

# Simple Tips to Establish Overall Wellness from a Mental Health Expert



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## Let nature nurture.

Research suggests that spending time in nature may have cognitive benefits, such as cognitive flexibility and attention control. <sup>1</sup> Studies show that connections to nature are associated with increased happiness, positive social interactions, and decreased mental distress.<sup>2</sup>

Take a daily walk in your neighborhood or sit in a park with friends to get some Vitamin D and enjoy being outdoors. With less distress, you're more likely to enjoy engaging in your oral care ritual. Daily outdoor walks also contribute to feeling increased energy levels which can help with getting out of bed and developing a morning routine to ensure oral systemic health.



## Get offline.

Several **recent studies**<sup>3</sup> have correlated frequent social media use with increased levels of anxiety. Heightened screen time is tied to decreased, disrupted, and often delayed sleep.

Setting limits on screen time and keeping your phone out of your bedtime routine, can help clear your head and improve your sleep. Decreasing social media use can contribute to decreasing levels of anxiety which can contribute to increased oral health care as a more relaxed mental state may lead to better self-care and better attentiveness to health needs.



## Start a daily gratitude list.

Take a few minutes each day to think of three things you are grateful for. This can be while you're brushing your teeth, making your bed, or walking your dog. Gratitude is strongly associated with increased happiness.

Putting sticky notes on your bathroom mirror or placing a journal next to your bed can help with maintaining this beneficial activity.



## Lean into routine.

When we are feeling stressed, personal hygiene is often the first thing to be left to the wayside. Address this by starting with small changes like establishing an oral care routine – this can help not only your overall physical health - but also overall stress through that repetitive process. A great entry-level power toothbrush that I love is **Philips Sonicare 4100** because it offers a gentle, yet powerful clean to holistically clean your teeth and gums.

Sometimes trying to initiate a new ritual can be difficult. We feel we need to complete the whole routine from day 1. This is not the case. Here's a slow re-entry routine to gradually help you ease back into self-care, but also give you to adjust to the changes without attempting to revert back to old behaviors out of memory:

- Brush your teeth once per day for 1 week
- Brush your teeth twice a day for 1 week
- Brush twice per day and floss once per day for 1 week
- Brush and floss twice per day for 1 week
- Reevaluate after 1 month if you need to add additional steps to your oral health routine



<sup>1</sup>APS, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 28, No. 5, 2019 ([journals.sagepub.com](http://journals.sagepub.com))

<sup>2</sup>Science Advances, *Nature and mental health: An ecosystem service perspective*, Vol. 5, No. 7, 2019 ([science.org](http://science.org))

<sup>3</sup>NCBI Association Between Social Media Use And Depression Among U.S. Young Adults, January 2016 ([ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov))

<sup>4</sup>PLOS ONE, *A brief diet intervention can reduce symptoms of depression in young adults – A randomised controlled trial*, 2019 ([journals.plos.org](http://journals.plos.org))