it helpful to schedule exercise time in advance to help to keep them accountable and on track.

Tip: Sign up for the [One Nature Challenge](#) as a family which is about getting outside 30 mins/day for 30 days. Extra bonus

points for starting this challenge during the colder winter months!

Keep a gratitude journal. Make note of the positive things you experience every day. When we look at life as a whole, gratitude encourages us to identify the goodness in our lives. Keeping a gratitude journal is one of the most widely tested happiness practices.

Tip: There's no wrong way to keep a gratitude journal. In general, write down up to five things for which you feel grateful. Keeping a physical record is important--don't just do this exercise in your head. The goal is to recall a positive event, experience, person, or thing in your life, and to write it down. You'll experience positive emotions all over again.

Be kind. Research shows that a wide range of kindness activities are good for us. Better yet--kindness in any form helps others feel good too.

Tip: Being kind towards others means being kind to yourself too. Go for it--shovel snow for a neighbour, phone a friend you've been meaning to connect with, or just smile! Kindness is all around us.

Now it's time to gather your family together, grab a pen and paper, and create your family wellness plan. Try one activity and build on it. Remember, you don't have to do everything all at once.