

Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Why not learn something new today? Here are a few more ideas:

- Find out something about your colleagues
- Sign up for a class
- Read the news or a book
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Research something you've always wondered about
- Learn a new word

'Five Ways to Wellbeing' detailed steps taken from Mind mental health charity

NEF has also acted as an advisor to the development of the Five Ways to Well-being smartphone app, funded by Somerset County Council, which is available as a free download for Android and iPhones.

This can be downloaded from the NHS Choices Apps Library at:

<http://apps.nhs.uk/app/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Five ways to wellbeing

The **Five Ways to Well-being** are a set of evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing. They are: **Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning** and **Give**. These activities are simple things individuals can do in their everyday lives.

The Five Ways to Well-being were developed by New Economics Foundation (NEF) from evidence gathered in the UK government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing. The Project, published in 2008, drew on state-of-the-art research about mental capital and mental wellbeing through life. It asked NEF to develop the Five Ways to Wellbeing to communicate its key findings.



Five ways to wellbeing

Be Active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social

interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Today, why not get physical? Here are a few ideas:

- Take the stairs not the lift
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Walk into work - perhaps with a colleague - so you can 'connect' as well
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey to work
- Organise a work sporting activity
- Have a kick-about in a local park
- Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you leave for work in the morning
- Walk to someone's desk instead of calling or emailing

Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing

Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

With this in mind, try to do something different today and make a connection.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you
- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home with them

Take Notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

- Get a plant for your workspace
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting
- Take a different route on your journey to or from work
- Visit a new place for lunch