



# iflow Psychology

## Information Sheet

Supporting mental health, resilience, and wellbeing

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### Benefits of Positive Activities

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Engaging in positive activities—whether physical, social, creative, or restorative—has well-documented psychological and physiological benefits.

These activities stimulate the brain's reward pathways, support emotional regulation, and help counteract the inertia that often accompanies stress, depression, or burnout.

**Improved mood:** Activities such as exercise, mindfulness, and social connection increase dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins, helping elevate mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

**Reduced stress:** Positive activities provide healthy distraction, promote relaxation, and interrupt unhelpful physiological stress responses.

**Better sleep:** Regular movement and calming routines (breathing, meditation, slow evening rituals) improve sleep quality and support healthier circadian rhythms.

**Increased resilience:** Mastery experiences—trying new things, completing tasks, learning skills—build confidence, coping ability, and psychological flexibility.

**Greater self-esteem:** Doing things that feel meaningful, enjoyable, or skill-based strengthens self-worth and reinforces a healthier self-identity.

**Enhanced cognitive functioning:** Activities that engage the mind (games, reading, puzzles, creativity) boost attention, memory, problem-solving, and cognitive agility.

Overall, positive activities support emotional well-being by improving mood, lowering stress, strengthening resilience, and enhancing cognitive functioning.

There are many ways to incorporate positive activities into your life. Examples include:

- **Exercise:** boosts energy, improves mood, and enhances physical health.
- **Meditation and mindfulness:** reduce stress and promote calm.
- **Reading:** expands knowledge and offers healthy mental escape.
- **Spending time with loved ones:** builds connection, support, and positive memories.
- **Pursuing hobbies:** such as painting, gardening, playing music, or crafting.
- **Volunteering:** provides purpose, contribution, and community connection.
- **Travelling:** introducing new environments, cultures, and perspectives.

Everyone responds differently. It's important to experiment, notice what genuinely improves your mood, and build your own personalised list of positive activities.

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## Meet Your PAL

Below is your Positive Activities List (PAL), designed to help you identify activities that support your mood, resilience, and daily well-being.

Tick the activities that appeal to you, cross out any that don't fit, and leave neutral activities unmarked.

### 1. Social Connection & Relationships

- Talking with others
- Calling a friend
- Meeting someone for coffee
- Meal with a friend
- Attending parties
- Throwing a party
- Reconnecting with old friends
- Making a new friend
- Spending time with family
- Spending time with children
- Playing with children
- Spending time with partner
- Kissing
- Hosting visitors
- Sending a supportive message
- Sending a thank-you text or letter
- Writing a letter
- Giving a compliment
- Receiving a compliment
- Offering help
- Asking for help
- Random acts of kindness
- Giving small gifts
- Volunteering
- Mentoring someone
- Joining a club, class, or social group
- Attending a workshop
- Discussing politics
- Debating
- Attending a social event
- Participating in community activities
- Spending time with pets
- Playing with pets
- Visiting a place of worship
- Praying or spiritual connection
- Smiling at strangers

### 2. Physical Activity, Sport &

- Movement Walking
- Walking the dog
- Bushwalks
- Jogging or running
- Riding a bike
- Cycling
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Surfing
- Board surfing
- Body surfing
- Stand-up paddle boarding
- Fishing
- Golf
- Tennis
- Squash
- Cricket
- Soccer
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Hockey
- Martial arts
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Stretching
- Mobility exercises
- Gym workouts
- Home workouts
- Rock climbing
- Roller skating
- Ice skating
- Skateboarding
- Horse riding
- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Camping
- Playing any sport
- Outdoor games
- Trampolineing
- Gardening
- Indoor gardening / caring for plants
- Getting sunshine
- Taking the stairs
- Gentle movement for chronic pain

### 3. Outdoors, Nature & Exploration

- Going to the beach
- Going to the park
- Picnic
- Exploring new suburbs
- Day trips
- Road trips
- Planning a holiday
- Taking a holiday
- Camping
- Visiting zoo or aquarium
- Visiting museums or galleries
- Nature photography
- Driving for leisure
- Taking a ferry trip
- Taking a train trip
- Watching birds
- Feeding ducks or birds
- Beachcombing
- Watching clouds
- Stargazing
- Watching sunrise or sunset
- Visiting waterfalls
- Sitting outdoors
- Enjoying a scenic view
- Walking by water
- Sitting under a tree

### 4. Creativity, Expression & Hobbies

- Art
- Painting
- Drawing
- Craft
- Crochet
- Knitting
- Sewing
- Decoupage
- Paper mache
- Pottery
- Ceramics
- Model making
- DIY projects
- Calligraphy
- Home decorating
- Interior styling
- Scrapbooking

- Photography
- Lego building
- Collecting hobbies
- Scrapbooking
- Digital illustration
- Graphic design
- Designing on Canva
- Playing an instrument
- Songwriting
- Making playlists
- Creative writing
- Writing poetry
- Journaling
- Reflective writing
- Writing short stories
- Writing for fun
- Cooking
- Baking
- Trying new recipes
- Creative cooking experiments
- Origami
- Woodworking
- Gardening projects
- Crosswords
- Word games
- Brain puzzles
- Chess
- Cards
- Board games
- Videogames
- Games arcade
- Puzzle apps
- Darts
- Fishing-related crafts or preparation
- Photography outings

## 5. Relaxation, Self-Care & Wellness

- Bath
- Long shower
- Massage
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Loving-kindness meditation
- Body scan meditation
- Deep breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Breathwork sessions
- Relaxing with candles
- Aromatherapy
- Using a weighted blanket
- Using essential oils
- Skincare routines
- Haircut or grooming
- Spa treatments
- Sauna
- Steam room
- Hot springs
- Float tank
- Napping
- Resting
- Relaxed evening at home
- Listening to calming music
- Watching ASMR
- Turning off devices
- Enjoying silence
- Comfortable clothing
- Drinking tea or coffee mindfully

## 6. Entertainment, Learning & Cultural Activities

- Watching a movie
- Watching TV
- Watching sports
- Going to the cinema
- Watching comedy
- Stand-up comedy
- Comedy podcasts
- Listening to music
- Listening to audiobooks
- Listening to podcasts
- Watching documentaries
- Going to concerts

- Attending plays or theatre
- Visiting museums
- Visiting art galleries
- Browsing a bookshop
- Reading a book
- Reading magazines
- Reading newspapers
- Reading short stories
- Reading poetry
- Reading online articles
- Attending a lecture or seminar
- Taking an online course
- Virtual museum tours
- Trivia nights

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## 7. Personal Growth, Identity & Productivity

- Learning a new skill
- Studying a topic of interest
- Working on a personal project
- Career exploration activities
- Resume updates
- Setting goals
- Planning future goals
- Reviewing old journals
- Values clarification exercises
- Vision board creation
- Personal development courses
- Writing gratitude lists
- Morning routines
- Evening wind-down routines
- Meal planning
- Budgeting
- Organising finances
- Financial planning
- Making a bucket list
- Decluttering
- Cleaning
- Organising a room
- Organising digital files
- Clearing email inbox
- Improving home workspace
- Completing tasks
- Work (if meaningful or rewarding)

## 8. Sensory Experiences & Simple Joys

### Joys

- Fresh bedding
  - Opening windows for fresh air
  - Fresh flowers
  - Lighting candles
  - Watching a candle flame
  - Listening to rain
  - Sensory grounding (5-4-3-2-1)
  - Soft fabrics
  - Warm blankets
  - Enjoying favourite scents
  - Trying new perfumes or colognes
  - Enjoying a warm drink
  - Eating dessert
  - Eating a favourite meal
  - Trying new foods
  - Warm sunlight
  - Watching fire or fireplace
  - Playing with fidget items
  - Eating breakfast outdoors
  - Watching people (people-watching)
  - Watching pets sleep
  - Savouring treats mindfully
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Select 3–5 activities from this list to schedule into your week. Begin with low-effort, high-reward options and gradually build up.

Record how each activity affects your mood, motivation, and energy. The goal is regular, intentional engagement to support recovery and well-being.

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