

MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems can affect everyone in society, but not in equal measure. When we look at different groups we see significant trends emerging, with one of the most startling being that despite lower reported incidence of depression in men, they have a significantly higher chance of taking their own life. The World Health Organization suggest men account for 75% of all suicide deaths with untreated depression a major risk factor. There is still much misunderstood about this global disparity, but we have highlighted some possible contributing factors we can all look out for.

For every death by suicide, at least 7 to 10 people are directly affected by the loss.



40% of men have never spoken to anyone about their mental health, despite over three quarters suffering from common symptoms like anxiety, stress or depression.

CONCERNING STATS

Less likely to seek medical advice for concerns or go for health checks.

Less likely to talk to friends and family or go to talking therapy.

More likely to be sleeping rough as 87% of rough sleepers are men.

More likely to 'self-medicate' with alcohol or drugs.

CONTRIBUTING ISSUES

Gender stereotyping

Traditional gender roles can make it difficult for men to open up. Often expected to be the stronger person, impacting ability to reach out for help.

Poor body image

Half of men under 40 are impacted.

Loneliness

Contributes to low mood, depression and impacts physical health.

High social media use

Comparisons drive insecurities in all areas of life.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Reduce processed food

Regular consumption contributes to anxiety and depression.

Cut back on alcohol

Impacts mood, wellbeing and sleep.
Dependency closely linked to depression.
Improvements in symptoms seen within first few weeks of no alcohol.

Step outside regularly

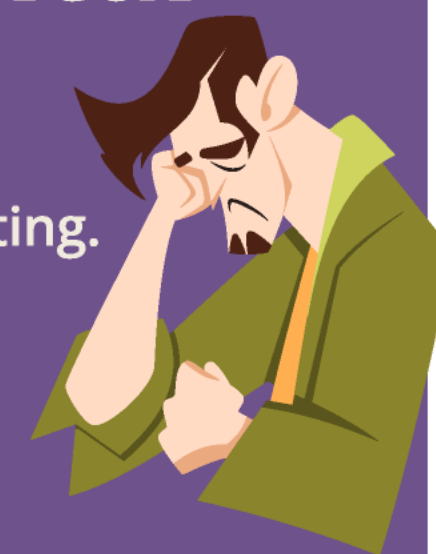
Large study found just 2 hours per week in nature significantly improves health and psychological wellbeing.

Develop connections

Building both strong and weak ties in all areas of life improves happiness and health.

Look out for mental health issues:

- Ups and downs in mood.
- Changes to routine e.g. sleeping/eating.
- Lack of self-care.
- More irritable or short tempered.
- Increased drug or alcohol use.
- Less sociable or withdrawn.
- Increased mistakes at work.
- Take any mention of suicide or self-harm seriously.



Reach out if concerned:

- Choose a time and place to talk.
- Be honest, concerned and empathetic.
- Listen carefully and allow space for conversation.
- Check in regularly.



How else to help?

- Effective signposting.
- Raise awareness with friends/colleagues to increase support network.
- Alert help if needed.



KEY TRIGGERS

New father

Paternal depression affects 1 in 10 men.

Work changes

Redundancy, retirement or change in job role.

Bereavement

Men often known for keeping things bottled up.

Relationship breakdown

One study found marital separation quadruples the risk of male suicide.



TOP TIPS for Creating Long-term Healthy Habits

Every day, millions of people wake up and brush their teeth. Why do we do this? It's because we have formed a habit! Habit formation means to make an action become automatic.

WIRING THE BRAIN FOR HEALTHY HABIT CREATION

Whenever we perform a specific task or action, the brain forms neural pathways that strengthen each time we perform the action. Therefore, repetition is key until the action becomes second nature.



TIPS FOR MAKING HABITS STICK

HABIT STACKING
Add your new behaviour...
5 minutes of stretching each evening...

1



after an old behaviour:
Brushing your teeth

GET SPECIFIC
Swap: "I'm going to go for a walk after work"

2

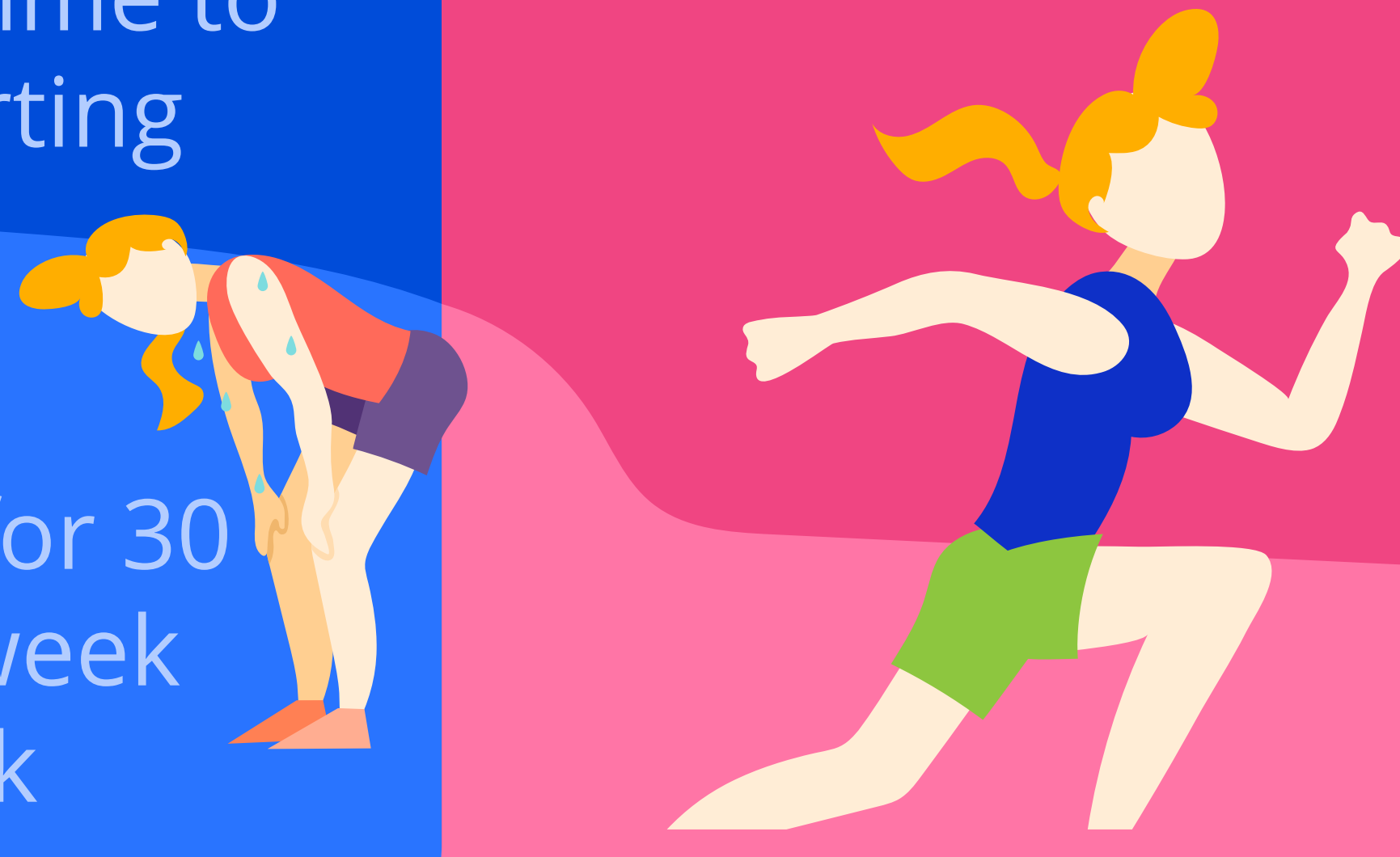


For: "On Tuesdays and Wednesdays when I get home from work, I'm going to change and go for a 20 min walk around the park"



START SMALL
Prevent burnout and allow yourself time to build up by starting small

3




Goal: Run for 30 mins 3x a week before work

Starting goal: Interval run for 15 mins 3x a week before work

MAKE IT EASY
Once you've identified the small, specific action, make it easy to do.
E.g., lay out gym clothes so you can slip them on and go

4




MAKE IT PHYSICAL
Create a physical action for non-physical habits.
E.g., To practice gratitude get a gratitude journal and keep it where you plan to perform the task

5



TRAIN YOUR BRAIN
When the brain recognises a pattern, such as a connection between an action and a feeling, it files it in the basal ganglia, a part of the brain where we develop emotions and memories and pattern recognition.
Brain-training exercises like Sudoku can strengthen the function of the basal ganglia. Set yourself a goal to do it three times a week.

6



HEALTHY HABIT INSPIRATION
Drink a glass of water after your morning alarm




Practice deep breathing for 3 mins after brushing your teeth at night



Stretch for 10 mins before showering each morning



Walk or run for 30 mins upon waking - place clothes by your bed the night before



Eat a protein-rich breakfast each morning

