


# Benefits of Routine and Goal Setting for Mental Health and Climbing

By: Logan Sherrer, an occupational therapy student





# Objectives

1. Participants can demonstrate making an attainable routine to benefit their mental health health and climbing
2. Participants are able to explain the benefits of routine for both mental health and climbing
3. Participants possess a greater value in routine for goal attainment to support their daily occupations






**What do you  
think routine  
has to do with  
mental health?**



# Benefits of routine

- Having a healthy routine impacts are mental health in many ways
  - It helps us to set manageable expectation for our day
  - Marking things off of a to-do list provides us with small wins to celebrate
  - Having a routine promotes adherence to healthy activities
  - Making room in your day for hobbies can help us to make more time for things we love
  - Routine can help improve sleep




**What are  
some routines  
you have?**

# Benefits of a routine for climbing and other hobbies



- In our busy world often times we do not prioritize the hobbies that bring us joy
- Making climbing or other hobbies a part of your routine helps to increase consistency of furthering your skills and strength
- Having a healthy sleep and meal routine benefits our physical and mental health
- Start small
  - Even setting time to go climb for 30 minutes or do a 5 minute jog can give us the time we need to decompress
  - Setting overambitious goals or forcing yourself to do more than you feel in the mood for can impact your joy for your hobbies and impact mental health



(Northwest Medicine, 2022)




**Do your routines  
ever feel  
overwhelming?**





# When can routines be bad

- Our culture often emphasizes high standards of productivity
  - Setting too high expectations on ourselves can be damaging to mental health
- It is important when planning a routine to not put too much pressure on oneself
  - Leave time for breaks and personal time
  - It is OKAY to miss things on your schedule or have to modify things as you go
- Adding too much to your routine at once can be counterproductive and lead to higher levels of anxiety





**What do you  
think makes up  
a balanced  
routine?**



# Setting healthy routines and goals

- Set attainable routines
  - In times where mental health is a barrier these goals may be as simple as getting up and getting dressed for the day
  - Make sure that you have t
- Start small
  - Ease into new goals or routines, jumping in can lead to burnout
  - Once you feel comfortable you make goals or changes in routine bigger
- Collaborate with friends or a partner to help hold each other accountable and to make things more enjoyable
- If changes to routine do not feel good for you, do not force it

# Setting healthy routines and goals (cont.)

- Simply setting goals can be a more approachable and less structured way to benefit your mental health and form healthy habits in your daily life
- Try to keep goals simple and obtainable
  - Long-term goals can be more complex
- For climbing you can set goals for climbing a certain amount each week or for achieving new grades
  - Simply setting a goal to climb 3 times a week is more palatable than scheduling to go at a certain time each day
- The small victories achieved through accomplishing goals each week help to improve mental health and let you take control of your life!

# Survey



# Group sign-ups

Thank you for your interest in The Spot's mindfulness series! If you want to learn more consider using the links below to sign up for one or more mental health groups led by Logan Sherrer, a Doctorate of Occupational therapy student.

[Denver](#)

[Golden](#)

[Louisville](#)

[Thornton](#)



**Additional readings:  
Current research on the  
benefits of climbing and  
routine for mental  
health**



# Evidence to Support Routine's Benefits to Mental Health

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the mental health of medical students was assessed in its relation to impaired routine from socially isolating and doing coursework online.
  - Many individuals' routines were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic which may have been a contributor to widespread mental health impairments
  - These findings demonstrate the importance of routine in our daily lives
- It was found that the students' impaired routine contributed to higher instances of depression and anxiety.
- Students also exhibited impaired performance in school research project.

## Information from:

Débora, C. C., Barbara, S. K., Gabriela Araújo Munhoz, Samuel Elias, B. D., João Vitor, Z. L., Aline, R. B., Henrique De Ataíde Mariz, Kirla Wagner, P. G., Lilian David De, A. V., Nafice Costa Araújo, Sandra Lucia Euzébio Ribeiro, Kakehasi, A. M., Ana Paula Monteiro, G. R., Marques, C., Edgard Torres Reis-Neto, Eduardo Dos, S. P., Pileggi, G. S., Gilda, A. F., Provenza, J. R. (2021). Effects of Participating in a Research Project During the COVID-19 Pandemic on Medical Students' Educational Routines and Mental Health: Protocol for a Web-Based Survey Study. *JMIR Research Protocols*, 10(4)<https://doi.org/10.2196/24617>

# Evidence to support therapeutic benefits of rock climbing

- Exercise alone has long time been a proven way to reduce anxiety (Karg et al., 2020)
- Exercise causes our body to increase heart rate and respiration to trick the mind into responding to a fear response even if something is not actually there
- Climbing as a form of exercise or recreation is found to be even more effective than traditional exercise alone (Karg et al., 2020)
  - Outlet for adrenaline
  - Clears the mind
  - Community engagement and support

Information from:

Karg, N., Dorscht, L., Kornhuber, J., & Luttenberger, K. (2020). Bouldering psychotherapy is more effective in the treatment of depression than physical exercise alone: Results of a multicentre randomised controlled intervention study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 20(116), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02518-y>



# Cultural considerations

- Evidence suggests that community-based exercise is an effective means to provide mental health support to marginalized and lower-socioeconomic communities (Lamb et al., 2015)
- These individuals may not have as easy or comfortable access to traditional mental health services
  - Community engagement and exercise reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Climbers should continue to provide a welcoming and culturally sensitive community (Lamb et al., 2015)
  - Supportive communities help to reduce external stressors

Information from:

Lamb, Dowrick, C., Burroughs, H., Beatty, S., Edwards, S., Bristow, K., Clarke, P., Hammond, J., Waheed, W., Gabbay, M., & Gask, L. (2015). Community Engagement in a complex intervention to improve access to primary mental health care for hard-to-reach groups. *Health Expectations : an International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy*, 18(6), 2865–2879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12272>

# References

<https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/health-benefits-of-having-a-routine>

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Health benefits of having a routine. *Northwestern Medicine*. (2022).

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