



TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD

THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

Are you feeling particularly down at the moment and can't seem to pick yourself up out of a rut? The Fire Fighters Charity Psychological Services Lead **Jane Rosso** shares ten tips for enhancing your wellbeing.

While feelings of depression aren't limited to any one time in the calendar, there's no doubt that the last year has had a major impact on many people's mental health.

So, if you're feeling low, we thought we'd bring you ten things you can do right now to improve your mood and enhance your wellbeing.

1 Connect with loved one: As restrictions begin to ease, there's never been a better time to reconnect with those closest to you. And, if you'd prefer to stay indoors a while longer, we can still connect with friends and family online, over the phone, by text, or maybe even with a more

retro approach, such as sending them a surprise in the post. Making a social connection can help to combat some of the feelings of loneliness you may be experiencing. Why not get creative and make them a nice card or postcard, then tell them how much they mean to you inside?

2 Be kind to yourself: Take time to breathe, stop, relax and nourish your soul. Do nothing except count your breaths. Tomorrow is another day. If work is not going so well today, take a break, talk about the difficulty you're facing, try a different approach and start the new day with a fresh outlook.

3 Help someone else: Helping others makes us happy by developing connections and feelings of confidence, control and optimism. What can you do to help someone else right now? Could you collect donations for a food bank or one of our clothing banks? Or could you just don a pair of rubber gloves and head out to do a litter pick in your nearby area?

4 Be joyful: What could you do that would make you smile? Laughter and smiling lift your mood, decreasing stress hormones and helping you to overcome feelings of anger. Laughter also increases feel-good endorphins and

releases physical tension. So put on your favourite comedy or look up a comedian you like on YouTube and enjoy. You could even try experimenting with laughter yoga.

5 Do something different: When you feel like you're in a rut, it can be beneficial to do something to break up the possible monotony you feel with your routine. Get up earlier to do a short yoga workout, meditation or tai chi before you start your day. Take a mindful walk while there's still daylight, paying attention to your senses and noticing your surroundings. If you're working from home, consider setting an alarm every two hours to get up and do star jumps, heel raises, lunges or running on the spot for thirty seconds, just to get your blood pumping.

6 Drink less alcohol: We drink for many reasons: boredom, relaxation, to unwind after a hard day, because we feel we deserve it, for fun, celebration, anxiety, habit, or, well, just because. But that extra glass of wine or pint of beer may actually be having a detrimental effect on your wellbeing, aggravating pre-existing conditions or disrupting your sleep. Try alcohol-free drinks or replacing the desire to drink with a tip from this list.

7 Shift your focus: Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do, trying to develop a positive mindset. Rethink difficult thoughts, such as 'I'm bored', and make that 'I'm going to use this time to learn a new skill'. Use your time deliberately, put down your phone, take up a new hobby, reach out to someone, read a book, decorate your house or do something creative.

8 Boost your immune system: Living a healthy lifestyle has so many benefits for both your physical and mental wellbeing, not to mention giving you a better chance of being able to fight off any nasty bugs you might be vulnerable to. Look into healthier food or drink options and take steps to improve your sleep hygiene.

9 Explore: Develop a curious mind for the world around you. This could be from your armchair through enjoying new sights via YouTube, Google Earth or museums and galleries that have gone digital, or by going for a walk on a new route in your local area. Research local community groups for activities you can do, such as a community litter picks, book swaps, art classes or a choir. If events aren't happening right now, register for future face-to-face meetings to give yourself something to look forward to.

10 Be grateful: Research shows that practicing gratitude can have many positive implications in a person's life, improving your physical and psychological health, enhancing your ability to feel empathy, improving your sleep, opening the door for new relationships, increasing mental strength and resilience and generally making you feel more optimistic. So take a few minutes each day to reflect on what you feel grateful for, and see the difference it can have on your life in the long term. What will you do to improve your mood?

You can find other health and wellbeing resources via The Fire Fighters Charity online library, where there's all sorts of things to help you engage with your own sense of personal wellbeing. Enjoy! 🍷



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Both in-house and online, physical and psychological, rehabilitation programmes with **The Fire Fighters Charity** are accessible to mountain and cave rescue team members, via the **Rescue Benevolent Fund**. Email secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund for details and a confidential chat.