

YOUR GUIDE TO

Stress

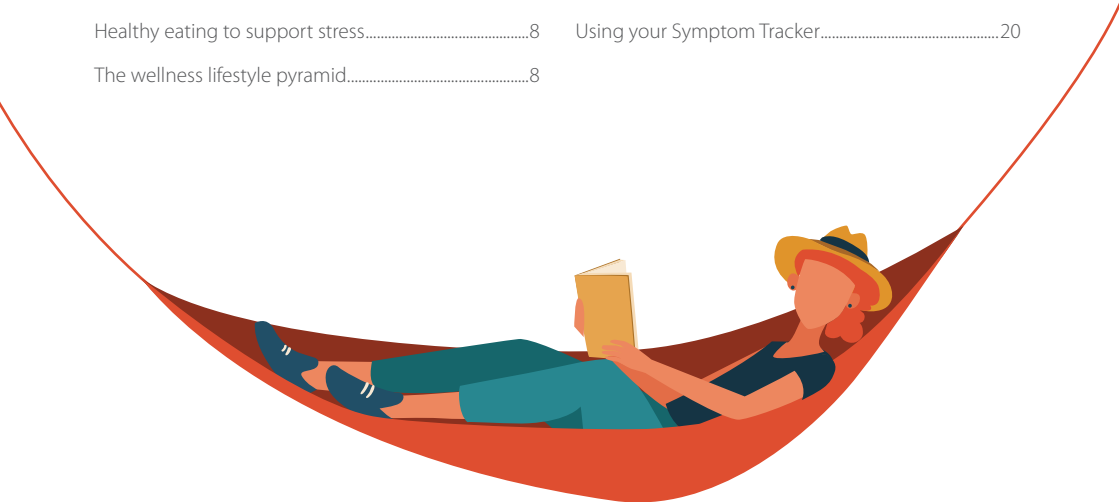
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A simple guide to help you manage stress
so you can enjoy life at your best.



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With the support of your Natural Healthcare Practitioner you will be able to develop strategies to help you feel calmer, more positive and in control of your situation. Stress does not discriminate on age or gender, with both men and women of any age feeling the effects of stress at some point in life. However, what is stressful for one person may not be for another, as everybody reacts to stress in different ways. In fact, stress can be so engrained in your daily life, that it may feel 'normal'. Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate the impact that stress may have on your physical and mental wellbeing. Working with a Natural Healthcare Practitioner who understands the effects of stress, and who can identify and provide strategies for your specific needs, will help you increase your tolerance to stress and reduce its impact on your body and mind.

A specialised treatment strategy prescribed by your Natural Healthcare Practitioner will help:

- Relieve any stress-related symptoms you may be experiencing.
- Address the underlying and contributing factors to your stress, to restore wellbeing.
- Modulate the physical symptoms to reduce the risk of them driving ongoing stress.

What drives stress?

Stress acts to motivate and sharpen your focus in situations where immediate action is required. The greater the intensity or urgency of the situation, the greater your stress response will be. For example, if you are faced with danger, your body switches on your acute stress response (also called the 'flight or fight' response) to give you a burst of energy and to help you deal with the danger by either running away or fighting back.

However, in the modern world, with emotional triggers seemingly around every corner, many people are faced with ongoing stressors, such as work deadlines, being stuck in traffic, endless emails and negative news stories.

In response to stress, your body releases the hormone cortisol – a chemical that allows you to stay in an active, attentive state for long periods of time in order to handle the stress at hand. Chronic stress strongly affects every system in your body, with ongoing or poorly managed stress increasing the risk of experiencing potential health consequences.

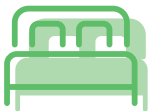
Stress may affect:



Mental wellbeing and mood



Digestive function



Sleeping patterns (e.g. your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep)



Cardiovascular function, such as your heart rate and blood pressure



Energy levels



Reproductive hormones

What does stress feel like to you?

Stress can manifest in many ways and is different for each individual. You may identify with one or a combination of these different presentations.



Nervous tension and anxiety: Frequent and persistent tension and anxiety may manifest as excessive fear and worry, restlessness, tightening of the chest, racing heartbeat, and in extreme cases, panic attacks. This negatively impacts quality of life and normal day-to-day functioning.



Wired and tired: When stress is ongoing, your brain may perceive this as an ongoing threat, mounting a stress response to keep you alert or 'wired'. This can reduce your ability to relax and wind-down, resulting in feeling not only wired but tired too – a sensation of being unable to switch-off in spite of being exhausted.



Exhausted and flat: In some individuals, exposure to ongoing stress may physically change the way their brain is able to respond. In these circumstances, the person is left feeling both physically and mentally exhausted, affecting performance at work and in everyday life.



Low mood and lethargic: Ongoing stress can lead to structural changes to brain tissues, changing the way the brain functions. Ongoing stress can also impact their resilience. This can affect the activity of brain chemicals leading to feelings of poor mood and may manifest as feelings of overwhelm, vulnerability, and lead to teary, weepy moments.



Insomnia: Stress can negatively impact sleep quality and quantity. This may manifest as an inability to unwind and fall asleep due to ruminating thoughts about your day, frequent waking, and/or feeling unrefreshed upon waking.



The symptoms of stress

Inflammation

Inflammation can be an invisible, but very active process, impacting your brain and nervous system. Left unmanaged, inflammation and the molecules it produces can become chronic and cause changes in mood and behaviour, by negatively influencing nervous system function and brain health.



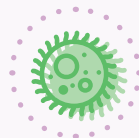
Oxidative stress

Oxidative stress can cause damage to cells – leading to fatigue and poor concentration. Brain cells and membranes are rich in fat, which is particularly susceptible to stress and damage.



Gut disturbances

An imbalance of good and bad bacteria in the gut, otherwise known as dysbiosis, can contribute to both inflammation and oxidative stress. In addition, gastrointestinal disturbances, such as food intolerances, may be linked to mood disorders.



Sex hormone and thyroid imbalance

Thyroid and sex hormones help to create balance in your body. If either, or both, are out of balance – this will impact your ability to handle stress.



Weight management

Weight management and being worried about your weight can lock you in a vicious cycle, with an unbalanced mood often leading to poor eating and exercise habits.



Poor sleep

Many people suffer from sleep disturbances, finding it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep. Without restorative sleep, your body is unable to recover each night from the previous day and you won't be functioning at your best.



Your Practitioner can assess and prioritise all of the above stress contributors and may recommend nutritional and herbal support, detoxification and weight management programs, or diet and lifestyle interventions specific to your needs.

Products to support you in times of stress

Your Practitioner may recommend specialised herbs and nutrients to help you better manage your stress, and to provide your body with the key nutrients it needs. In the absence of sufficient dietary intakes, specialised ingredients may help you to withstand the effects of stress, while you identify and address the underlying causes.

Core nutritional support

During times of stress your body uses more nutrients than usual; however, there is also an increased need for particular nutrients, such as magnesium and B vitamins. Your Practitioner may recommend some core nutritional support during these times.



Mg

Magnesium: Magnesium levels may be depleted when you are stressed as your body uses and excretes more magnesium than usual at these times. Magnesium is considered an essential mineral, meaning it needs to be consumed as the human body cannot make it. Many people are aware magnesium is beneficial for muscle relaxation and to provide support for muscle cramps and spasms; however, it also supports cellular energy production. When you have a lot on your plate and your energy reserves are running low, magnesium can help you refuel.

Different types of magnesium vary greatly in their bioavailability, and therefore therapeutic efficacy. Meta Mag® is a magnesium bisglycinate; a highly soluble and absorbable form of magnesium that provides several advantages over other forms of magnesium. It is well-tolerated, producing fewer gastrointestinal side-effects commonly caused by other forms of magnesium.



B9
B1
B12

B Vitamins: B vitamins typically come as a 'complex', as they are a group of nutrients that act together in synergy to support energy production and for healthy nervous system function. These powerhouse nutrients are involved in numerous hormonal pathways and to support brain chemistry, so if a deficiency exists it may manifest as a host of symptoms, such as low mood, irritability, and/or difficulty concentrating. Supplementing with extra B vitamins can support the symptoms of stress and assist energy levels.

Herbal support for improved stress resilience

Your Practitioner may recommend specific herbs to help with your most frequent stress symptoms.



Withania, Siberian ginseng and Rhodiola: These herbs are known as 'adaptogens', as they are used to help the body adapt to stress. Withania helps reduce the stress hormone cortisol, while Siberian ginseng is useful when stress leads to physical fatigue. Rhodiola helps improve work performance by relieving both mental and physical exhaustion created by ongoing stress. In combination, these herbs help to rebalance the stress response system once more.



Zizyphus, Magnolia and Passionflower: Herbs traditionally used to help manage anxiety. These herbs promote the calming brain chemical gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which is beneficial during times of stress to relieve feelings of tension and/or anxiety.



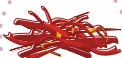
Rehmannia: Traditionally used for the relief of nervous tension and ongoing stress. This herb helps to nourish the nervous system and improves stress tolerance. Rehmannia and lavender, in combination, are particularly beneficial in situations of feeling 'wired and tired'.



Dong quai and Panax ginseng: Used in Traditional Chinese Medicine to promote emotional resilience during stressful times. These herbs, in combination, are indicated for situations of stress that lead to feelings of being 'weepy' or 'teary'.



Bupleurum combination: Another Traditional Chinese Medicine formula helpful in situations of ongoing stress. This combination is used when stress leads to mood changes that manifest as nervous tension and irritability.



BCM-95™ Turmeric and Saffron: A potent combination for cases of low mood. These herbs address several of the factors that may lead to low mood, including supporting the stress response system, reducing inflammation and protecting the brain against the damaging effects of ongoing stress.



California poppy and Lavender: Taken together, these herbs help induce sleep and reduce night-time waking. California poppy possesses mild sedative properties, while both herbs promote the calming effects of GABA, to induce relaxation and support restful sleep.

Healthy eating to support stress

What you consume is what fuels your body. By ensuring you are receiving the core nutritional foundation that provides healthy brain and nervous system structures, as well as brain chemistry, your Practitioner can ensure you're getting all the nutrients you require to help you resist and healthily manage stress. An optimal diet can also reduce inflammation and oxidative stress – giving you the best chance at supporting optimal mental wellbeing. Your Practitioner may advise that you follow the Wellness Lifestyle to ensure you are minimising any foods that exacerbate symptoms of stress, and are engaging in regular movement and relaxation to help balance your response to stress.

The wellness lifestyle pyramid

Boost your intake of antioxidants, omega-3s, beneficial probiotics, vitamins and minerals by eating a varied diet.



Include a handful of nuts and seeds and up to two tablespoons of healthy oils daily.



Limit starchy carbohydrates to two small serves a day, and choose wholegrain options (i.e. brown rice and sourdough).



Enjoy a minimum of one cup (two serves) of fresh fruit daily.



Include protein-rich foods in each meal or snack.



Enjoy a minimum of three cups of fresh vegetables per day.



Drink a minimum of eight glasses of water daily.



Enjoy a minimum of 30 mins of moderate activity, and 30 mins of fun and relaxation on most days.



Balancing your energy needs

Your brain and nervous system need a steady supply of energy to work properly. In some cases, eating small, frequent meals may be helpful to balance blood glucose levels and therefore energy needs. Each of these meals should consist of a small amount of good quality protein, along with an unrefined carbohydrate source, such as fresh vegetables or fruit.

Foods to include

Certain foods are of particular benefit for healthy mood, therefore your Practitioner may recommend you eat more foods that are high in:

	Protein	Essential Fatty Acids	Magnesium	B Vitamins
Avocado		✓		
Bananas			✓	
Beef	✓			✓
Berries			✓	
Brazil Nuts		✓		
Cheddar Cheese	✓			
Chia Seeds		✓		
Chicken and Turkey	✓			✓
Citrus Fruits				✓
Dark Chocolate (>70% Cacao)			✓	
Eggs	✓			✓
Fish	✓			
Flax Seeds		✓		
Leafy Greens			✓	

	Protein	Essential Fatty Acids	Magnesium	B Vitamins
Lentils and Beans	✓			✓
Nutritional Yeast				✓
Nuts and Seeds	✓		✓	✓
Pork	✓			
Prunes			✓	
Quinoa	✓			
Red Meat	✓		✓	✓
Salmon and Sardines	✓	✓		
Seafood and Shellfish	✓			✓
Sweet Potatoes				✓
Tofu	✓			
Walnuts		✓		
Whole Grains			✓	✓



Your Practitioner can help you to obtain sufficient protein from your diet in most instances.

Tips to make food preparation and cooking easier

1. Make a meal plan and buy all your ingredients in one shop. This prevents having to head to the shops every second day, which will save you time. It will also give you more time to prepare meals at home.

2. Simplify your meals, you don't have to cook restaurant style meals every night. Only cook complex recipes if you enjoy cooking.

3. Make a double batch when cooking a meal so it can be used for lunch or dinner the next day.

4. Invest in kitchen tools that make your life easier! Preparation time can be made quicker with food processors or choppers. Slow cookers can be your best friend, it also is one of the best ways to bring out the flavour in food.



Food to avoid

Equally as important as the foods to include in your diet are the foods your Practitioner may recommend you limit or avoid. These are usually foods that can amplify your physical response to stress.



Your Practitioner may discuss which foods to remove or limit in order to improve your gut function if this is of concern.

- Cut down your caffeine: While caffeine can enhance your mood and alertness, it can also stimulate your body's production of stress hormones at times when you don't need them, making it more difficult for you to relax. Avoid more than one caffeinated beverage a day.
- Limit alcohol.
- Refined carbohydrates, such as sugar, white bread, rice and pasta.
- Unhealthy fats, such as deep fried foods or margarine.
- Allergenic foods (foods that trigger an allergic response).

Supporting your mental health and wellbeing

Experiencing stress, worry and mood changes are not uncommon. What this means is you are not alone. Your Practitioner can support you to increase your tolerance to everyday stressors, manage any mood imbalance you may be experiencing, and give you the tools to put you back in the driver's seat to live your best life.

Recognise your resilience

You are more resilient than you know! Those facing adversities report multiple silver linings, including a renewed appreciation for life, realisation of true priorities and friendships, and recognition of strength. If you are experiencing a stressful situation, what is your silver lining? Remember, when life challenges you, you have been planted. Use it as an opportunity to flourish and grow.

Move your body to help your mind

Exercise boosts production of your body's feel-good neurotransmitters, known as endorphins, which have a positive impact on your mood and stress. Aerobic exercise is also proven to decrease stress hormones. Aerobic forms of exercise may include running, swimming, walking, cycling or joining a sporting team (perhaps at work or via a local sporting club, such as football, cricket, golf or tennis).

A successful exercise regime can involve any kind of physical activity, anything that moves your body for at least 2.5 to 5 hours per week. Start by easing yourself in with a few shorter sessions first, and carve out some time in your schedule to make exercise a consistent habit.

Though you might not always have time to hit the gym, a brisk walk, yoga at home or putting on some music for a quick boogie can be an excellent way to unwind.

Don't underestimate the power of exercising in a group or with a friend. Social connection and relationship building can be a powerful tool for improving mental wellbeing.



Practice gratitude

Feeling grateful just happens sometimes; however, the act of intentionally and regularly expressing gratitude has a multitude of benefits, including improvements in self-esteem and overall mental wellbeing, reduced aggression and enhanced empathy. Use the Personal Wellbeing Journal to write down what you are grateful for each day or just things that make you happy, and notice how your perspective changes.

Get back to nature and step outside

Spending time in natural environments can benefit health and wellbeing. It can be as simple as taking time to water your plants, gardening for half an hour, or walking barefoot on the grass for five minutes. Choose a nature activity, big or small, to do every day or week to help induce a sense of calm.

Pay attention on purpose

Mindfulness is the act of focusing on the present moment, drawing your attention away from mental chatter and anxious thoughts by tuning in to your physical senses. Focus on what you can see, touch, hear, smell or even taste. The evidence for developing a mindfulness practice is growing with a number of studies showing people reporting less stress, improved physical and emotional health, and better sleep.

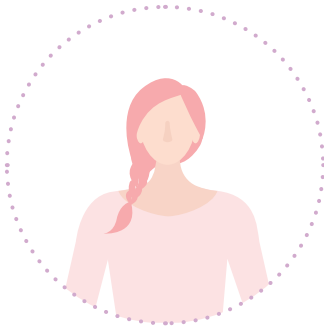
Becoming more mindful gets easier with time and practice, and can help you to remain calm, regulate your thoughts, emotions and reactions, and stay present even in the midst of stressful events.



Be mindful of your breathing

You spend all day and night breathing, so you are an expert at breathing! Yet how often do you stop and notice how you are breathing? Becoming more mindful of your breath simply requires you start paying attention on a regular basis. Notice how the rhythm varies as your mood or emotions change. It's possible to calm yourself simply by slowing your breathing rate and taking a few deep breaths – a proven stress-reducing strategy you can take anywhere to help you feel more centred and relaxed.

A simple breathing technique is to do the following:



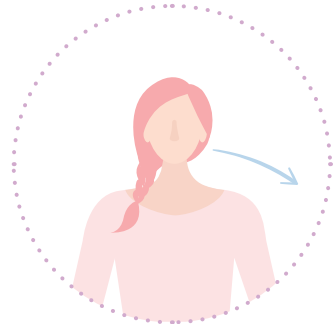
1. While standing or sitting, draw your elbows back slightly to allow your chest to expand.



2. Take a deep inhalation through your nose.



3. Hold your breath for a count of 5.



4. Slowly release your breath by exhaling through your nose.

Continue this for 3 to 5 minutes (depending upon how much time you feel you have).

Other quick tips



Laughter really is the best medicine: Good for both your heart and mind!

Whether you prefer to watch a funny movie, listen to a favourite comedian, watch a funny video, or share a funny story with a friend. Laughter has been shown to reduce the physical effects of stress.



Schedule time for yourself: Don't feel that this time has to be an hour or a day. Make it manageable for you and your lifestyle. Just as you recharge your phone battery, you have to recharge your personal battery too – so remember to take five!



Take a break: If you find yourself in an unexpected stressful situation, whenever possible try to take a break and remove yourself from the event. Go for a quick five minute walk or make a cup of tea. Take a few deep breaths and create a space where you can gather your thoughts for a few moments and restore calm.



Use your phone to your advantage: Spend less time on social media and more time using a meditation app. There are many free meditation or relaxation apps available for smart phones. Find one that works for you and instead of opening a social media app, opt to open a meditation app instead.



Do things you love: Hobbies are not just activities you did as a child. You are never too old to pick up a childhood hobby or involve yourself in a new one. Make time to play and be creative every day or week.



Use your Personal Wellbeing Journal at the back of this booklet (located from page 23) to help implement these stress buster tips into your life.

Sleep

Most people have been asked at some point in life, “are you getting enough sleep?” Though some people sleep consistently well, for others a good night’s sleep may be a distant memory. No matter where you fit on the scale of good sleep, it is important to consider both the quantity, but also the quality of your sleep. Sleep can affect how well you think, react, work, learn, interact with others, heal and restore, so it is important to everyone. For many people, bad habits in the lead up to bedtime, are a major contributor to a restless night. To help optimise your sleep:



Reduce evening ‘screen’ time

Night-time exposure to blue light from digital screens is stimulating and can interfere with your brain’s production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for making you feel sleepy. Turn off electronic devices 1 to 2 hours prior to bedtime.



Develop a bedtime ritual

It is important to give your body cues that it is time to slow down and sleep. Your ritual may include stretches, breathing exercises, listening to relaxing music, a hot bath, or sipping on a cup of caffeine-free tea.



Schedule your sleep

When your sleep cycle has a regular rhythm, you will feel better. Plan for 7 to 8 hours sleep. Aim to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day. As soon as you get up in the morning, go outside and face the sun for 15 to 30 minutes. This has also been found to help improve mood.





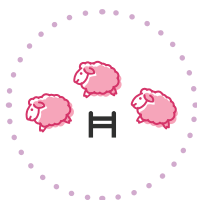
Do not stay in bed if you are awake

If you do not fall asleep within 20 minutes of lying down, get out of bed and perform a mundane activity until you feel sleepy enough to return to bed. Boredom is key; avoid activities that may stimulate you, such as watching TV, and avoid the use of bright lights, which suppress melatonin production.



Make sure your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable

Reduce light, noise and extremes of temperature. If light in the early morning bothers you, get 'blackout' curtains or blinds, or wear a slumber mask. If noise is an issue, wear earplugs or get a 'white noise' machine.



Go to bed when you feel sleepy

This reduces the time you are awake in bed. If you go to bed too alert you may have difficulty getting to sleep. This can result in feelings of irritation and frustration about not falling asleep, and worry about how you will manage the next day when tired.



Don't take naps during the day

This can reduce your sleepiness in the evening, resulting in poorer quality sleep during the night. If you just can't make it through the day without a nap, sleep less than one hour, and make sure you are awake again by 3:00 pm.



Personal Wellbeing Journal

Journaling has an endless list of benefits. Some people may associate a journal as a confidant and a place to confess struggles and concerns without judgement, and a journal can absolutely function in this role. However, it can also be a place for tracking your mood and emotional symptoms, as well as a tool to help you implement new, positive habits that inform your life and optimise your mental wellbeing. Regular journaling in this way can help you manage your response to stress, create new perspectives and explore opportunities for positive self-talk. So throw those teenage dream connotations of a journal away and experience what your Personal Wellbeing Journal can do for you.

Using Your Journal

1. Set a wellbeing goal for the week

At the start of the week, set a goal you want to achieve or an element of your wellbeing you want to focus on and write this in the space provided (this is usually going to be a goal you have agreed upon with the support of your Practitioner).



2. Mood tracker

Your Personal Wellbeing Journal has an emoji face system to help you track how you are feeling each day. There are five faces that represent a spectrum of emotions that you may experience during the day. Circle one or all of the faces that you resonate with that day and watch how the faces change over the days and weeks. Emotions are complex, therefore your Personal Wellbeing Journal also has a space below the emoji faces where you can choose to write how you are feeling if that feels more appropriate.

3. Habits and activity aims

Your Personal Wellbeing Journal can be used to create a regular series of habits and/or areas of focus that are personal to you and which you would like to achieve each week. Create your own or be inspired by the Lifestyle Tips (pages 14 to 17) in combination with the recommendations your Practitioner may make. Write down your habit/goal for each journal category in the space provided. Then, using a tick and cross system, tick off all the habits and goals you have achieved each day so that you can see the progress you are making each week.

Examples for each category include:



Relaxation

- Stop for a cup of tea every afternoon.
- Stop twice a day and focus on my breath for two minutes.



Sleep

- Be in bed by 10:00 pm every night this week.
- Use my meditation app before bed.



Movement

- Walk my dog for 20 minutes every day.
- Play my favourite song and dance in the living room.



Diet

- Avoid alcohol during the week and no more than two glasses of wine on the weekend.
- Include two pieces of fresh fruit every day.

4. Supplement tracker

Your Practitioner may recommend some individualised nutritional or herbal supplements for your circumstances. Your Personal Wellbeing Journal provides a space for you to tick that you have taken these as recommended. Always follow your Practitioner's instructions for use.

5. Practice gratitude

This is your chance to write! Write a sentence or a list of things you are grateful for each day. You may wish to do this upon waking, before bed or any time during the day. The choice is yours.

Using your Symptom Tracker

There may be specific symptoms, areas to focus on, or particular emotions that you and your Practitioner want to track each week. Using a scoring system from 1 to 10 (with 1 being very low, and 10 being very high), track your particular symptom each day and bring this record along to your appointments for your Practitioner to view.

Example:

Symptom 1: Feeling irritable

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	9/10	8/10	8/10	9/10	7/10	6/10	6/10
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							



Symptom 1: _____

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Symptom 2: _____

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							


























Symptom 3: _____

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Symptom 4: _____

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Personal Wellbeing Journal

Mood Tracker	                        	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
How are you feeling today?								
Habits and activity aims								
RELAXATION: _____								






































SLEEP: _____								

MOVEMENT: _____								

DIET: _____								

SUPPLEMENTS – Did you take your supplements today?								
PRACTICE GRATITUDE: What are you grateful for today?								
Monday:								
Tuesday:								
Wednesday:								
Thursday:								
Friday:								
Saturday:								
Sunday:								

Personal Wellbeing Journal

Mood Tracker	                                    	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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Saturday:								
Sunday:								

Personal Wellbeing Journal

Mood Tracker	                                    	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
How are you feeling today?								
Habits and activity aims								
RELAXATION: _____								





































SLEEP: _____								

MOVEMENT: _____								

DIET: _____								

SUPPLEMENTS – Did you take your supplements today?								
PRACTICE GRATITUDE: What are you grateful for today?								
Monday:								
Tuesday:								
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Sunday:								

Personal Wellbeing Journal

Mood Tracker	                                   	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
How are you feeling today?								
Habits and activity aims								
RELAXATION: _____								






































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Personal Wellbeing Journal

Mood Tracker	                                    	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
How are you feeling today?								
Habits and activity aims								
RELAXATION: _____								

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Your Practitioner Contact Details: