

# Get back into the swing of things

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The start of a new year is a natural time to look ahead to the coming year and consider how we want to improve our lives. You can adopt a new mindset or reset your mind and begin the new year with a sense of calm and preparedness to tackle new goals and big dreams. Use these tips to start the new year and your first day back at work with a solid plan of action.



**Get back into  
the swing of things.**

Reset, reflect and recharge  
to hit the new year running.

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## Get back into a routine

Routines can reduce stress levels and improve mental health, more time to relax, and less anxiety. Those who follow a routine sleep better and feel refreshed and ready for the day. Your bedtime habits affect your mental sharpness, performance, emotional well-being, and energy level.

Try to maintain a consistent time for waking up and going to bed. A little extra [planning](#) can result in better health. Set the alarm a little earlier to have a healthy breakfast and meditate or work out.

## Take a break from social media time

Social media is constant noise and distracts us from our purpose and divides our attention. By its very nature, social media is addictive. While social media can be a positive platform (staying connected with friends and seeing exciting life updates), the benefits seldom outweigh the negatives.

Ultimately, social media can cause us to feel more disconnected than connected and affect our self-esteem and self-confidence. Try to limit your social media use and declutter your digital life.

Self-care promotes our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Taking good care of yourself is essential. It's like the oxygen mask on an aeroplane - in an emergency, you must put it on yourself first before you can help others.

An effective self-care routine throughout the year has several essential health benefits, such as [reducing anxiety](#), depression, stress, and [burnout](#). Take time to care for yourself, stay healthy and remain energised.

### **Practice mindfulness**

Training yourself to become more mindful can help you to stay present and focused on what's happening around you. Directing your attention to one task at a time can help you gently let go of any background thoughts. It helps free up mental bandwidth, making experiences more enjoyable and less rushed.

[Mindful meditation](#) can help boost mindfulness and teach you to be aware of distracting thoughts, acknowledge them and let them go.

### **Exercise more**

Add a 30-minute workout to your daily routine. [Exercise](#) increases your overall health and your sense of well-being and has some direct stress-busting benefits.

### **Read fiction**

Researchers found that becoming engrossed in a novel enhances connectivity in the brain and improves brain function. Reading fiction improves the reader's ability to put themselves in another person's shoes and flex the imagination in a way similar to the visualisation of muscle memory in sports.

Getting lost in a fiction book is a lifestyle choice driven by a desire to unplug from a constant stream of visual information. It is the perfect antidote for an overwhelmed mind.

### **Write it out**

Research supports that journaling can help decrease intrusive thoughts and other mental "clutter." Working memory and other cognitive functions can operate more smoothly and relieve stress simultaneously. Daily journaling can help improve your mental health, reduce stress, help with depression and anxiety, focus your mind, and organise your life.

Dedicate at least 15 minutes to writing each day. Tip: Try writing in the evening as part of your bedtime ritual.

### **Get musical**

Many people enjoy listening to music, but music offers more than a pleasant auditory experience. It is therapeutic and can help relieve stress and improve mood, concentration, and memory.

### **Sleep it off**

A good night's sleep can refresh you when you feel physically tired, but it can also help safeguard against mental fatigue and emotional distress. Sleep affects almost every type of tissue and system in the body – from the brain, heart, and lungs to metabolism, immune function, mood, and disease resistance. A chronic lack of sleep or [poor quality sleep](#) increases the risk of disorders, including high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity. Insufficient or inadequate sleep can interfere with your ability to solve problems and make decisions, and you might find it harder to remember important information or regulate your emotions.

Aim to get between 7 and 9 hours of sleep each night to reset your brain for optimal daytime performance.

## Delegate or ask for help

If you are an avid 'do-it-yourselfer,' you might lose out on the benefits of delegating or asking for help at work, home, or in relationships. Refusing to delegate means you are missing out on a powerful tool. Using the power of other people's help might be the best thing you can do for your mental health. Delegating tasks can empower colleagues, family, and friends to enhance their talents and skills and develop new ones. By sharing the work, you can devote more time and energy to activities and areas that are most [meaningful to you](#).

If you're in over your head, do yourself a favour and ask for help.

This year, be structured enough for success and achievement and flexible for creativity and fun.

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