

# The Connection Between Physical and Mental Health



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**Health is a journey and every step, no matter how small, will lead you towards your healthiest YOU. No matter how you are feeling or what kind of wellness support you need, we are here to guide you on your journey.**

I'm going to let you in on a secret. I don't like working out. Never have. Doubt I ever will. I do it for purely selfish reasons; to stay healthy, to not get injured playing the sports I love and so that I can indulge in an unhealthy snack from time-to-time.

I've been an athlete my whole life. Sports were my life and the way that I stayed fit. In university, I competed in varsity track & field in the pentathlon (hurdles, long jump, shot put, high jump, 1000m), relays, as well as individual jumping events (long jump, triple jump, high jump). To stay competitive, I realized that going to practice wasn't enough and, even though I didn't want to, I had to get in the weight room as well as the therapy room. In an average week, I would spend more than 25 hours practicing, lifting weights, yoga, pool workouts, physio, massage and athletic therapy.

By the time school ended my body was broken! There was also a vacuum left where competitive sports were. I've filled the void by playing recreational sports at the F.H. Sherman Recreation Centre (slo-pitch & basketball) as well as indoor and outdoor touch football, but nothing fulfilled my need for competition until I started competing in Spartan Races. I've completed six and am pushing myself to finish higher in the standings with each race!

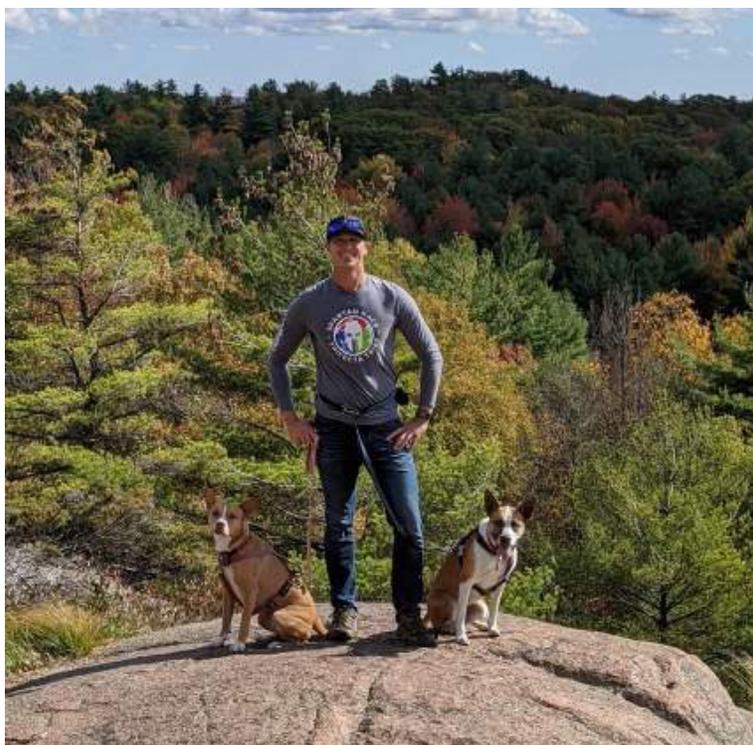
Exercising has also become the way that I stay mentally well. That and my dogs.

There is a definitive link between our mental health and our well-being. Improving mental health helps to motivate us to improve our physical activity and increases our willpower to resist unhealthy foods. Eating well in turn supports our fitness goals and our energy. Being physically active helps boost mood and lead to healthy eating choices. The three aspects are integral and intertwined. If you ignore one aspect, the others suffer. Unfortunately, too many people are suffering in silence. This is why events like Bell Let's Talk Day are so important to help reduce the stigma.

Here at Dofasco, we truly emphasize the need to work on all aspects of your health to achieve wellness.

Our health is a journey, not a destination. It's important to be mindful of our activity levels, work to reduce our leisure screen time, recognize our eating behaviour by focusing on whole foods over processed ones, take action to improve our resiliency and ability to manage stress, and, most importantly, put in the effort to manage our mental health—even if it's just taking one small moment in the day to be mindful.

If you're looking to progress on your wellness journey there are resources available to you that focus on all aspects of your health and well-being including fitness, nutrition and mental health.



Ryan Wight, Team Lead of Fitness, Wellness and Injury Prevention hiking with his dogs Cassie (left) and Bella (right)

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## Are You Less Active?

Although the company's fitness centres remain closed due to COVID-19, you can participate in a large variety of classes that can be done on your schedule via our [YouTube Channel](#) or [Facebook Group](#). The classes are suitable for all levels with targeted Beginner classes, High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), Yoga, Stretch, Total Body, Dumbbells, Arms Only, Buns & Guns, and Mindfulness.

Join our [Personal Best Virtual 5K Race](#) and train for a virtual 5K event scheduled for March 27. The Personal Best Virtual 5K program will help you prepare for it and help you achieve your goal-- whether it's finishing the race or running your fastest time.

For more information on the get active options available to you, [click here](#).

## Are You Struggling with Your Office Set-up?

If you can't seem to get comfortable with your office set-up, there is Office Ergonomics support for you, including a How-to guide, Pain and Discomfort Survey and office assessment support. [Justin Depelsmaeker](#) can help you to work in comfort and counteract any bad habits you may have picked up. Click here for [more information](#).

## Do You Need Support for Mental Health?

Homewood Health provides confidential and anonymous counseling, support and resources for a variety of life's challenges including parenting, elder care, financial, legal, depression, anxiety, relationships, addiction and more. E-courses are available

on topics ranging from Taking Control of Your Finances, Anger, Quitting Smoking, and more. To find out more about Homewood's services, [click here](#). To contact Homewood, call 1-800-663-1142. Phones are answered 24/7.

If you'd like to learn more about mental health and the mental health continuum, [click here](#). You'll get a quick overview of the 4 zones from green to yellow to orange to red, and different resources to help support you. There is also a full list of [community resources](#).

Watch for upcoming programs on Resilience and Mind and Body coming in the spring.

### **Are You Distracted, Distressed and Mindless?**

Mindfulness can help you to surf the challenges of life, be more present, and be able to choose how to respond to difficult situations. MindwellU offers a 5-day or 30-day challenge that requires only 5-10 minutes per day and will guide you on how to incorporate mindfulness into your day. Or join a weekly session on Teams, facilitated by Lindsay Knight. Find out more [here](#).

### **Want to Quit or Reduce Smoking?**

Did you know that your benefits plan includes unlimited coverage for patches, mist, lozenges and other types of medication? If you'd like help in developing a quit plan, Homewood Health can help. David Cayford can also help you set up a plan and support you on your journey. Find out more [here](#).

### **Do You Need Nutrition Help?**

Join our [Personal Best Eat Healthy Be Active Program](#), which runs from January to April 2. During the 12 weeks of this program, you'll learn how to gradually adopt a healthy eating pattern and will receive 3 weekly workouts.

If you would like 1-on-1 help for nutrition, contact Homewood Health. A Registered Dietitian will provide up to 4 coaching sessions to help you with your challenges, which can include eating better, eating for shiftwork, dealing with food intolerance and more. Call Homewood at 1-800-663-1142.

### **Complete a Health Assessment**

Do you want to get an individualized assessment on your health? Look for a new and revamped Health Assessment that the Wellness Team will be launching in the spring through [My Well Site](#). This assessment will evaluate the key areas of your health (physical activity, nutrition, mental well-being) and give you a personalized score along with information to help you improve your measures.