

THE WEEK

Junior



Building happy, healthy habits in 2021

**A four-week guide to
improving your physical
and mental health.**

Building happy, healthy habits in 2021

We all know it's important to take care of our physical and mental health. So *The Week Junior* has created a four-week guide packed with activities and ideas designed to strengthen your body and mind. Everyone is different, so give them all a go, by yourself or with friends or family, and discover what works best for you.

When you find something you really love, keep it up! Measure your progress by crossing off each day you stick to your new routine on a calendar. Then watch it build into a happy, healthy habit in 2021.

Did you know?

Fact 1:
Creating good routines help you to sleep better.

Fact 2:
Exercise can boost your memory.

Fact 3:
The area of your brain that looks after habits is called the basal ganglia.



Week one

1. Share stories and memories with your family.

You could use FaceTime or Zoom to see relatives you live apart from. Ask parents or grandparents what they liked most about school, or talk about the best day they've ever had.

2. Have some breathing breaks.

One way to be mindful and to calm any overwhelming feelings is through breathing exercises. Either sitting or standing up, with your eyes open or closed, start by taking big, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out slowly through your mouth. You can count the seconds out loud as you inhale and exhale, and notice how fast or slow your breathing is. Focus on the feeling of your body filling with air, and as you breathe out, notice how your muscles soften and your body relaxes. Stay right here in this present moment, not focusing on the future or the past. You can continue this for three minutes, five minutes or even 10 minutes, until you feel calm and rested. After you finish, congratulate yourself and think about how the process made you feel. For more information about mindfulness and how to practise it, visit theweekjunior.co.uk/headspace

3. Pick a recipe

your whole family will love and make them a tasty meal. Ask an adult for help if needed. Visit littlecookscs.co.uk/recipes for recipe ideas.

4. Invent a new sport.

Choose a name, design the field, think up some rules (number of players, how to score etc), draw the balls/rackets/kit, and give it a go!

Week two

1. Get into a new hobby,

such as photography. One idea for a project is finding or making letter-shaped objects to photograph. For example a rugby goal is the shape of an 'H', and two sticks can form a 'T'. Photograph each letter of the alphabet and use them to create words or names.

2. Practise being grateful

by thinking about the things you have to be grateful for – like avoiding a rainshower, eating a nice meal or being greeted by a happy pet. Write down three things every day.

3. Learn to budget.

If there's something you really want but can't afford at the moment, then work out a savings plan. This could include earning money by doing odd jobs, or going without something you'd usually buy.

4. Getting plenty of sleep

is a good way to stay healthy. Make a sleep chart and record how much sleep you get every night this week. See if you can increase it each time.

Week three

1. Organise a film night for your family or friends. Set a time to watch, and take it in turns to pick the film – you could do this weekly. Recreate the cinema at home by dimming the lights and enjoying a bowl of popcorn. You can catch up with your friends afterwards to discuss what you liked and disliked, and rate each film 1-5 stars.

2. Start a feelings diary. Find a notebook and try to write or draw how you're feeling at least once a day.

3. Pick a goal and work out how to achieve it using the WOOP method: **W**ish for something, imagine the best **O**utcome (result), think of any **O**bstacles to avoid and create a **P**lan to overcome them.

4. Create a healthy eating plan. Nutritionist and author Joy Skipper highlights the importance of variety. She says, "The more different foods you eat each day, the more nutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, fibre, vitamins and minerals) your body will be getting – and these are very important for everything in your body to work the way it should – healthy fats for your brain, great protein for your muscles and lots of colourful vitamins and minerals for your skin and hair. Aim to eat a rainbow of fruit and vegetables each day, with some delicious protein from meat, fish, eggs or pulses." For more information about food groups and how they are important, visit theweekjunior.co.uk/joykipper

Week four

1. Jigsaw puzzles exercise our brains, improve fine motor skills (how we use the small muscles in our hands) and encourage teamwork. So clear a table, find a puzzle and get the whole family involved.

2. Get creative and draw yourself as a superhero. Think about superpowers, outfit, transport and, of course, a sidekick.

3. Try taking a break from social media for a day. You may find it difficult but remind yourself that you are more important than your profile, and your friends will still be there when you return.

4. Spend 30 minutes a day doing exercises that get your blood pumping and your muscles moving. Mint Coaching has some fun online workouts at mintcoaching.fit. Try them at home or outdoors in your garden or a park.

Making it work

So how do these activities improve our physical and mental health?



Relationships

Good relationships with friends and family make us feel happy. Learning how to manage these relationships can help us feel more secure and loved.



Exercise and healthy eating

Keeping fit and eating well keeps our bodies strong, improves our sleep, concentration, energy and generally makes us happier, healthier people.



Managing stress and anxiety

Finding something that focuses our attention and stops a stream of worried thoughts, even for a while, can make us feel calmer and more relaxed.



Life skills

Learning important life skills teach us to be independent and organised and give us more confidence in our decisions.



Hobbies

Trying something new and becoming good at it feels rewarding, gives us confidence and helps us make new friends.



Keep going

Check out *The Week Junior's* new weekly wellbeing page for ideas to help you take care of your physical and mental health. Starting February 2021.

Getting help

Being stressed or worried is a normal part of growing up, but sometimes our feelings can overwhelm us. When this happens it's important to talk to someone, like a parent, friend or teacher. You can also call Childline free on **0800 1111**, or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

For lots of ideas for things to make and do, visit theweekjunior.co.uk/activityhub. It's got all sorts of activities to get stuck into, such as recipes, puzzles, crafts and more!

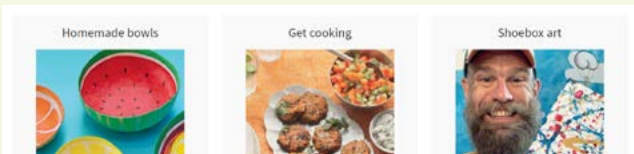
What makes our readers feel happier:

“Playing with my dog relaxes me and makes me feel better.”

“When I'm upset I like to listen to music to take my mind off it.”

“If I feel sad I like to watch TV.”

“Playing puzzles and board games always makes me feel happier.”



CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE ACTIVITY HUB

