

Healthy Living

Guidance for Parents and Carers

Gateshead Psychological
Service

Wellbeing for Education
Return Project



Having a Healthy Living Mindset

Having good physical and psychological health will help you and your family in these challenging times. Having the right mindset from the beginning is the key to success. Think about these questions for your family:



- What do you want to change or improve?
- What is possible right now during the pandemic?
- What do your children want to change or improve?
- What do you do already that works?
- What are your main goals/ideal outcomes?



Once you have answered these questions, it will help you to plan for a healthier future. You may want to start with healthier eating or exercising or with introducing some wellbeing activities into your everyday lives. **Start small and with what works for you and your family.**

It is also important to keep these aspects in mind on your journey to a healthier lifestyle:



- Make change together and get everyone involved in the process.
- Have sensible rewards.
- Little and often is key.
- Celebrate the successes, no matter how small.
- Be patient. Change won't happen overnight.
- Don't be too harsh on yourself when mistakes are made.
- Do it for the kids – a healthier life is a happier one.



Psychologically Healthy: Useful Links/Resources

Check out our other resources which can all help work towards a healthy lifestyle:

Sleep

[Click here!](#)

Routines

[Click here!](#)

Self-compassion

[Click here!](#)

Adult Wellbeing

[Click here!](#)

- [5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Looking after your mental health | Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [Every Mind Matters | One You \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)



Healthy Eating Tips



- Map out all of the healthy foods you/your children enjoy. Use this as a starting point.
- Plan meals together. Make sure you have a good balance of foods – [this guide can help](#).
- Substitute unhealthy snacks for healthy alternatives, [try this planner to help](#).
- Make changes gradually – going cold turkey won't help.
- Get the kids cooking. [Here are some tips](#).
- Have sensible treats.
- Model trying new foods to your children to encourage them to try as well.
- The foods we eat can affect our mood. [Mind have made a great video on this](#)



Exercise Tips



- Start with what you/your children enjoy.
- Ease yourself in.
- Build up challenges over time. The [Couch to 5K programme](#) builds up your skills gradually.
- Schedule exercise in the family routine.
- Always choose walking/cycling over driving where possible.
- Try to do it together – motivate each other.
- Accept that some days will be harder than others to exercise and that this is OK.
- Do what is best for you and your family, try not to compare yourself to others.
- When the weather is bad, try some [indoor activities](#) or a [YouTube fitness channel](#).



Healthy Living for Children

Children learn best from their role models and their parents/carers are the primary adults that influence them. Here are some tips to help:

- **Be a role model for your child** – it may take some time but they should eventually follow your example. [Here is a useful guide](#).
- **Teach them how to be healthy.** Including healthy eating, exercising and wellbeing. [This page on BBC Bitesize](#) can be a good starting point.
- **Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing.** Here are some [wellbeing resources](#) to help your child's wellbeing during the pandemic.
- Remember to **keep them involved in any changes** to the family lifestyle and **let them make decisions with you**.

Healthy Living for Teens

We know it can be difficult to help teenagers when they may not want to talk to their parent or carer.

Here are some tips to help:

- **Open up the conversation during a mutual activity** and let them know that you will help them if they have any questions or need some further advice on healthy living.
- **Give them access to some helpful support sites** – they may want to research these on their own and come back to you if they have any questions. [A site like this one may be useful](#).
- **Your teenager may have been exposed to unhealthy rumours about health.** To give them the right information and support, [The Mix](#) is a great support site with plenty of advice. If you are still concerned, seek a professional for further support.