



**22 for 2022 featured in the HuffPost article,
[“22 Tiny Mental Health Habits That Can Improve Your Life in 2022.”](#)**

1. **Be a good friend to yourself.** We can be our own worst enemy, and we can think the worst of ourselves. However, if we can be kind and love ourselves, we can also be kind to others. Start by trying to be a better friend to yourself. You can begin with positive self-talk (i.e., “I am able to get this work done.”).
2. **Breathe.** If you feel anxious or sad, breathe. Inhale for a four count and exhale for an eight count. Repeat five times. A longer exhale has been proven to increase a calm state.
3. **Check in with your therapist.** Friends and family are great for many reasons. However, sometimes we need more support. When you are ready to make changes in your life, a qualified therapist can give you a safe space to process previous experiences and can guide you through the therapeutic process.
4. **Complete an act of kindness or give to someone who needs help.** Generosity is key to our positive mental health. An act of kindness towards others may help you understand your own difficulties, increase empathy, and gain some perspective.
5. **Create a schedule for a sense of accomplishment** (i.e., “I made my bed today!” “I got a shower today!”). We complete many tasks throughout the day without recognizing our accomplishments. Take time to give yourself a pat on the back when you complete an action during the day, even if the task is small like making your bed. A quick “I did it!” will provide a boost of energy to complete other tasks.
6. **Give yourself a manicure, pedicure, facial, or hair mask.** Self-care comes in many forms. Caring for your hands, feet, face, or hair can stimulate your senses and relax your nervous system.
7. **Go play!** When we were children, we played. Sometimes we played by ourselves, and sometimes we played with others. As adults, we may think it is too childish to play. However, play evokes creativity, can lead to humor, and connection with others.

8. **Focus on this moment because it is the only moment that exist.** We have so many thoughts through the day. If we are too far in the past (i.e., “I should have...”) or in the future (“what if...”), we are ignoring this moment. To bring your attention to the present moment, try grounding exercises, such as breathing or tapping into your senses, and help yourself to “let your thoughts pass by.”
9. **Keep a gratitude journal, noting people and experiences that please you.** Writing provides time to reflect about all our thoughts and experiences. It gives us time to process our life. When writing, take time to reflect on at least five things in which you are grateful.
10. **Learn something new.** Learning a something new can help keep you occupied and help you connect with others who have similar interests. Whether it is a new language or a new game, learning helps keeps our mind busy.
11. **Let your thoughts pass by like clouds in the sky.** Therapists use many analogies to describe your thoughts and behaviors, especially when they apply cognitive behavioral therapy techniques. Take time to be mindful of your thoughts. Where did they come from? Can you watch them pass by like clouds in the sky and not get too attached to them?
12. **Reach out and talk with someone.** Sometimes we isolate ourselves from others. Although we are connected through social media, we can still feel lonely and need a friend. You are not alone! Reach out and call someone you care about. You may bring joy to both of your days.
13. **Snuggle with an animal.** Caring and loving an animal can help you learn to love and care for yourself. If you are having a tough moment, consider cuddling up with an animal for emotional support.
14. **Start a new hobby or get back to an old one.** Hobbies give us time to express ourselves in a creative way. They also give us time to reflect on our day. When we make something special, we can share it with others. You may also inspire someone else to pick up a hobby!
15. **Stimulate your senses.** You can do this by smelling strong scents (i.e., coffee, onions, flowers, etc.), examining an object, or “taking your ears for walk” by listening to all the sounds around you. You can also give yourself a hug to induce a sense of security. Checking in with your senses can help you ground yourself in this moment.
16. **Take a five-minute break.** Many people are focused on work, including schoolwork, and chores among other daily activities. If you feel stuck, take a five-minute break. Walk away, stretch, get a glass of water, or smell fresh air. When you return, you’ll feel refreshed and ready to finish the activity. You may also come up with new ideas on your break!
17. **Take a museum or historical tour.** Many towns have local historical tours. Get out and learn about history and other time periods. Taking a tour gives you a little break away from your routine.
18. **Take a 15-minute nap.** A quick nap or meditation can give you the break you need to continue with the rest of your day.

19. **Take a nature walk or swap screen time for green time.** Going outside for fresh air and sunshine isn't only for children. Consider taking time away from your work to take a walk. Notice the environment. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell?
20. **Try something for five minutes.** If you are having trouble starting an activity, try it for five minutes. This strategy is great for any activity, including working out and chores. Just try it and see how long you'll do the activity. Sometimes starting is the hardest part of the process.
21. **Turn it off.** If you are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of information that you are watching or listening to, turn it off. Take time for yourself to relax, or create content rather than consuming it.
22. **Watch a funny movie, tell jokes, or listening to uplifting music.** We are a result of our environment, including the content we watch. If you are having a sad moment or need a boost of energy, watch something funny, tell jokes with a friend, or listen to uplifting music. Smiling and laughing are positive for your mental health.



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