

THE WELLNESS WHEEL



"Am I Well?" – A question that many people ask them themselves regularly. But what does this actually mean? Are people asking, "Am I suffering from any illness?" or "How can I prevent future illness?" Many people have the assumption that if they are not ill, they are well. However, this is far from the truth.

A new concept that has been introduced to me lately by Cathy Dunleavy, a health and nutrition coach, is the "The Wellness Wheel". I would like to explain in this blog exactly what this means and how we can use it to get the most out of our lives and thrive. (Additionally, I have some great, healthy dinner options for you.)

To attain true wellness, we have to pay attention to our physical wellbeing but also create an overall balance within our lives. In recent years, there has been a lot more focus on mental and emotional health. Yet, we tend to pay less attention to our spiritual, intellectual, social and occupational wellbeing.

The Wellness Wheel is designed to help us to live our lives to the absolute fullest. It focuses on how we should be continuously developing to keep us happy and healthy rather than just surviving day to day. So, let's go into detail on these different areas that we should focus on.

Physical:

Usually, this is broken down into nutrition and exercise. People tend to focus most of their attention on their physical well-being.

Emotional/Mental:

The importance of emotional and mental wellness has certainly grown in recent years.

Everyone has a unique personality, this means that you may have a more positive or negative outlook, you may be more sensitive to certain situations or you may have trouble with balancing your frustration.

This is a great section of the wheel that allows you to incorporate mindfulness into your day to day life. This will aid in emotional regulation, providing you with an optimistic outlook and increasing your level of gratitude.

Ways to balance out emotional wellness:

- **Sleep** – If this is an area that you struggle with, try the following:
 1. No caffeine after 1pm
 2. No screen for 1-2 hours before bed
 3. magnesium supplements
 4. weighted blankets
 5. No big meals within 2 hours of bedtime
 6. sleep/meditation apps – ensure that you are consistently using them.

- **Structure, Plan, Organise** – Try to include more structure in your life and reduce clutter and chaos, they have a huge effect on stress levels!
- **Learn relaxation and stress management techniques** – Find something that you enjoy – Go for a walk, ring a friend, learn breathing techniques.

Intellectual:

Your brain is incredibly malleable, so it is important to keep learning! This causes your connections between neurons to strengthen and helps to reduce deterioration in the brain. To maintain intellectual wellness learn about what you LOVE!

Why not try out a podcast? I love time savers and being able finish multiple activities at once. Podcasts allow you to listen while you exercise or commute or do the housework. What a great time hack!

Reading books is another great way of learning about what you love. This is especially great at nighttime, why not read a book instead of being on your phone at night? You will be improving your sleep and strengthening your brain!

Social:

Human contact is vital, it is so important to have a strong support network to improve your social wellness. Through human connection we learn to communicate, we see things from different points of view, we feel like we 'belong', we laugh, we feel HEARD.

See socialising as a necessity rather than a luxury. Having strong social connections is invaluable for wellbeing.

Spiritual:

Spirituality simply means that life is more than what you experience day to day. It doesn't matter what form your spirituality takes, as long as it works for you.

You can't control everything that happens in the world and that's okay!

Try trusting that many problems and solutions are out of your control and they may not involve you. Accepting that can be incredibly freeing.

Learning about a form of spirituality that sits well with you and leaning on that during difficult times improves the spiritual aspect of our wellness.

Occupational:

Your occupational wellness is focused on the balance between work and leisure.

By achieving balance you will improve wellness as you will feel financially secure while also feeling satisfied with your leisure time.

Consider your own level of occupational wellness. Are there things that you could change that would give you more balance? Maybe you would like to go back to work after time off? Too much work or too much leisure can both have negative effects on one's wellness, this is why the balance is vital!

The Wellness Wheel encourages us to bring some awareness to all the aspects of our lives that can affect our health negatively or positively. Keep track of these sections and find ways you can improve those sections to promote overall wellness. Think outside the box, you never know what could work best for you.

We deserve to feel well!