

# Psychology Month February 2017

## Week 4

Change your *habits*, change how you *feel*



[www.dpcdsb.org/psychology](http://www.dpcdsb.org/psychology)



@psychDPCDSB

DPCDSB Psychology Department, February 2017

# *Change your dietary habits- change how you feel*

Nutritional Psychiatry is a new field examining the effects of diet on the brain; to read more about it, click:  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/can-your-diet-shape-your-mental-health/article24647105/>

Diets rich in vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants



- Brain cell nourishment
- Less stress on the brain
- Lower rates of anxiety and depression



Diets high in processed foods and low in nutrition



- Brain inflammation
- Impaired brain function
- Higher rates of mental health problems



## Change your exercise habits - change how you feel

Physical activity is good for your brain!

- Watch Dr. Mike Evans, Toronto physician and professor, present on increasing your productivity and happiness with exercise
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG7n2QiaMB8>
- Even as little as 10 minutes counts!
- Take a stretch break at your desk or with students in the classroom:  
[http://advancedhealth.ca/clients/516/images/computer.desk\\_stretches.jpg](http://advancedhealth.ca/clients/516/images/computer.desk_stretches.jpg)





## Change your environmental habits- change how you feel

Natural environments (e.g. parks, gardens, wilderness areas, and urban green spaces) improve our psychological well-being

- Researchers at Stanford University found that a walk in a natural environment as opposed to an urban environment decreased anxiety, rumination, and negative affect, and improved working memory performance and positive affect <http://news.stanford.edu/2015/06/30/hiking-mental-health-063015/>
- Recovery from surgery has been shown to be reduced for patients with a view of trees versus a view of a brick wall (<http://mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2012/10/ulrich.pdf>)
- Psychologist Stephen Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory suggests that nature restores us after prolonged work periods:

Our Brains at Work (directed attention):

- Requires active concentration and prolonged effort to avoid distraction
- Causes mental fatigue, and over time, increased irritability, and stress

Recover from mental fatigue with natural settings which:

- Capture our attention and maintain our interest effortlessly
- Provide an opportunity for reflection and a feeling of being 'away'



## Change your humour habits- change how you feel

- Laugh your way to reduced stress and anxiety!
- Psychological research has shown that using humour as a coping strategy is linked to:
  - Viewing stressful situations as a positive challenge
  - Adjusting expectations realistically based on experience
  - Lower perceived stress during stressful situations



- Watch Professor Peter McGraw discuss what makes things funny:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysSgG5V-R3U>