

[IMAGE]

The Pillars of Mental Health

By Editorial Staff

Physical health is perpetually trending, with weight-loss solutions, gym memberships and nutritional protocols constantly on our radar. But what about mental health? Isn't it equally as trend-worthy ... particularly these days? Let's *make* it trend by discussing these three simple lifestyle choices that can have a profound impact on your mental health and wellness. This isn't speculation - although it certainly makes sense; it comes from a new research study that surveyed more than 1,100 young adults (ages 18-25).

Published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, the study asked questions about participants' mental health and their adherence to three specific lifestyle behaviors: sleep, exercise and diet - specifically questions that assessed "typical sleep quantity and quality; physical activity; and consumption of raw and processed fruit and vegetables, fast food, sweets, and soda." Two scales that assess depressive symptoms were used to gauge participants' mental health / well-being.

Sleep quality proved to be the strongest predictor of depressive symptoms / well-being, followed by sleep quantity and physical activity. One on dietary factor predicted greater well-being (but not depressive symptoms: raw fruit and vegetable consumption. These findings held up even after accounting for other variables assessed via the survey that could impact mental health, such as BMI, smoking, alcohol consumption, socioeconomic status, health conditions, etc.).

So there you have it – the three pillars of mental health. How many are you optimizing? If the answer isn't all three (and particularly if it's zero or only one), your mental health likely is suffering as well.

1. Sleep (quality and amount)
2. Physical activity
3. Diet (specifically raw veggies / fruit)

Remember, true health and wellness isn't just physical, mental or spiritual health; it's a combination of all three. You can be in great physical shape, but if you're struggling on the mental side, you won't be happy. And on the flip side, how many people are dissatisfied with their physical health, yet can claim they're perfectly happy from a mental perspective? Talk to your doctor about how to optimize the pillars of mental

health; in so doing, you'll wake up more refreshed, get in better shape and reduce countless disease risks at the same time.

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