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Daily Wellness: 9 Foundational Practices

Introduction

Your body is not one-dimensional. It is a vessel for your mind and spirit, and your lifestyle must support all three in tandem. If you focus too much on only one part of that trinity, you'll find your total wellness lacking. To ensure your mind, body, and spirit are all reaching their full potential, try to build your wellness routine on these nine foundational practices.

1. Breathing

How many times throughout the day do you focus on your breath? Do you pay attention to what happens when you're tired, stressed, or angry? A peaceful spirit will direct you on the path toward whole-body wellness. Try to adopt a breathing technique that can keep you centered and focused.

When you intentionally allow more oxygen to enter your body, you can slow your heart rate, lower your blood pressure, reduce stress, and relax your muscles. To get started, try this common technique, recommended by experts at the University of Minnesota:¹

- **Sit up straight**
- **Inhale through your nose with your mouth closed.**
- **Exhale through your mouth with your lips pursed** (as if you were whistling).
- **Make your exhalation twice as long as your inhalation.** (For example, inhale for two seconds, exhale for four.)
- **Be sure to use your abdomen when you breathe, consciously pushing your belly out. If it helps, put your hand over your stomach to feel it rising and falling.**

This basic breathing exercise will help you intentionally unite your mind, body, and spirit so that you're on your way to building a solid foundation for daily wellness.

2. Hydration

Up to 60% of the adult human body is made up of water.² It is easy to underestimate water's

importance, but you cannot achieve optimal physical or mental health without it. The effects of dehydration can range from a bothersome headache to life-threatening heatstroke.

To ensure sufficient fluid intake, you must know your body well. Everyone is built differently, so hydration needs will vary. Increase your water intake slowly until your urine is mostly clear with a tinge of yellow throughout the day. When exercising, you may need to increase your daily water intake. According to the American Heart Association, one good rule of thumb is to weigh yourself before and after exercise to see how much you've lost in perspiration.³ For every pound of sweat you lose, you should replenish with a pint of water. By keeping your body hydrated, you'll be more likely to think clearly and make the best decisions for your health.

3. Nutrition

Many people see nutrition as one building block of a diet rather than the foundation for an entire lifestyle. However, consuming healthy foods isn't just for physical appearance and ability. It can also support both your immune system and your mental health. Aside from avoiding fried foods and added sugars, how do you facilitate holistic nutrition? Try identifying key food groups you might be lacking in your diet and add them into your daily meal or snack choices to ensure your body gets the proper nutrients.

Nutrition is not just about what you eat. It also involves shopping in the right places and identifying the best foods for you and your family. It may also include choosing effective supplements. If you're looking for more tips on making nutritious decisions for your body, [read this eBook](#).

4. Exercise

The growth of technology has led to increased demand for convenience. Today, it is easier to do almost everything online, limiting the need to get outside and be active. TV and video games are prime distractions, and they're taking a toll on people's health. Even spending 30 minutes per day on a physical pastime like jogging, cycling, or a Pilates workout can benefit your mind, body, and spirit.

According to experts at Harvard, a well-rounded exercise program has four components: aerobic activity, strength training, flexibility training, and balance exercises.⁴ These four core factors of exercise help you strengthen your cardiovascular system, build muscle, protect your bones, improve your posture and balance, and avoid falls. If you're not sure where to start, here's a recommendation for each category:

- **Aerobic Activity:** Go for a brisk walk in a local park (or at the local gym if it's cold outside).
- **Strength Training:** Lift free weights from the comfort of your home.
- **Flexibility Training:** Adopt a stretching practice and go at your own pace to slowly expand your limits.
- **Balance Exercise:** Pilates can improve your balance, and as a bonus, it can also serve as an aerobic activity.

5. Sunshine

The sun is a natural mood and energy booster. Before artificial light was invented, our ancestors' lives depended entirely on the sun's rising and setting. Research shows that starting your day with natural

light can improve your sleeping habits.⁵ When you get sufficient sleep, your mind, body, and spirit all benefit, resulting in reduced stress and a strengthened immune system.

Are you getting enough vitamin D in your daily life? If not, you might not be reaching your full potential. Try to get outside to enjoy the daylight, or simply open your curtains to make sure you get some sun through your windows.

6. Rest

True rest goes beyond just sitting on the couch and watching television or taking a day off work. To feel rejuvenated, you must make an intentional choice to relieve stress. For example, if you bury your emotions or procrastinate on a stressful assignment, you might feel stressed instead of relaxed.

By prioritizing these nine foundational practices of true, whole-person wellness, you can support your mind, body, and spirit equally.

Rest looks different for everyone, so find what works for you. Maybe you like to take a warm bath and read, or you may enjoy working out to clear your head. Focus on relaxing activities that feed your mind, body, and spirit.

7. Emotional Balance

Learning how to manage your emotions is a key foundation of holistic wellness. When you don't express yourself effectively, you can damage relationships and your mental health. If you hide your feelings when you are sad or upset, it can lead to increased stress and an eventual breakdown. Adopt a relaxation practice such as meditation to help you stabilize your emotions.

Another way to keep your emotions balanced is to process your thoughts before you immediately react. Your initial response to a problem or challenge might not be the healthiest, so take some time to consider all your options before you say or do something you may regret. To practice doing this, try acting instead of reacting. It may look like a small difference, but this involves purposeful intention. For example, when you wait to respond to a troublesome text or email, you allow yourself time to process and act in a more grounded manner. You can also practice balancing your emotional reactions by writing out your thoughts and feelings in a journal.

8. Energy Support

Each of the past seven components contributes to supporting your energy. When you adopt simple practices at home, you'll likely see improvements in your mental clarity, motivation, and overall well-being.

To further supplement this growth, adopt a few energy-boosting practices. For example, avoid smoking or excessive drinking, as both will compromise your health. Additionally, try to snack on whole grains, nuts, and high-fiber vegetables to avoid the energy lag that comes with quickly

absorbed sugars or refined starches.⁶ You can also boost your body and mind with a little caffeine by having coffee or tea in the morning.

9. Spiritual Growth

While you're nurturing your physical needs, you should also invest in your spiritual health to complete the mind, body, spirit trifacta. Here are a few questions to help you discover your deepest desires and needs:

- What is “life-giving” to you?
- Where do you find your deepest identity?
- What do you value most?
- What is your purpose?

As you answer these questions, you may be able to discern what fulfills you. Talking with a pastor or a trusted mentor may also help develop your spiritual practices. This foundation of wellness goes beyond just what you like to do or your daily routine. It's about the activities and habits that feed your spirit and help you live to the fullest.

Build on Your Wellness Practices

By prioritizing these nine components of authentic, whole-person wellness, you can support your mind, body, and spirit equally, rather than putting too much focus on one part of the equation. As you achieve your goals and set new ones, we'd love to come alongside you to help you build upon your wellness practices. Enroll in a natural health education program to expand your knowledge of holistic fitness, nutrition, or even aromatherapy. To learn more about the programs we offer at Trinity School of Natural Health, call 800-428-0408, option 2, to speak to an enrollment specialist.

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