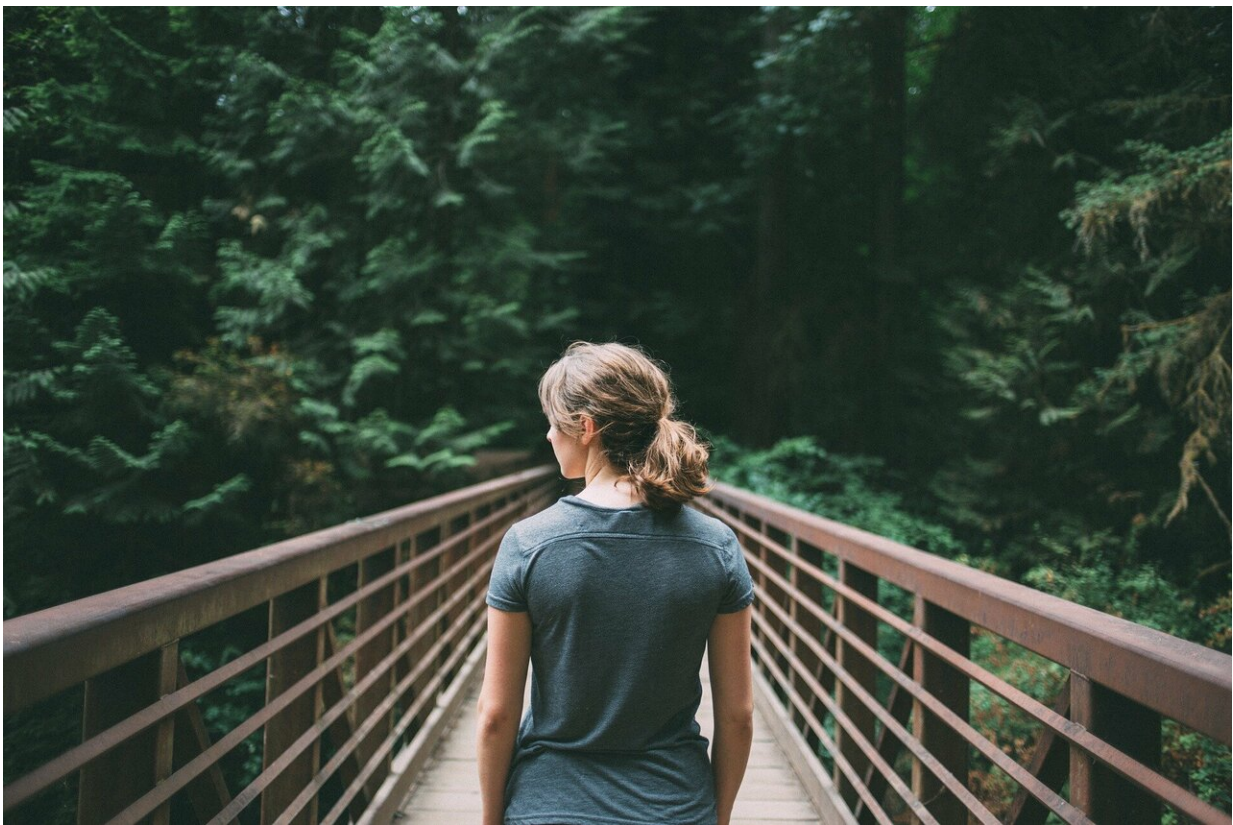


Survey finds nearly half of Americans prioritize mental health with daily 'mindful moments'

May 5 2022



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Americans are discovering new ways to prioritize and boost their mental health. Many are finding that taking a "bite size" approach is making a

tremendous impact.

According to a new 2022 Healthy Now [survey](#) commissioned by Parade Media and Cleveland Clinic, 46% of Americans have been able to maintain or improve their mental/[emotional health](#) by taking multiple 5- to 10-minute breaks throughout the day for activities that relieve stress, depression, and/or anxiety.

Americans are finding these "moments" more doable and effective than more extended periods of [mental health](#)-boosting activities. In fact, seven out of 10 Americans (70%) believe that taking these shorter breaks throughout the day was more beneficial for maintaining and improving their mental well-being than taking one 30- to 60-minute break.

"Everyone's familiar with the concept of the 'mental health day,' but our survey suggests that just a few minutes of time set aside each day to relax and recharge can make a real difference," says Lisa Delaney, Parade Media's SVP/Chief Content Officer. "It's a way of breaking down practices that help benefit a fundamental component of wellness into 'snackable' moments that more easily fit into our busy lives."

Top activities of mentally/emotionally healthy revealed

While the fact that almost half of Americans are embracing this approach is a bright spot, the survey reveals that many others continue to struggle with their mental health. More than one-third (37%) of all respondents rate their current mental health as average or low. Significant percentages of Americans said they grappled with anxiety (45%), sadness and depression (36%), and anger (34%) at least once a week in the last month.

Crucially, the survey revealed many Americans who rated their mental health as low are not engaging in well-researched activities proven to improve mental health. Less than half exercise regularly (37%) or spend time outside (37%), compared to 52% and 46% of those who rate their mental health as high. Those with strong mental health also believe getting adequate sleep (87%), movement (76%), and socializing with others (71%) are beneficial to their mental/emotional health.

"Simply taking a 5-minute walk around the block offers both exercise and time outside to clear your head and recharge for the rest of the day," Kia-Rai Prewitt, Ph.D., a psychologist with Cleveland Clinic's Center for Adult Behavioral Health. "Even so, don't get discouraged if you have to skip it every now and then. Building these into your daily routine is a marathon, not a sprint."

Mothers struggling most with mental health

Why aren't Americans making these beneficial breaks a part of their everyday routine more often? Survey respondents who rarely or never engage in activities that support their mental health cite being too busy (34%) and being a caregiver for a loved one (36%) as barriers. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of these respondents say they simply don't know how to support their mental health.

The study shows that certain segments of Americans are more affected by these barriers. For instance, the survey indicates that one in three mothers (32%) never or rarely² spend time improving or maintaining their mental/emotional health, despite reporting lower levels of mental health than fathers. Almost half of mothers (43%) rate their mental health as average or low, compared to 26% of fathers who said the same. Similarly, 17% of mothers report their mental health as "excellent," compared to 33% of fathers who said the same.

The survey also uncovered these additional results:

- **Sex is rejuvenating for men; not so much for women.** Men are more likely to find having sex as refreshing after a long day (54%) than women (36%). When it comes to fathers and mothers, that gap widens, with 65% of dads finding sex to be rejuvenating, compared to 44% of moms. Women say they are likely to find more solitary activities as restorative, like reading a good book (63%) or lighting a candle (48%).
- **Working can have a positive impact on your mental health.** Despite the demands of balancing working outside the home and parenting, working parents report higher levels of mental/emotional health than nonworking parents. About seven in 10 (69%) of working parents rate their mental/emotional health as strong, compared to 55% of nonworking parents. Additionally, working parents are more likely to feel happy, fulfilled, refreshed and productive on a weekly basis.
- **...but working does take an emotional toll.** Despite being happier, working parents also report higher levels of exhaustion (65%) and anger (42%) on an at least weekly basis, compared to nonworking [parents](#), 52% and 31%, respectively.
- **Investing in employees' mental health pays off.** Roughly half (53%) of those with strong mental health said their employer considers mental health days part of PTO, compared to 32% of those with low mental health.

More information: For full results, visit [Parade.com/healthynow](https://www.parade.com/healthynow)

Provided by Cleveland Clinic

Citation: Survey finds nearly half of Americans prioritize mental health with daily 'mindful

moments' (2022, May 5) retrieved 7 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-survey-americans-prioritize-mental-health.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.