

Wellness Matters

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Mental Health Benefits of a Clean, Organized Space

If you're struggling with seasonal affective disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues, keeping your home tidy and organized may be challenging. However, research shows that disorganization can worsen your mental health, creating a snowball effect. January is *Get Organized Month*, so it's the perfect time to focus on cleaning or decluttering your space.

The Link Between Clutter and Mental Health

Recent studies have found that clutter in the home is associated with higher levels of cortisol—the body's stress hormone. It can reduce your ability to feel pleasure in a space and contribute to issues in other areas of your life, such as your relationships and financial well-being. A messy living space can also distract you from other priorities and cause you to lose important things.

Living in a tidy, organized place can improve your mental health by increasing your sense of clarity and control. It can also

boost your confidence, increase your productivity, and create a more peaceful atmosphere.

People also tend to take cues about how they're doing from their living space. Therefore, a clean and organized space can reinforce the notion that you are worth the time it takes to create a calm and peaceful place.

Getting Motivated to Clean or Declutter

Becoming motivated to clean can be difficult. To make it easier, consider breaking every task into much smaller ones. You can also set a timer for 10, 15, or 20 minutes and stop cleaning the moment the timer goes off. This may help you get started by making cleaning seem more manageable.

Conclusion

A clean and organized living space can provide you with clarity and peace this winter. Take advantage of *Get Organized Month* this January by taking steps to declutter your home.

Building a Daily Meditation Practice

Meditation can provide a sense of peace and calm that can boost your mood, benefit your mental health, and improve your emotional and physical well-being. It is a simple and relatively quick way to relieve stress that you can do almost anywhere. Regular meditation can help you manage stress, increase self-awareness, reduce negative emotions, focus on the present, gain a new perspective, and improve sleep quality.

Making Meditation a Habit

When meditation becomes a habit, you're more likely to notice the positive long-term benefits. Start small to avoid feeling discouraged or like you don't have enough time to meditate. Meditating for just five minutes daily can help you sustainably integrate meditation and peacefulness into your routine.

Finding the right time to meditate is also important. You could end up feeling frustrated and more stressed if you try to meditate during a busy time of day or at a time that doesn't work well with your schedule. To begin, you may want to try

meditating at several different times throughout the day (e.g., in the morning, on your lunch break, or before bed) and see which time works best for you.

It's also important that you find a comfortable way to meditate. You're unlikely to continue meditating in the long term if you don't enjoy your sessions. You can meditate while sitting, lying down, or even on a walk.

A meditation app or podcast can also help you build meditation into your daily schedule. These apps can typically be personalized to monitor your progress or track changes, which you may find motivational.

Conclusion

Developing a new habit can be challenging, so go easy on yourself when you don't find time to meditate. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to meditate. The best type of meditation is the kind that works for you.



Achieve Fitness

One Step at a Time

Too busy to possibly fit in a workout? Simply adding steps to your daily routine—with a little help from a pedometer—can be as easy as opting for the stairs instead of the elevator.

Studies show that people who take at least 10,000 steps a day are generally healthier and in better physical shape than those who don't.

Every minute of walking takes approximately 100 steps, which adds up quickly when you look for ways to fit extra steps into your day:

- Park a little farther from the office or store
- Take the stairs
- Walk short distances instead of driving
- Talk to co-workers in person instead of through email or phone