



Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Sikhi

You might find it useful to consider the following five steps to improve your mental health and wellbeing, as co-developed by the NHS and Sikh community organisations. Practising each of the five ways to wellbeing every day can have a very positive impact on your mood and wellbeing. These are also things which are encouraged in the Sikh way of life.

One Connect with the Divine and other people



Connection with the Divine, Vaheguru, the Source of all Creation, is the one connection that can bring about eternal peace and contentment.

This connection allows us to form positive relationships with others around us, rooted in the recognition that everyone is a part of the Divine.

Connecting with others can enhance our wellbeing by helping us to:

- Recognise our shared humanity and that we are not alone in our struggles
- Support others and receive support from others
- Open our hearts to share in experiences of compassion, kindness and love; qualities that allow us to have a deeper connection with each other and the Divine
- Enhance our spiritual connection and uplift us

Sharing virtues

Appreciating others virtues (gun) and letting go of shortcomings (avgun) allows us to build positive relationships and appreciate the divinity within each of us.

The Sandalwood Tree

The Sandalwood tree has a beautiful, soothing fragrance, which it gives to all of the plants surrounding it. In the same way, Gurbani advises us that those minds who enter into the sanctuary of **Vaheguru** and the **Saadh** sangat (spiritually elevated ones) became fragrant and are soothed.

“O Siblings of Destiny, peace is found in the Saadh Sangat, the company of the spiritually elevated ones.”

— ANG 42, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Two

Be physically active



Suggestions of further resources:

- Workouts on YouTube or on a fitness app that you download (e.g couch to 5k)
- Health & fitness experts on social media. Check out [@stronglikeg](#) on Instagram
- Why not join a local martial arts or self defence class?
- Check your local gurdwara noticeboard for health and fitness classes (e.g. yoga)

“This body is the temple of Vaheguru, in which the jewel of spiritual wisdom is revealed”

— ANG 1346, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

A balanced approach to cultivating mental and spiritual well-being involves caring for both the mind and body.

In the same way that the mind gains its nourishment through the practice of Simran (focused meditation), the body requires nourishment through good nutrition, sleep and physical activity.

Research shows that physical activity enhances our mental wellbeing by:

- Decreasing stress and improving sleep
- Causing changes in your brain and body that can help to positively impact mood
- Raising self-esteem and self- confidence
- Lowering the risk of long-term health conditions, such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers

Here are some suggestions for how you can incorporate practices alongside physical activity to enhance spiritual and mental wellbeing:

- Mindful simran (focused meditation) whilst walking in nature and connecting to Vaheguru’s creation
- Practicing gratitude for the body. How privileged we are to be able to walk, to breathe, to be
- Being mindful of the body during exercise
- Eating and sleeping in moderation

“By His Grace, you have a healthy golden body. Attune yourself to that loving Lord.”

— ANG 270, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Three Learn something new each day



The term 'Sikh' literally means a learner, and seeker of Truth.

Research shows that learning something new everyday, such as a new skill, can improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Boosting self-confidence, raising self-esteem and reducing low mood
- Helping you to gain a sense of purpose and moving you closer to personal and spiritual self-development goals
- Connecting you with others (this could be in person, via phone or social media e.g Community groups such as [Taraki](#) and [Sikh Your Mind](#) and check out Basics of Sikhi quiz nights.)

Here are some further options to bring learning into your life and deepen your connection with your Sikhi:

- Learn more about the spiritual path by contemplating some verses of Gurbani with English translations ([sikhitothemax.com](#))
- Read books or listen to katha, Sikh discourse ([Basics of Sikhi, Nanak Naam](#))
- Learn Gurmukhi or kirtan ([Learnsikhionline.com](#) offers free 1 to 1 kirtan, punjabi & tabla lessons with a teacher of your choice)
- Rediscover an old hobby or try a new one (e.g Cook something new)

“Learn about Vaheguru, contemplate (Vaheguru) in your mind”

— ANG 230, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Four Give to others



“One who works for what he eats and gives some of what he has, O Nanak, he knows the path”

— ANG 1245, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Seva, or selfless service is highly valued within Sikhi. The Divine Vaheguru resides in all of us, therefore serving others is a form of service to the Divine.

Sikhs are encouraged to do seva of others through thought, word and action to uplift others (sarbat da bhalla) and humble themselves.

The highest form of Seva is internal seva of remembrance of Vaheguru.

Acts of giving and kindness are known to help improve mental wellbeing by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Bringing about a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Experiencing connection with other people

“Practice truth, contentment and kindness; this is the most excellent way of life”

— ANG 51, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

People who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Compassion can greatly benefit everyone especially during difficult times, from small acts of kindness to more regular giving, such as volunteering. You could try:

- Saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you
- Getting some essential supplies for a vulnerable neighbour
- Asking friends, family or colleagues how they are and listening with attention and genuine interest to their answer
- Serving all as One through langar (free kitchen) and pangat (equality). Find out about volunteering opportunities in your local community (e.g. Khalsa Aid, Nishkam SWAT, Midland Langar Seva Society)
- Support a food bank

Five

Pay attention to the present moment



For much of the day our attention is scattered, and the mind gets caught up in worries about the future and regrets over the past. This can create pain and suffering.

Purposely bringing one's attention to the present moment (commonly known as mindfulness) can bring about an experience of peace and an appreciation for all that is.

It is only in the eternal present moment that our mind can experience true happiness and connect with the Eternal Divine, Vaheguru.

**“If you centre yourself for just one breath,
you shall see Vaheguru face- to- face present
before you”**

— ANG 727, SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

You could start by:

- Noticing how the mind wanders from thought to thought throughout the day; how often it goes back into things that happened in the past, or gets caught in worries about the future
- You could then practice bringing your attention back into the present moment, by doing simran (practice reciting the Gurmantar, Vaheguru and listening to your own voice as you recite)
- Notice how your mind and body feel when your mind is not present, and how this changes when you are able to bring your mind back to presence
- Creating a regular meditation practice is a powerful way of becoming more present. Form the simple habit of meditating for just two minutes a day (to start with)

Resources:

- Watch videos about meditation on youtube (e.g [Nanak Naam](#), [Sikhnet](#))
- Listen to guided meditation online (visit the [Sikh your Mind](#) YouTube channel for guided meditation in English and Punjabi)
- Use meditation apps to access guided meditation tracks and to help create a regular practice (e.g. Insight Timer, Calm, Headspace)

About Us

Good Thinking is supported by the NHS and London borough councils. We provide free, 24/7, digital support to Londoners seeking mental health advice and help regardless of where they are on their journey. We offer round the clock support and self-care options that are easy to access, and simple to navigate.

Our Mission

We support individuals to look after their mental wellbeing in a way that works best for them. We encourage everyone to be proactive about their mental health and we provide tools and guidance to support this. If you need further support try talking to your GP.

For more information, visit www.good-thinking.uk

This text has been adapted by Dr Darshan Kaur (Sikh Your Mind), Amandeep Kaur (Sikh Your Mind & Kaur Coaching) and Shuranjeet Singh (Taraki). This leaflet has also been endorsed by the below organisations.

