

How Pets Improve Mental Health 🧠

1 Pets reduce depression, anxiety, and stress

2 They provide non-judgmental companionship

3 Pets lower feelings of loneliness, alienation, and isolation

4 They provide us with a sense of purpose

5 Pets keep us active and social



Sources: <https://www.rover.com/blog/dogs-can-help-depression-stress-anxiety-complete-guide/>
<https://www.rover.com/blog/cats-depression-stress-anxiety-mental-health/>



Handouts were compiled from a variety of sources unless otherwise noted and are provided for information only.

From Rover.com



We asked a Mayo Clinic expert: Why is it so important to treat a sleep disorder?

Timothy I. Morgenthaler, M.D., Director, Mayo Clinic Center for Sleep Medicine: Insomnia is unsatisfying sleep; difficulty getting to sleep; difficulty, you know, staying asleep; getting up earlier than you wanted to feel fulfilled.

When it starts happening more than three times per week for more than three months, then we would call it chronic insomnia disorder.

If people have those kinds of symptoms, they should really be thinking about seeking help for a possible sleep disorder.

Insomnia is one very common sleep disorder. Another common sleep disorder is obstructive sleep apnea syndrome. Loud snoring is often an accompaniment of obstructive sleep apnea.

There are health consequences of not getting enough sleep. When we're getting less than about six to six and a half hours of sleep, the risk of hypertension, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and other threats to health increase.

As we treat sleep apnea, the risks tend to come back toward normal. And many people, as they get obstructive sleep apnea treated, find within weeks that they are more mentally alert and are sleeping better.

There are a lot of reasons — besides the fact nobody likes having chronic insomnia disorder — that it's worthwhile getting treatment. The good news is that there are treatments that work very well for chronic insomnia disorder. There are non-drug treatments and drug treatments, and sleep medicine specialists or physicians can help people get on the right track.

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Functional fitness: Is it right for you?

Mayo Clinic

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Functional fitness exercises train your muscles to help you do everyday activities safely and efficiently. Find out what it can do for you.

What is functional fitness training?

Functional fitness exercises train your muscles to work together and prepare them for daily tasks by simulating common movements you might do at home, at work or in sports. While using various muscles in the upper and lower body at the same time, functional fitness exercises also emphasize core stability. For example, a dead lift is a functional exercise because it trains the muscles used when you pick up an object from the floor. By training your muscles to work the way they do in everyday tasks, you prepare your body to move efficiently in a variety of common situations.

Functional fitness exercises can be done at home or at the gym. Gyms may offer functional fitness classes or incorporate functional fitness into boot camps or other types of classes. Exercise tools, such as fitness balls, kettlebells and weights, are often used in functional fitness workouts.

What are the benefits of functional fitness training?

Functional exercises tend to be multijoint, multimuscle exercises. Instead of only moving the elbows, for example, a functional exercise might involve the elbows, shoulders, spine, hips, knees and ankles. This type of training, properly applied, can make everyday activities easier, reduce your risk of injury and improve your quality of life.

It's also a good idea to start with exercises that use only your own body weight for resistance. As you become more fit and are ready for more challenge, you can increase resistance by using weights or resistance tubing or performing movements in the water.

As you add more functional exercises to your workouts, you should see improvements in your ability to perform your everyday activities. That's quite a return on your exercise investment.

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Farewell to Falls (Stanford Program)

This is a free, home-based fall prevention program. An occupational therapist will come to your home to look at risk factors for falls. The therapist also tests your strength and balance. After the visit, you get a home safety evaluation that tells you what you can do to prevent falls.

As part of this program, your medicines are reviewed by a Stanford Health Care pharmacist. You are also given home exercises you can do, and other information on how to prevent falls.

This program offers two visits, and follow-up phone calls each month. After 1 year, the therapist returns to your home for a third visit and re-evaluation. You do not need a referral to take part in this program.

Eligibility requirements:

- 65 years or older
- Lives in Santa Clara or San Mateo County
- Ambulatory (cane or walker ok)
- Lives in own home or apartment
- Interested in participating in a full multi-faceted visit
- Cognitively able to provide health history and fully participate
- No alcohol dependency

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Get out of that chair!

A recent study estimates that American adults spend an average of 6.6 hours a day sitting. Research has shown that the more time a person spends sitting, the higher the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, certain cancers and earlier death.

mayoclinic.org

Ways to Minimize Chair Sitting

- **Take a break every 30 minutes:** Get up, get a glass of water, take out the trash, do some squats or simple stretches. This is especially important during long trips in a car or airplane.
- **Stand during routine tasks:** Take a walk while talking on the phone or stand while watching tv. Try a standing desk.
- **Take your meetings on the go:** Whether chatting with co-workers or meeting friends for coffee, suggest taking a walk while you talk.
- **Invest in a fitness monitor:** These devices can alert you when you've spent too much time without moving. Setting a daily step count goal can motivate you to get up and move.

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Tips for communicating with a person who has cognitive impairment

Communicating with a person with cognitive impairment can be challenging. For instance, they may have trouble following instructions about their care. The following tips may help improve your communication.

- Address the person directly and use simple wording, presenting one idea at a time. If you're asking questions, do so in a yes-or-no or a multiple-choice format.
- Help orient the person. Explain (or re-explain) who you are and what you will be doing during the visit.
- Be cognizant of other health problems the patient may have that could be making communication more difficult, such as hearing or vision problems.
- If the person can hear you but does not understand what you are saying, try rephrasing your statement. Try not to speak too quickly or loudly.

Mental health self care checklist

Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

- **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.
- **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.** A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks or coffee.
- **Make sleep a priority.** Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Practice gratitude.** Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind.
- **Focus on positivity.** Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- **Stay connected.** Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.

Mental health care (outpatient)

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.

Call 911 if you're in immediate medical crisis.

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)

helps pay for these outpatient mental health services:

- One [depression screening](#) per year. The screening must be done in a primary care doctor's office or primary care clinic that can provide follow-up treatment and referrals.
- Individual and group psychotherapy with doctors (or with certain other licensed professionals, as the state where you get the services allows).
- Family counseling, if the main purpose is to help with your treatment.
- Testing to find out if you're getting the services you need and if your current treatment is helping you.
- Psychiatric evaluation.
- Medication management.
- Certain prescription drugs that aren't usually "self administered" (drugs you would normally take on your own), like some injections.
- Diagnostic tests.
- [Partial hospitalization](#).
- A one-time "[Welcome to Medicare](#)" [preventive visit](#). This visit includes a review of your possible risk factors for depression.
- A [yearly "Wellness" visit](#). Talk to your doctor or other health care provider about changes in your mental health since your last visit.