Importance of a daily routine for mental health and function

July 17, 2023

Establishing structure and stability

A routine is a set of habits, tasks and activities that you undertake regularly at roughly the same time each day. If you struggle with daily routines or managing your health care, remote cues and prompts could be a game changer. By providing reminders and guidance, remote cues and prompts can help simplify your life and improve your wellbeing. By introducing regularity, routines establish a sense of structure and stability in your life, which can reduce stress, anxiety, and negative emotions such as depression.

Establishing healthy lifestyle

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." - Aristotle
When you establish routines, you naturally develop healthy habits that contribute to your overall wellbeing. These can include regular exercise, healthy eating, or taking time for selfcare. Once structure is established, these tasks become habits. Having a routine frees up time that would otherwise be spent on planning, decision-making and preparation. It is easier to start a routine than maintain one. Many of us give up mid-way. Sticking to a routine requires accountability, motivation, discipline practice, and repetition in daily life.

Managing stress and anxiety

By providing structure and predictability, daily routines can reduce uncertainty and anxiety. They can also include calming activities such as meditation or yoga. Daily routines take the guess work out of what needs to be done, ultimately reducing stress. It creates a sense of accomplishment and gives us control of our lives. There will always be external and environmental variables that are beyond our control; but a daily routine can help change and manage that which is in our control.
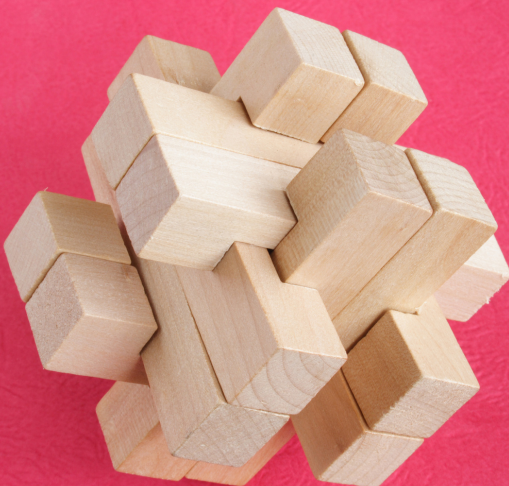
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Boosting productivity

When you have a daily routine, you don't have to waste cognitive energy making decisions about when to do specific tasks. This leaves more time and energy for focused work. You can accomplish more when you establish daily routine as it helps increase focus and eliminates time wastage. A routine can help you feel productive and motivated throughout the day as it provides a sense of accomplishment and control over your time and tasks. Following an efficient routine and adhering to goals for daily tasks frees up more free time for leisure and relaxation. When we have a sense of accomplishment, it naturally builds our self confidence.

Routines and cognitive health

Having a daily routine and regular habits supports cognitive function and may even free people up to be more creative. Structured and defined routines allow us to spend less cognitive energy on recurring tasks, which can support focus and creativity for more complex tasks. Maintaining established and consistent routines can be calming and reassuring, for both healthy individuals and those suffering from cognitive difficulties. Regularly practicing an activity, whether it's physical or mental task, can help a person maintain their functional abilities and prevent or delay onset of age-related neurodegenerative disorders.

Self-care routine

Sometimes self-care falls by the wayside. However, having a daily routine in which you set aside time to take care of your mind and body is crucial. It can lead to better physical and mental health, increased productivity, and an overall improved sense of well-being. Self-care can take different forms, including:

- Meditation
- Exercise and movement
- Spa
- Reading
- Other forms of rest and relaxation