

HOPE FOR HEALTH

10 TIPS FOR STAYING HOPEFUL

Research by Mather Institute and Washington University in St. Louis shows that people with a hopeful disposition are more likely to practice healthy lifestyle behaviors and feel positive about the future. Based on a review of academic research, the following are some strategies to promote hope and stay motivated.

1 Set goals for yourself.

Goals could be short-term (e.g., aiming to walk for 20 minutes every day) or long-term (e.g., learning a foreign language).

2 Start slow.

Make sure that the goals you set are attainable (e.g., eating a healthy diet or getting enough sleep).

3 Break up goals into smaller goals to make them more manageable.

For example, if your goal is to walk for 45 minutes every day, start with a 30-minute walk, three times a week and build your endurance.

4 Keep realistic expectations about your goals and be creative.

If bad weather interferes with your weekly lunch with a friend, enjoy a “virtual” lunch together over a video call.

5 Develop a purpose in life.

You can volunteer at your local soup kitchen, participate in a fundraiser, tutor school-aged children, or collect or distribute items of clothing.

6 Nurture your hobbies.

Pursue your passion, be it gardening, baking, writing, knitting, traveling, or scrapbooking.

7 Challenge yourself.

Complete a crossword or Sudoku puzzle.

8 Try new things.

Learn new skills such as playing a musical instrument or try out a new restaurant every month.

9 Engage in social activities.

Try to socialize regularly with friends and family. You can also join a book club or gardening club, video chat with grandchildren, or find a walking partner.

10 Practice reflection.

Meditating every day or maintaining a daily gratitude journal are some great ways to reduce stress, increase self-awareness, appreciate life, and think positively about the future.

These tips are based on academic research summarized by Mather Institute, an area of service of Mather. Mather is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well.SM Staffed by nationally recognized researchers, the Institute is an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful aging service innovations.

