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Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person wellbeing each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

Mental Health Awareness

Mental health is just as important as physical health, yet it often doesn't receive the same attention. While we readily address physical ailments, mental health challenges can go unnoticed, dismissed or misunderstood as personal shortcomings rather than real health concerns.

Fortunately, that's starting to change. More people are openly sharing their experiences, and workplaces are increasingly recognizing the importance of emotional wellbeing. And that's good news — recognizing that most people are working through stress, juggling responsibilities and simply trying to get through the day. Acknowledging the toll these challenges take on mental health is a crucial part of this change, paving the way for better support, understanding and resources to help people cope and thrive.

Why Mental Health Matters at Work

When mental health is overlooked, the consequences can be serious — burnout, exhaustion, lack of motivation and even physical symptoms. But here's the good news: prioritizing your mental wellbeing isn't just about avoiding stress — it's about improving your daily experience at work, at home and in every aspect of life. When you take care of your mental health, you're more likely to feel energized, focused and motivated. We know that employees who feel supported report greater job satisfaction, stronger connections with colleagues and higher overall wellbeing.

Your mental health matters, which is why more employers are investing in their people. It's also

crucial to set a time to check in with yourself. Taking small steps to manage stress, set boundaries, and seek support can help you feel more balanced, both at work and beyond.

Ways to Take Care of Your Mental Health

Let's be honest — who wouldn't want to feel their best all the time? If you take a moment to really think about it, mental health isn't just something "nice to have" or an extra to focus on when there's time. It's essential maintenance. Starting with this mindset is the first step to showing up as your best self for the people and work that matter most to you.

So, what are some other things anyone can do to take better care of their mental health?

- 1. Pause and check in with yourself.** Are you feeling overwhelmed? Tired? Stressed? Maybe you're just hungry? Whatever the case, acknowledging your emotions is the first step in managing them.
- 2. Use available resources.** Many workplaces offer support, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counseling or wellness initiatives. If you're not sure what's available, check with HR or a manager.
- 3. Make time for breaks.** Even small moments to reset — whether it's a quick walk, a deep breath or stepping away from your screen — can make a big difference.
- 4. Connect with others.** Talking to a trusted coworker, friend or family member can help lighten the load. You don't have to navigate challenges alone.



5. Set boundaries. Protect your time and energy by establishing clear work-life limits, whether that means logging off at a reasonable hour or saying no to extra commitments when you're at capacity.

Again, prioritizing your mental health isn't selfish — it's necessary. Even small changes can add up to a big impact.

Mental health isn't just an individual responsibility — workplaces play a role in fostering a supportive environment. You deserve to feel valued, heard and supported — not just this month, but every day.

This May, take a moment for yourself. Your mental health is worth it.

References

- Busted: 7 Myths about Mental Health: [unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)
- Myths and Facts About Mental Health: [psychiatry.org](https://www.psychiatry.org)
- Why Should Mental Health Be a Priority in the Workplace? [imagine.jhu.edu](https://www.imagine.jhu.edu)

Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

Topic: Bringing Joy to Your World

When: Tuesday, May 13 | Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET



To register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code. For more information, view the [Employee Flyer](#).

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinars: Save the Dates!

Visit the [Wise & Well Training Center](#) to mark your calendar for all upcoming webinars this year.

“Remember, discovering the quality of your present mental health can be as simple as asking yourself: How are you feeling? Whatever the answer may be today, it is important to recognize the emotions as valid and that seeking help is an act that requires immense strength rather than a sign of weakness.”



Monthly Moves

The 12-Minute Foot Core Workout that Can Prevent Injuries

In *The New York Times* last July, Jen Murphy published an informative article about strengthening the often-neglected muscles in your feet. She explains that the foot core – the tiny muscles within the feet – are responsible for supporting the arch, absorbing load and keeping you stable when walking or running. These muscles become activated when walking barefoot but weaken when we wear narrow, cushioned footwear.

A weak foot core can alter your gait and lead to falls and injuries like shin splints. This routine is especially beneficial for anyone who spends significant time on their feet, such as nurses, restaurant servers and people who run or walk for fitness.

1. Intrinsic Isometric

Sit in a chair and place all five toes of one foot atop a folded towel. Press the toes down – don't grip – and raise the heel.

The goal: 20 seconds per side, repeat five times

2. Banded Toe Flexion

Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the ground. Loop a resistance band under your big toe to create tension. Keep the lesser four toes flat on the ground as you lift the big toe, hold for one count, then lower it. After completing reps with the big toe, loop the band on the lesser four toes and repeat the exercise.

The goal: 20 reps per side

3. Big Toe Mobility Drill

This drill can be performed sitting or standing. Keep the

ball of your right foot on the ground as you lift your heel up. Press that foot's big toe into the ground for 10 seconds. Now, from the same position, try to lift your big toe for 10 seconds. Because the toe is already extended it will barely move.

The goal: 10 seconds, repeated twice, then switch sides

4. Foot Intrinsic Swing

Hold a light weight (2-10 pounds) in your right hand. Press down through your right foot as you step the left foot behind you. Your weight should be in the ball of your foot, with your heel raised. Slightly raise your right heel. Swing the weight back and forth like a pendulum to add instability to the movement. You can perform the exercise next to a table or chair for balance.

The goal: 20 seconds per side, repeated 3-4 times

5. Toe Push Off

Stand and place a towel beneath the toes of your right foot. Slowly roll your foot up as you slide the towel behind you, pushing through the ball of your big toe.

- **The goal:** 40 reps per side
- **How often:** Aim to complete all five exercises 4-5 times a week for one month, then scale back to 2-3 times a week for maintenance.
- **Equipment needed:** Resistance band, one light weight (2-10 pounds) and a towel.



Grilled Portabella Tacos

May is finally here! So, let's fire up those grills and make some tacos!

Wait, what? Tacos? On the grill?

That's right! Your summer taco nights are about to get a serious vegetarian upgrade. Say hello to smoky, spice-kissed portobello mushrooms — marinated, grilled and ready to impress even the most dedicated carnivores. Whether you're a mushroom fanatic or just taco-curious, this vegetarian twist is a game-changer.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil, plus more for grill
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 3 tsp. fresh lime juice, divided
- 2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 4 large portobello mushrooms, cleaned, stemmed, gills removed, sliced 1/2" thick
- 2 cups thinly sliced Napa cabbage
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 2 tbsp. fresh cilantro, thinly sliced, plus more for serving
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- 8 (5" to 6") corn tortillas, warmed
- Cotija cheese, for serving (optional)



Grilled Portabella Tacos

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk oil, chili powder, garlic powder, cumin, 1 tablespoon lime juice and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt.
2. Arrange mushrooms in a single layer in a shallow glass baking dish. Pour marinade over mushrooms, gently turning to coat as needed. Set aside at room temperature for 30 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, toss cabbage, onion, 2 tablespoons cilantro and remaining 2 tablespoons lime juice; season with remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt.
4. Prepare a grill for medium-high heat; preheat 5 minutes (or heat a grill pan over medium-high heat). Clean and oil grates.
5. Remove mushrooms from marinade, letting excess drip off. Grill in a single layer, turning halfway through, until deeply marked on both sides, 1 to 2 minutes per side.
6. Arrange 2 slices avocado and a handful of slaw in the center of each tortilla. Top with 3 to 4 grilled portobello slices and a smattering of cilantro and cotija.

Source: [delish.com](https://www.delish.com)

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May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

As spring fully blossoms, it's the perfect time to nurture both mind and body. Each week this month, we're sharing supportive practices to help you prioritize your mental wellbeing.

May 2

Mental Health Affects Everyone

Mental health conditions can affect anyone regardless of personality or life circumstances. Even those who appear to "have it all together" experience mental health challenges. This week, remember that mental health is a health issue, not a character flaw.



May 9

Proactive Mental Wellness

Just as everyone needs physical exercise regardless of their fitness level, everyone needs to take care of their mental health. This week, focus on regular mental wellness practices that help build resilience before challenges arise.

May 16

Adapting Your Support Strategies

Previous success in handling stress doesn't guarantee the same approach will work for new or more intense challenges. This week, remember that seeking help early often leads to faster recovery and better long-term outcomes.

May 23

Opening the Conversation

Talking openly about mental health helps break the stigma. This week, consider how sharing your experiences can strengthen relationships and deepen connections with friends, family and colleagues — instead of changing how they see you.

May 30

Prioritizing Mental Wellbeing

Taking time for mental health isn't neglecting your responsibilities. This week, remember that prioritizing mental wellbeing improves your ability to show up in all areas of life. Self-care isn't selfish — it's essential for sustainable productivity, relationships and overall happiness.

Send our Wise & Well Tips of the Week to your employees for quick, easily digestible health and wellbeing tidbits they can incorporate into their daily lives.

– Your Wise & Well Team

Source: imagine.jhu.edu

Mental health starts with small, consistent actions. These seven simple activities can create meaningful moments of calm during even the most busy of busy days.



7 Simple Acts for Daily Wellbeing