

# 5 Ways to Support Good Mental Health

## Support the Gut Microbiome

The bacteria in your gut affects your mind, so eat prebiotic and probiotic rich food to beat anxiety. Try to include a variety of vegetables at lunch and dinner, as prebiotic foods such as jerusalem artichoke, asparagus, leek, banana, apple, garlic and onion help to feed beneficial bacteria in the gut. Researchers have linked an unhappy gut to an unhappy mind and have found that those who eat more prebiotic and probiotic rich food experience less social anxiety.

## Get a Good Night's Sleep

Aim for seven to nine hours a night. A restful sleep helps improve mood and emotional resilience, while chronic sleep deprivation can make you more prone to anger and irritability. Try a relaxing magnesium bath at bedtime.

## Follow an Anti-inflammatory Diet

Refined sugar and carbohydrates such as white flour-based products and white rice can lead to mood swings and fatigue, so try and replace these with brown rice, millet, oats, legumes and vegetables instead. Include sources of healthy fats such as oily fish which are rich in omega 3, nuts and seeds, flax seed or hemp oil for better brain health. Omega 3 fats strengthen the connections between brain cells and reduce inflammation that can affect brain function.

## Take Regular Exercise

Regular physical activity such as walking, yoga, pilates and qi gong can help improve mood, depression and anxiety. Exercise daily and try to aim for at least 3 sessions of more rigorous activity for at least 45 minutes a week. There are some great classes and videos online for all abilities that you can do at home, but the trick really is to just keep moving!

## Practice Meditation

Learn to practice mindfulness and meditation to promote calm and relaxation and help better manage anxiety and negative emotions. It can sometimes be difficult to see how to make time for yourself, but if you can try to find just 5 minutes each day to sit quietly and focus the mind, you will truly feel the benefits.