



Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Hinduism

You might find it useful to consider the following five steps to improve your mental health and wellbeing, as recommended by the NHS. Practicing each of the five ways to wellbeing every day can have a very positive impact on your mood and wellbeing. These approaches are all aligned with Hindu beliefs and teachings.

One Connect with God and with others



“I went to the root of things, and found nothing but God alone.”

– MIRABAI

Hinduism focuses on the connection with God and humanity as a path to mental wellbeing. It advocates a sense of global belonging, encouraging us all to connect with each other and appreciate the divinity within.

“‘This is mine; that is theirs,’ say the small-minded. The wise believe that the entire world is a family.” – MAHA UPANISHAD 6.71-75

“There is no better way to stabilise the mind than by listening to the discourses of God with faith and love”

– BHAGWAN SWAMINARAYAN (VACHANAMRUT KARIYANI 12)

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing as they can:

- Help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- Give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and allow you to support others

“Family members should gather daily and engage in worship, discussions, scriptural reading and other devotional activities.”

– MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ (SATSANG DIKSHA 86)

Connecting with friends and family, whether it’s online or in-person, can improve your mental wellbeing. You could:

- Stay in touch with family and friends, especially the older generation who may have struggled with loneliness and difficulties in accessing available resources due to language barriers
- Make time to include your friends and family in your hobbies
- Organise picnics, walks, get-togethers, cooking together, etc.
- Make time to participate in spiritual activities together, such as visiting a mandir or praying together

Two

Be physically active



“Action is superior to inaction. Through inaction, even the maintenance of your body will not be possible.” – BHAGAVAD GITA 3.8

“The one, whose diet and movements are balanced, whose actions are proper, whose hours of sleeping and waking are regular, and who follows the path of meditation, is the destroyer of pain or unhappiness.” – BHAGAVAD GITA 6.17

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness, it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Raising your self-esteem
- Reducing depression and anxiety
- Lowering your risk of long-term health conditions, such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers
- Helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- Helping to positively change your mood

“First build up your own physique. Then only you can get control over the mind.” – SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Regular exercise is really important, and you should try to maintain an active lifestyle if you are well enough to do so. Suitable exercise might include:

- [10-45 minute workouts on the NHS website](#)
- Slower-paced activities, such as walking around your home or garden
- Easy, low-impact exercise whenever you can, like stretching while the kettle boils
- Workouts on YouTube or on a fitness app that you download

Three

Learn something new each day



The pursuit of knowledge is highly praised in Hinduism. The first line of the Brahma Sutras states: **“Athāto brahmajijñāsā – Now is the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth.”**

Research shows that learning new skills can improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Boosting self-confidence, raising self-esteem and reducing depression
- Helping you to gain a sense of purpose
- Connecting you with others

There are lots of ways to bring learning into your life. These include acquiring new knowledge and new skills. There is no limit:

“Where the Infinite is in question, the diversity of approaches is equally infinite.” – SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

“Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions.” – RIG VEDA 1.89.1

New knowledge:

- Reading the scriptures
- Reciting and memorising verses from the scriptures
“One who recites enjoys the highest bliss.” – Hanuman Chalisa
- Work together and arrange group scriptural readings with friends and family

New skills:

- Try some new healthy and nutritional recipes
- Learn a new language, such as Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Panjabi, Sanskrit or Tamil
- Try some arts and crafts, such as decorating an arti or your home mandir

Four

Seva: Give to others



“In the joy of others lies our own.” – PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ

Seva, or selfless acts of service, is a core component of Hindu beliefs and living. These can be performed through thought, word and deed.

“Integrity in thought, word and deed are inherent in the good.”

– KALIDASA

Acts of giving and kindness are also known to help improve mental wellbeing by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with other people

People who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to feel happier. There are many ways to show compassion to others, from small acts of kindness to more regular giving, such as volunteering.

Carry out acts of seva (selfless service).

These can involve helping your neighbours, your family, your community and even your environment. Simple ways to practise seva include:

- Physical acts of kindness
- Recycle
- Cook or bake for your neighbours
- Walk or cycle instead of using the car
- Help elderly or frail friends and neighbours by running errands
- Volunteer for a charity organisation of your interest

Mental acts of kindness

- Listen and spend time with someone who is alone or going through hardships
- See the good in others. **“Be like the honeybee who gathers only nectar wherever it goes. Seek the goodness that is found in everyone.”**
– Mata Amritanandamayi
- Be grateful for and acknowledge all of the good things in your life
- Forgive and forget. The Goddess Durga is described in the Mahishasura Mardini Stotram as one **“who forgives and gives refuge”**
- Practice karma yoga, i.e. offer selfless service for inner purification; act without ego or egocentric desires

Five Pay attention to the present moment



**“Meet this impermanent world with neither attachment nor fear.
Trust the unfolding of life and you will attain true serenity.”**

– BHAGAVAD GITA 2.56

Being in the moment and being aware of your thoughts, your feelings, your body and the world around you can improve your mental wellbeing. This is often called ‘mindfulness’. This is something recommended in Hinduism and can be practised in various ways through acts of bhakti (devotion) and prayer. It is encouraged to be present in our acts of worship, focusing on the words we say and the actions we perform, and being aware of the intentions with which we do them.

“Joy is never tomorrow. It is always now.” – SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

You could start by doing:

- Dhyana (meditation). You can either focus on an image of God, a symbol, your breath, or anything you choose. **“When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place.” – Bhagavad Gita 6.19**
- Pranayama, which connects the mind and the body through the breath

Prayer and bhakti allow you to:

- Remain positive with a stable mindset
- Accept not everything can be controlled
- Remain active and engage in maintaining a positive attitude

Examples of prayer and bhakti include:

- **Puja:** Daily worship (offering flowers, fruits, food) to murtis (sacred images) of your chosen deities engaging fully the mind and the heart
- **Japa:** Take up daily chanting of a mantra. You can optionally turn a mala (rosary) while doing this. It is the best and easiest means of focusing the mind and clearing the heart, through which **“impure thoughts are washed away”**.
– Shiva Tandava Stotra
- **Smruti (contemplation):** Read the scriptures which talk about the glories of God and think about them: What are the lessons here for me? How can I apply what I have learnt in my daily life? By reading Hindu scriptures, you can cultivate unconditional love for God, faith and surrender.

About Us

Good Thinking is supported by the NHS and London borough councils. We provide free, 24/7, digital support to Londoners seeking mental health advice and help regardless of where they are on their journey. We offer round the clock support and self-care options that are easy to access, and simple to navigate.

Our Mission

We support individuals to look after their mental wellbeing in a way that works best for them. We encourage everyone to be proactive about their mental health and we provide tools and guidance to support this. If you need further support try talking to your GP.

For more information visit www.good-thinking.uk

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Hindu Forum of Britain

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