My Personal Mental Health Routine

This routine is hugely based on mindfulness. It seeks to help improve and maintain high levels of mindfulness throughout the day. The goal with this routine is to be mindful from the moment you wake up in the morning until going back to sleep at night.

Let’s take a closer look at each of the mindfulness techniques and how to work with them. The techniques are divided into different parts that reflect different parts of our day and needs, i.e. introspection, planning, resting and physical activity.

1. Introspection

Reflection

Reflection with mindful walking makes a good combination for solving problems like bits of code that are not working in a project, and other serious issues in our personal lives.

Reflection brings our attention to the problem we are trying to solve and also raises our awareness. Usually, after about 5 to 20 minutes of mindful walking and we have improved our level of mindfulness, we can start thinking about the problems we have and try to come up with solutions for each, one at a time.

Mindful Walking And Walking Meditation

When we feel overwhelmed mentally and even emotionally, mindful walking goes a long way in helping us come back to peace and balance.
When we have barriers, either work related or personal, that are keeping us from working smoothly on our tasks, mindful walking can be a good method to overcome them.

To enjoy the benefits of mindful walking well, we first have to do walking meditation which helps us know and master the areas to focus on like feelings, thoughts, and sensations when walking mindfully. After that, we can then get into mindful walking whenever we are walking to enjoy more benefits.

2. Planning

Visualization

Visualization is also another technique we can use to get a good understanding of the project we are working on. Before getting started on any project, we can visualize the end product we desire to have so we can understand exactly what we need to do to get there. Visualization goes a long way in helping to create a good mock-up and prototype of the project as well as understand the client's needs and desires better.

In order for us to be able to make use of it, we only need to close our eyes and put the pieces of the project together to create an entirety in our minds. We can then explore each aspect of the project and how it is supposed to be when the final version is complete. Visualization also provides good mental relief and energizes us to keep working on the project we may have.
3. Resting

Resting Awareness

Resting awareness is a technique that aims to increase awareness when in a resting position. When we are taking our well-deserved breaks after a long period of working, the technique can help us let go of any built-up tension and cool off as we prepare to go back to work.

To practice resting awareness, all we have to do is get a bit comfortable wherever we are seated, and simply remain aware of our thoughts, feelings and sensations when in that resting position.

We just simply observe as thoughts on various aspects of our lives come and go without interfering with them. This practice is good for not only giving our minds and bodies a period of rest but also for learning how our thoughts work.

Body Scan

Body scan is a brain-improving method that works just like resting awareness. We can also use it during our breaks. What we need to do here is lay down on a mat on the floor and then scan our bodies from the toes up using our minds. Ideally, we become aware of every part of our bodies and the thoughts, feelings and sensations associated with them without rationalizing anything.

Being more aware simply helps us calm down and improve our mindfulness levels. With body scan, we can increase our work hours, be more productive, and gain mental clarity to help us know exactly what we are working on and we should approach our tasks and keep going until we are done.
4. Physical Activity

**Mindful Programming**

Here, we can go about our programming tasks as usual but while trying to remain aware of ourselves as we do it. As we write code, debug, come up with advanced software development solutions for the project we are handling, and as we implement them, we can seek to be aware.

By trying to be always mindful of ourselves and our environment regardless of what we are doing, we get to remain focused, feel balanced mentally, emotionally, and physically as well as keep our energy levels high so that we can work longer. Mindful programming also helps to avoid hitting the creativity wall that comes from mental exhaustion.

**Note-taking**

Note-taking works well when we want to have long hours of focused attention on our work. Mind-wandering is a common occurrence when working. We find ourselves thinking about other things that are not related to the work we are doing, and before we know it, we no longer have the desire or will to keep working.

To remain "in the zone", where we are just flowing with energy and focus, we have to reduce the mental chatter going on in our brains, and note-taking can help deal with that.

Every time our minds drift off to other things, and we become aware of that, we should take a mental note and say to ourselves, "That is a thought" or when we experience a deep feeling about something, we can take a mental note and say "That is a feeling" and then redirect our attention to our work.
**Mindful Eating And Mindful Speaking**

During our meal times, we can also aim to remain aware so that we keep control over ourselves. When eating, we can eat mindfully. We can become aware of how we pick the food from our plates to our mouths, how we chew and swallow, and how we repeat the process until we are done with our food.

After that, as we wait to go back to work, we can also socialize with our colleagues or friends mindfully by listening and speaking mindfully, and this can help keep us in the present moment so that we have an easy time taking the same level of mindfulness back to our programming work.

**Mindful Breathing**

Mindful breathing is all about being aware of our breath. It is the foundation of most meditation techniques as it helps to ground us in the present moment.

Breathing is always happening in the present moment and by being aware of this process, we get to be in the present moment too. Mindful breathing can be used any time we feel we are having a hard time being mindful. When we get lost in thought, we can direct our attention to our breath and come back to the present moment.

Here, we aim to be aware of how we breathe in and out in its entirety, how we allow air into our bodies through our noses, how it enters and fills our lungs, how our bodies respond to air coming in as well as when we breathe out.

When we remain aware of our breath for a couple of minutes, we can forego the stressful thoughts of the future and the regrets of the past and simply be there in the moment.

The techniques mentioned above can be used by a person who likes mindfulness and prefers working with it alone.
However, we can also combine mindfulness with other self improvement techniques like yoga or even other meditation techniques we are currently using or are planning to work with in the near future. It depends entirely on the individual and what they are more comfortable with.

To help you get started, here is a custom mental health routine that helps you out with questions you can ask yourself that will help you understand where you stand in terms of mental health and your daily schedule, so that you can come up with a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) routine.

**MENTAL HEALTH ROUTINE TABLE**

1. Which mental health techniques would I prefer to work with?

   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

2. What’s my daily schedule like? (Note down a rough idea of when you wake up, when you sleep and whether you work at home or commute to work and the activities you get involved in.)

   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
3. In my typical day, and based on my schedule, which time of the day is best for me to do mindfulness meditation, reflection, yoga or any other technique that requires me to create time for it? (You can list 2 times of the day if you can, like morning and evening, morning and afternoon or even 1 like in the morning only.)

With the above information, fill in the techniques in the table on the next page to help you have a solid mental health routine you can now follow to maintain optimal mental health.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>When working</th>
<th>During my breaks</th>
<th>Evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** You can add different techniques on different days. Take time to think which techniques are best fitted for you in various times of the day and the options you have for each period of the day and mix them up as you wish.

Good luck!