



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM
Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



How Staying Positive Helps

It's likely our species survived because of our knack for detecting danger. But our worry-filled thoughts can present dangers of their own: Thinking negatively can drag down our moods, our actions and even our health.

Experts say it's worthwhile—and possible—to learn how to think more positively.

Consider What Researchers Found About The Benefits Of Staying Positive

- People who were pessimistic had a nearly 20 percent higher risk of dying over a 30-year period than those who were optimistic.
- People who kept track of their gratitude once a week were more upbeat and had fewer physical complaints than others.
- People who obsessively repeated negative thoughts and behaviors were able to change their unhealthy patterns—and their brain activity actually changed too.

Ways To Stay Positive

Foster Optimism

Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible—and it gets easier with practice.

If you want to pump up your optimism, you might:

- **Write about a positive future.** The idea is to envision your goals and dreams come true. Tips include:
 - Write about your great future life. Writing helps you absorb ideas better than just thinking.
 - Set aside time so you can go into detail. Researcher Laura King, PhD, who proved this exercise a great mood booster, assigned 20 minutes on four consecutive days.
 - A variation on this exercise is to imagine positive outcomes in a particularly challenging situation.
- **Search for the silver lining.** Looking for the positive in a negative situation may sound sappy, but it can actually show great strength. To find your silver lining, ask yourself:
 - How have I grown from this situation?
 - Are my relationships stronger now?
 - Have I developed new skills?
 - What am I proud of about the way I handled this situation?

To read the full article and get the statistical data and graphs, please visit: [Stay Positive | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](https://www.mhanational.org/stay-positive)

**January
2024**



Month

[Mental Wellness Month](#)

[National Mentoring Month](#)

Week

[No Name Calling Week \(Jan. 20-24\)](#)

Day

[I am a Mentor Day \(Jan. 9th\)](#)

[International Mentoring Day \(Jan. 17th\)](#)

[Thank Your Mentor Day \(Jan. 21st\)](#)

To learn more visit: [2024-National-Observances.pdf \(mhanational.org\)](#)



Get Enough Sleep



The 10 Tools for Resiliency:

1. Connect with others
2. Stay positive
3. Get physically active
4. Help others
5. Get enough sleep
6. Create joy and satisfaction
7. Eat well
8. Take care of your spirit
9. Deal better with hard times
10. Get professional help if you need it

To learn more visit: [Stay Positive | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](https://www.mhanational.org)

How Sleep Helps

Sleep may seem like a waste of time. You could instead be answering email, doing the dishes, repairing the deck, or decking the halls. But research shows that you're more likely to succeed at your tasks—and enjoy greater well-being—if you get some serious shut-eye.

Of course, it's not easy to sleep when you're feeling overwhelmed. In fact, nearly two-thirds of Americans say they lose sleep because of stress. That's especially unfortunate because sleep

combats some of the fallout of stress, and poor sleep has been linked to significant problems, including:

- greater risk of depression and anxiety
- increased risk of heart disease and cancer
- impaired memory
- reduced immune system functioning
- weight gain
- greater likelihood of accidents

Are You Getting Enough Rest?

Experts suggest that adults get seven to nine hours of sleep a night. Everyone is different, though, and you may need more after a few days of burning the midnight (or 2 a.m.) oil.

To assess your sleep deficit, ask yourself:

- Am I often tired?
- Am I using caffeine to get through the day?
- Do I sleep well?
- Do I wake up feeling refreshed?
- Do I get drowsy while driving or watching TV?

To sleep longer—and better—consider these suggestions:

- **Set a regular bedtime.** Your body craves consistency, plus you're more likely to get enough sleep if you schedule rest like your other important tasks.
- **De-caffeinate yourself.** Drinking caffeine to stay awake during the day can keep you up at night. Try resisting the coffee and colas starting six to eight hours before bed.
- **De-stress yourself.** Relax by taking a hot bath, meditating or envisioning a soothing scene while lying in bed. Turn off daytime worries by finishing any next-day preparations about an hour before bed.
- **Exercise.** Working out can improve sleep in lots of ways, including by relieving muscle tension. Don't work out right before bed, though, since exercise may make you more alert. If you like, try gentle upper-body stretches to help transition into sleep.
- **Make your bed a sleep haven.** No paying bills or writing reports in bed. Also, if you can't fall asleep after 15 minutes you can try some soothing music, but if you remain alert experts recommend getting up until you feel more tired.

To read the full article and get the statistical data and graphs, please visit: [Get Enough Sleep | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](https://www.mhanational.org)

Thank You
for your support

Dear Valued Referral Sources,

Many thanks to your organization for the generous referrals throughout 2023. We hope this year brings you and yours lots of joy, success, happiness and good health. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW

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Washington County 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-877-225-3567

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Greenbriar Treatment Facility: 1-800-637-4673

SPHS, Center of Excellence Opiate Use Disorder Hotline: 1-888-810-8595

STTARS Sexual Assault Hotline (Greene & Washington): 1-888-480-7283