

tikva

MANUAL

INTRODUCTION



Tikva = hope!

Tikva is a Hebrew word meaning "hope"

Welcome to the handbook that will guide you through the concept of Tikva and prepare you for the role of Tikva instructor. This handbook combines theory with practice to give you a deeper understanding of Tikva and its meaning for you as a prospective instructor. A central part of the Tikva concept is its connection to the Bible, and this material opens with one of its most basic biblical words:

"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10 NIV

These words remind us that God is God, and that in the stillness we can gain insight into just that. God has created us and our bodies with an inherent worth that extends beyond our achievements. God's love for each of us is unique, and He fully understands the way our bodies are made. God has carefully planned and designed every function of our bodies and desires us to live in truth, constantly healing and embracing constant change.

By integrating these basic principles from the Bible into the Tikva concept, we strive to create an environment where each individual can experience healing, spiritual growth and change.

The Bible is Tikva's most important foundation.

Our common journey with Tikva is a journey towards truth and God's presence.

Welcome to exploring and growing with Tikva!



TIKVA - A MOVEMENT OF HOPE

Tikva strives to be much more than just a form of exercise. Tikva is a movement of hope that reaches beyond the physical and reaches into the deepest recesses of our being. The goal of Tikva as a movement of hope is for each participant to leave each session with a sense of optimism, strengthened by the belief that hope is a powerful catalyst for change and well-being. Tikva is not about emptying yourself, but instead filling yourself with the word of God and the true hope in Christ.

- **Jeremiah 29:11:**

"I know what thoughts I have for you, says the Lord, namely thoughts of peace and not of trouble to give you a future and a hope."

- **Romans 15:13:**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

- **Psalms 39:7:**

"But what do I now hope for, Lord? My hope is in You."

- **Hebrews 6:19:**

"This hope we have as a safe and secure anchor of the soul that reaches within the veil. There Jesus entered and opened the way for us, when he became high priest forever, in the same way as Melchizedek."

- **Psalms 42:11:**

"Why so sorrowful, my soul, why so troubled within me? Hope in God. I shall again thank him, my salvation and my God."

- **Psalms 71:14:**

"But I shall always hope and praise you again and again."

- **Romans 5:5:**

"And hope does not fail us, because the love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit whom he has given us."

BACKGROUND

Tikva grew out of Mimmi Edin's own need for holistic training on Christian foundations after a whiplash injury. The concept was developed in Kungssportskyrkan in Huskvarna Sweden, where Mimmi was previously operations manager for the church's wellness work.

The desire was to create a form of training grounded on Christian principles that combined calm and soothing music, gentle and strengthening movements that promote blood circulation with a holistic view of the human being where the practitioner also gets to hear Bible words that give strength and inspiration. From the very beginning, Tikva has had its own music composed by Fredrik Larsson, Kungssportskyrkan, and the movements are created by physiotherapists and personal trainers.

TIKVA - CONCEPT

Tikva, with its combination of gentle movements, stretching, biblical words, specially written music and prayer, is a form of exercise that goes beyond mere physical activity. It is a concept that strives for health for spirit, body and soul. It is the whole that creates Tikva. Tikva is a concept where one part is not more important than the other.

Tikva can be seen as a healing and hopeful form of exercise that strives to integrate different aspects of human well-being. By embracing spiritual, mental and physical dimensions, Tikva can contribute to an increased sense of hope and harmony in people's lives.

In summary, Tikva consists of body exercises, Bible words and music.

THE BODY EXERCISES/MOVEMENTS

We make use of the movements that have been produced and are in the material. The movements were initially developed by Mimmi Edin together with a physiotherapist. Now they are selected and developed by physiotherapists together with experts in training at Kungspporten's wellness center in Huskvarna.

Simple and effective body exercises for flexibility, breathing and blood circulation.

The desire for new movements

If you have movements you wish would be included in the material in the future, it is not something we can add or arrange today during the course. However you can send us a picture or video of the movement with a description so we can easily understand it, we will then pray and discern its addition to our repertoire.

THE WORDS OF TIKVA

During each session, we read encouraging Bible words that build up and give hope to the participants' lives and contexts. You don't have to be a Christian to practice Tikva, but it is good that we as instructors are clear during the session about where the words come from.

Tikva words are taken from the Bible and are numbered in your material. We only use the words that are in the material to protect both the person leading a Tikva session and those who participate. You have to know where the words are taken from!

We use the Tikva words

- So that you can feel secure in not having to invent your own words of wisdom or look for suitable words for your class.
- So that whoever goes on a Tikva class will know the source for what we say. Those who are not religiously interested but want to take part in Tikva must know and understand what it is about.
- For others to feel safe that Tikva is a Christian tool that does not mix in all possible other life views or philosophies.
- Because the word of God is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12)

THE MUSIC

The Tikva music you get from the training is specially written for Tikva by music teacher and worship leader Fredrik Larsson, who is a member of Kungssportskyrkan, Huskvarna. As a certified Tikva Instructor, you get rights to use the music via Bandcamp.

EQUIPMENT & LOCATION

You will need something that plays the music and be able to easily adjust the volume with feedback from the participants. This applies both to your voice and to the music volume.

You need a quiet environment - inside or outside. Place the emphasis on well-being and a quiet environment when choosing premises. Make sure that there are no people running through the room during the session or that noise from outside can disturb. A conference room works great – or a quiet park, garden.

If you have the opportunity to decorate a room, then think about creating a calm and pleasant environment, think about the whole facility in everything from changing rooms to the possibility to sit down and rest on the side.

A soft mat, a blanket and a small pillow are tools that are advantageously used in Tikva. Blanket and pillow because you easily start to get cold during the relaxation time. The mat gives you a place to be where your feet stand firmly and your body can rest on an insulating surface.

TIKVA STRETCH - FOCUS ON INCREASED BLOOD CIRCULATION & MOBILITY

Content for a 45 minute session:

(active time 30 min session with a total of 15 exercises, relaxation time; and 15 minutes of welcoming, mingling and after talk)

Breakdown of Active time:

First section: 20 min exercises: 5-10 exercises

Begins with basic position and then exercise "Introduction"

Second section: 3-5 min relaxation: 3 min is rest in silence, relaxation exercises can be added if necessary

Third section: 5-7 min awakening

Conclusion: Exercise "Finish"

TIKVA RELAX - FOCUS ON RELAXATION & INCREASED BODY IMAGE

Arrange the room with chairs, blankets and pillows. Make sure the music is at a good volume. Adjust the lighting, not too bright and not too dim. Greetings to all participants. It is not always wise to first ask how everyone is doing as there is no time to fully listen to the answers. Confirm that you are glad they came and make them feel welcome. Remind participants that mobile phones are to be on airplane mode during the session. Remember that your tools during the session are your voice and your ability to observe how those participating in the session are doing. If you are stressed, the participants will notice and become stressed themselves. Speak in a calm voice, allow time to pass between the various exercises. Be sure to breathe calmly yourself and you will help the participants also to be calm and go slowly.

Be attentive to all participants. Maybe there is someone who is very unsettled and has difficulty slowing or calming down. Perhaps you can help the person by giving

an extra blanket or by gently commenting that sometimes it feels uncomfortable to unwind, the body has difficulty relaxing and the thoughts are spinning. This comment can be made in the whole group and in general without singling out one person. Reassure them there is no danger, that they are in a safe place, that we are doing the best we can and learning one step at a time.

TIKVA FORTE - FOCUS ON INCREASED BLOOD CIRCULATION & MOBILITY, BUT WITH AN EMPHASIS ON INCREASED MOBILITY

Includes exercises that allow the participant to train and capture the passive movement ability and make it active by gaining increased control and strength over the movement.

Only certified Tikva Forte instructors can teach a Tikva Forte class. To host Tikva Forte, you need an additional training course.

GRADUATION

Tikva is a registered trademark and is owned by Kungsportens Friskvårdscenter in Huskvarna, Sweden.

This means that everyone who participates in a Tikva class can feel confident that the concept is the same regardless of location. Instructors have had training and use an approach that is consistent with the values, thoughts and intentions presented on www.tikva.cc and the material you as an instructor receive.

Each instructor must annually take an exam, as well as pay the annual fee to obtain rights to use the name 'Tikva' for their Tikva classes. After passing the exam the Tikva instructor receives a diploma and can lead Tikva classes. The instructor will then also receive login information to a portal where they will have access to marketing material, training material, all up to date and new movements and more relevant material needed to be an active instructor.

If an instructor chooses not to pay the annual fee, or take an exam, they will not have access to this portal, and will not be listed on the website of certified instructors and they will not be allowed to teach Tikva classes.

As a Tikva instructor, you do not have the authority to add new movements, new music, or other Bible words other than those provided to you. You also do not have the authority to train your own instructors, or use the name in your company name because it is a protected brand name.

THE ROLE AS AN INSTRUCTOR

As a Tikva instructor, you are not only a guide through physical exercises, but also a bearer of hope and spiritual inspiration. The instructor's mission extends beyond the physical training session; they are ambassadors for Tikva, spreading the message of hope and merchants of a holistic view of well-being.

Being aware of his role as a messenger of hope, the instructor strives not only to influence the physical well-being of the participants, but also to contribute to their inner well-being.

The theme of hope permeates every aspect of the workout, from the physical movements to the Bible words shared and the music played. As an instructor, you can share hope and strive to inspire participants to embrace hope as a powerful source of well-being.

By creating an open and supportive community during the training session, the instructor can have a profound impact on the participants. Being responsive to their needs and creating space for reflection fosters an atmosphere where hope can flourish. The instructor strives to be a positive force not only during the training session but also as a present and supportive guide outside the classroom. As ambassadors for Tikva, the instructors carry the message of hope everywhere and inspire participants to integrate hope into their everyday lives, creating a long-term positive impact on their overall well-being.

As instructors we are not in the center, instead we always point to the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

We are not masters that the participants should follow, but instead we point to the true master - Jesus Christ.

TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Proverbs 3:5-8

Do we as Christians need to take care of our health?

Taking care of one's health can be seen as a response to God's love and care and as a way of living in accordance with the moral principles taught by the faith. It is a way of honoring God by cherishing the gift of life and body that He has given.

Taking care of your health as a Christian is important for several reasons:

Temple of God:

According to the Bible, the body is described as God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Taking care of your health means nurturing and respecting the body that God has given us as a gift.

Moral responsibility:

Christianity teaches moral responsibility, and this includes taking responsibility for one's own health. By maintaining good health, one can be more effective in service to God and others.

Balance & totality:

Integrating spiritual and physical health contributes to a balanced lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle can strengthen the spiritual dimension and promote a holistic view of mankind.

Longer & more efficient life:

Good health enables a longer and more efficient life. It gives the opportunity to devote more time to service and fellowship with others and mission God gives you in life.

Testimony:

A healthy lifestyle can serve as a positive testimony to others. Taking care of one's health can be a way of showing God's care and love for the body as part of God's creation.

SPIRIT, BODY & SOUL

May he who is the God of peace sanctify you completely, and may your spirit, soul and body be preserved whole and unharmed...

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Promoting wellness for mind, body and soul means taking care of all three aspects in a holistic way. Pursuing wellness for mind, body and soul is about creating a balanced and enriching lifestyle that takes into account every aspect of our existence.

Focusing on wellness for mind, body and spirit is not just about one-off actions, but rather about creating a lifestyle that regularly promotes health and balance. Interspersing these different aspects in everyday life can contribute to an overall well-being that benefits one's entire personal development.

The theology behind man as spirit, body and soul is grounded in the Christian faith and its understanding of God's creation and the relationship between God and man.

Created in the image of God:

A central doctrine in Christianity is the teaching that man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This means that man has a unique spiritual dimension that reflects the attributes of God and that sets him apart from the rest of creation.

Trinitarian nature:

The theology of man as spirit, body and soul reflects the Trinitarian nature of God. Just as God is a Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), so man is a unity of spirit, body and soul. (1 Thess. 5:23) This unity emphasizes the wholeness and unity of man in God's creation.

Wholeness & Healing:

Man is seen as a whole, where spirit, body and soul are intimately connected. Christian theology emphasizes the importance of healing and salvation for the whole person – spirit, body and soul – through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

This view of man as spirit, body and soul contributes to an understanding of man as a whole and God's intention for creation. It becomes a basis for seeking a balanced and healthy lifestyle, where both the spiritual and physical dimensions are in harmony with God's will.

Our physical well-being has a significant impact on our psychological well-being. There is a strong connection between the body and the mind, meaning that changes in one can affect the other. When we take care of our physical well-being through regular exercise, a balanced diet and adequate sleep, it can have positive effects on our mental state.

Regular physical activity releases neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin, which can improve our mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Exercise also promotes the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain relievers, which can increase feelings of well-being.

A healthy diet that includes nutritious foods can affect our energy and mood. Eating a balanced diet with a variety of nutrients can help stabilize blood sugar levels and provide a more even energy level, which can reduce the risk of mood swings and fatigue.

Sleep is also crucial for our mental health. A lack of sleep can affect cognitive functions, mood and the ability to handle stress. Having regular and adequate sleep can improve our ability to concentrate, our decision-making and our ability to deal with emotional challenges.

In conclusion, favorable physical well-being can have a significant positive impact on our psychological well-being by reducing stress, improving mood and increasing our ability to cope with everyday challenges.

HEART

In the Bible, the word "heart" is often used in a way that extends beyond its physical meaning and can be related to the innermost being of man, including aspects such as spirit, body, and soul. Here's an overview of the differences:

Heart:

In the biblical sense, the "heart" often refers to more than just the physical organ. It symbolizes the inner man, including one's thoughts, feelings, will and morals. The Bible tells us to guard our hearts because it is the heart that guides our actions and attitudes.

Spirit:

The spirit is often connected to God's presence and His relationship with man. It can be interpreted as the spiritual aspect of man, the part that is in contact with the spiritual realm and God.

Body:

The body represents the physical aspect of man. It is the physical shell that enables us to interact with the material world.

Soul:

The soul is often considered an overarching term that includes both the spirit and the psyche. It is the part of the human being that involves personality, feelings, thoughts and will.

In many biblical contexts, "heart" is used to refer to the innermost being of a person, including spirit, body, and soul. It is a symbolic term that covers the emotional, spiritual and moral within us. The Bible tells us to guard our heart because it affects our relationship with God and our interaction with the world around us.

In the Bible, references to the heart are multifaceted and include various aspects of human nature, morality, spirituality, and relationship with God. The heart not only symbolizes the physical organ but also represents the innermost being of a person.

In Matthew 5:8 Jesus says

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Here the importance of a pure heart is emphasized in order to have a close relationship with God. It is about more than just external actions; a pure heart is the key to spiritual experience and closer communion with God.

In Proverbs 4:23 we are told

"More than anything to be guarded, guard your heart, for out of it is life."

This supports the idea that the heart is the source of our actions and thoughts. Preserving it, keeping it pure and in line with God's will, is essential to our life and relationships.

Paul explains in Romans 10:10:

"With the heart one believes and is justified, with the mouth one confesses and is saved." This shows the role of the heart in faith and righteousness, that faith is not only an intellectual act but something that comes from the heart and affects our entire being.

The heart is also the seat of our thoughts and feelings, as mentioned in Jeremiah 17:9: "Deceitful above all else is the heart, it is incurably sick. Who can understand it?"

This reminds us of the complexity of the heart and the need for God's guidance and purification. Nurturing the heart according to biblical principles means not only focusing on the external, but striving to have a pure heart, genuine faith and righteous actions. It is striving to harmonize one's inner thoughts and feelings with God's will and thereby live a life that is blessed and in close relationship with God.

Tikva & the heart:

Through stretching and deep breathing, one can focus on the state of the body, which can be a metaphor for caring for our inner heart. Having a healthy body can create a better platform to nurture one's inner self as well.

Calming music can affect the mood and create a calmness that enables meditation on Bible words. Bible words, with their loving and guiding messages, can help guide our thoughts and actions, which is central to nurturing our hearts according to God's will.

When we combine these practices, we create an atmosphere that promotes well-being - not only physically, but also emotionally, mentally and spiritually. By nurturing the heart in accordance with biblical principles, we can follow God's will and create a harmony between our interior and God's intentions for us. It can influence the way we live and interact with the world around us in a way that is more consistent with Christian values.

CREATED BY GOD

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

Psalm 139:13-18 (NIV)

According to the Bible, man lived in a state of perfect harmony in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. In the biblical creation story, it is described that man, Adam and Eve, had an intimate and undamaged relationship with God and was in perfect harmony with their surroundings. Physically, they were free from disease or aging and had a healthy relationship with food and nature.

Mentally and spiritually they were close to God, without shame or guilt, enjoying God's presence. The Garden of Eden represented not only a physical place but a symbol of perfection and harmony between man, God and creation. There was no disharmony or separation between the various aspects of human well-being - physical, mental and spiritual. But that changed when sin entered the world, and this state of perfection was lost.

Today we live in a world marked by disharmony and imperfection, which is different from the condition described in the Bible's garden story. Humanity has been hit by physical, psychological and spiritual challenges:

The human body is prone to disease, aging and health problems. We struggle with diet-related illnesses, lack of exercise, and other health-related challenges.

Stress, anxiety and depression are common problems that affect many people's mental health. The pressure from work, relationships and society often creates an imbalance. Many struggle with a sense of emptiness or search for meaning and purpose in life. The relationship with a spiritual dimension or God can be lacking or absent for many people.

The current state of the world is thus different from the perfect harmony described in the garden story in the Bible. The disharmony is rooted in sin and has brought about a deviation from the ideal state that humanity once experienced according to the Bible.

As Christians, we have a responsibility for creation. In the creation story, man is given responsibility for nurturing and preserving God's creation. It also includes caring for the body that God has given us. By being responsible stewards of our physical health, we honor the creator and His creation. The Garden of Eden also represents a place of perfect harmony and balance. Striving for balance in lifestyle, diet, work and rest is in line with the intentions of creation. Moderation in all aspects of life is a biblical principle. In the beginning, God gave plants and fruit as food. An awareness of what we eat and how it affects our health is relevant. The Bible contains guidelines for a healthy diet, and being aware of one's dietary habits is a way of honoring God by taking care of the body.

God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it as a day of rest. Taking regular rest and relaxation is part of the Christian tradition. It contributes to physical and spiritual renewal. Including personal devotion and prayer in everyday life is a source of spiritual strength and well-being. Being aware of one's spiritual health and relationship with God creates a holistic view of well-being. The Garden of Eden represents communion between man and God. Striving for solidarity, love and compassion towards others is a central aspect of living as a Christian and can contribute to a positive impact on society. The Garden of Eden was a place of hope and trust where man lived in harmony with God. Christians are encouraged to live with a hope that extends beyond earthly circumstances and to trust in God's goodness and guidance in all aspects of life, including health.

Integrating these principles into daily life can help Christians act responsibly and consciously regarding their health in today's society.

Tikva is not a universal solution or a miracle cure. But it can be an important tool in the right direction towards holistic health.

THE HOLY BREATH

And the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. So man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

Your every breath - inhale, exhale - makes the sound of His name, it calls for Him - YHWH, YHWH. and He who makes us will make it so we make it. Make it to the next breath, to the next moment, to the next sunrise, to the next season, to the next step that will take us closer to home and Him.

From the book: Breath as prayer p13, Jennifer Tucker 2022

Being aware of the influence of breathing for the body is important for a Christian for reasons, including spiritual, physical and mental.

Spiritual aspect:

In Christianity, breathing is emphasized as a symbol of God's life-giving power. In the Bible, God is described as the one who breathes life into man (Genesis 2:7). Thereby, breathing becomes a reminder of the spiritual presence and God's creative power. God breathed His 'ruah' into man, which both means breath and Spirit. The interesting connection between spirit and breath.

Contemplation & prayer:

Breathing is also central to many other spiritual disciplines and meditation techniques outside Christianity. Oftentimes It's about emptying your mind and looking within yourself for answers through breath work. In Tikva, however, it is about filling one's mind with God's word, and seeking God and His voice to find peace, not finding it within ourselves.

Physical & mental health:

Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Practicing mindful breathing and deep breathing becomes an act of respect and care for this sacred temple. It becomes a physical and spiritual practice to maintain and nurture the body in which the Spirit of God dwells.

Contemplation & stillness:

For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "If you turn and be still you will be saved. Through stillness and trust you will be strong." - Isaiah 30:15
Many Christian traditions include contemplative exercises in which breath is used as a tool. By consciously breathing and creating silence, the individual seeks a deeper connection with God. This can be a method to find stillness in the soul and listen to God's voice.

Breathing is not only a physiological process but from a Christian point of view it is also a spiritual and holistic practice that can be integrated to promote both physical and spiritual health. Being aware of one's breathing can be a path to presence, calm, and a deepened experience of one's spiritual journey. A very important part that distinguishes the breathing in Tikva from other non-Christian practices is the prayer. Prayer is the key that changes everything. Prayer using the Bible. Prayer is the bridge from our heart to God's. It is like our spiritual breath. The Holy Breath.

Breathing can help us reset our nervous system. Prayer can help us restore and realign our souls. Deep breathing can calm our mind and body. Prayer can calm our mind and soul. There is tremendous power when we combine this and also incorporate body movement and music.

BREATHING DURING THE EXERCISES

To maximize relaxation and benefit from stretching exercises, it is beneficial to use a breathing technique that is calming and supportive. Deep breathing is an effective technique that goes well with stretching exercises.

When performing stretching exercises, you can use deep breathing by inhaling deeply through your nose and then slowly exhaling through your mouth as you relax into the movement and stretch the muscles. This helps to reduce tension in the muscles and promote relaxation throughout the body. We therefore exhale when we stretch the muscles.

Coordinating breathing with movement can increase the effectiveness of stretching exercises while creating a sense of calm and overall well-being. It's about finding a rhythm that suits you and letting your breath guide the movements to maximize relaxation and the benefits of stretching. Also focussing your attention to breath helps you to not think about other distracting things or thoughts.

WHAT IS CONTEMPLATION?

In the material we use the word contemplation instead of meditation.

In Christian tradition, contemplation often refers to a form of prayer or spiritual reflection in which a person stills their mind to be open to God's presence or to seek deeper understanding of spiritual truths. It is a practice that can be done individually or in community, and it often emphasizes silence and intentional listening. Tikva can be a form of spiritual reflection or contemplation, where gentle movement, soothing music and God's word combine to create an atmosphere of intentional listening and stillness and can become an opening to receive God's intervention and presence.



TIKVA is a Hebrew word and means hope.

Each letter from this word also forms the basis for Tikva's values: thought, insight, body awareness, well-being and relaxation. We will now delve into and unpack these more below.



Knowledge of the body



Wellbeing

tikva



Insight



The thought



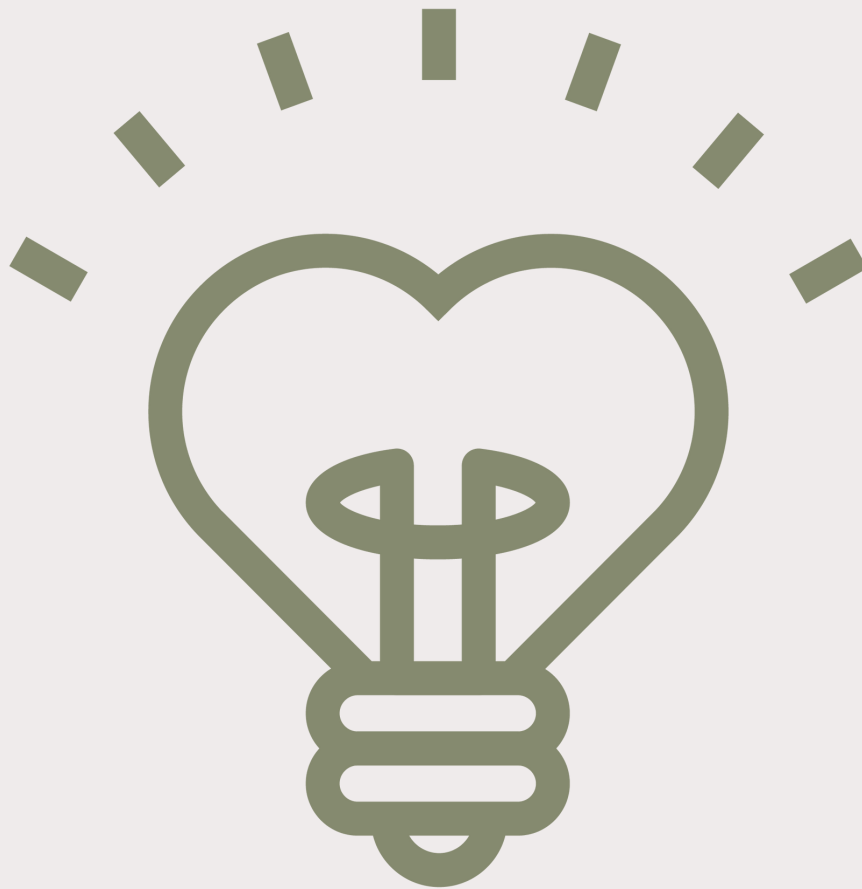
A relaxed view/

Relaxation

THE THOUGHT

I know what thoughts I have for you, says the Lord, namely thoughts of peace and not of trouble to give you a future and a hope.

Jer 29:11.



Your thoughts affect you more than you might think. The foundation of a healthy life is healthy thoughts. Every day we think thousands of thoughts. Do you remember how your thoughts went last week, yesterday or just earlier today? These thoughts affect your day, your personality, and your brain, whether you're aware of them or not.

The majority of your thoughts today are the same as your thoughts yesterday. Our thought patterns today are probably the same today as yesterday - unless we actively work on a change. Your thoughts can be your greatest asset, but also your greatest adversity. Your thoughts have the potential to change your entire life. Your thoughts affect your life - it affects the whole of you.

THOUGHT

Our thoughts can be described as mental processes or activities in the brain where information is processed, interpreted and stored. Here are some aspects that help explain and describe our thoughts:

Cognitive processes:

Thoughts are part of the cognitive processes, which include everything from perception (understanding of sense impressions) to memory, problem solving, decision making and language comprehension.

Mental representation:

Thoughts can be thought of as mental representations of ideas, images or concepts. These representations can be based on our experiences, knowledge and feelings.

Consciousness & unconsciousness:

Some of our thoughts are conscious and some are unconscious. Conscious thoughts are those we are aware of and actively think about, while unconscious thoughts can be below the surface and influence our behavior without us being aware of them.

Feelings & thoughts:

Thoughts and feelings are often connected with each other. Our thoughts can affect our emotions and vice versa. Positive thoughts can lead to positive feelings and positive feelings to positive thoughts.

The dynamics of the thought process:

Thoughts are dynamic and, via electrical signals in our brains, constantly changing. Our brain is active and constantly engaged in processing information and creating new thoughts.

Reflection & conscious presence:

Reflection and mindfulness involve being aware of our thoughts without judging them. It is an exercise that aims to create an increased awareness of our thought patterns.

The role of language:

Many of our thoughts are formulated through language. We often think in words and create sentences to understand and express our thoughts to ourselves or to others.

Individuality:

Our thoughts are unique and shaped by our life experiences, values and personal perspectives. This means that each individual has a unique mental experience.

Understanding and reflecting on our thoughts can be an important part of personal development and well-being. It can also be useful for managing stress, making decisions and creating positive changes in our lives.

THE INFLUENCE OF THOUGHTS

Search me, O God, and know my thoughts, try me and know my anxiety, see if my way leads away from you, and lead me in the eternal way.

Psalms 139:23-24

Thoughts have a significant impact on our lives, both on mental and physical well-being. Our thoughts can affect our emotions and the overall mood we are in. Positive thoughts can lead to positive emotions and vice versa.

Research has shown that negative thoughts and prolonged stress can negatively affect our physical health.⁽¹⁾ It can increase the risk of various health problems such as cardiovascular diseases. Our thoughts play a central role in our decision-making processes. Positive and clear thoughts can lead to better decision making and problem solving.

Thoughts about ourselves affect our self-esteem and self-confidence. Positive self-images can contribute to a healthy self-esteem, while negative thoughts can undermine it. Our thoughts about others and our relationships can affect how we interact and communicate. Positive and empathic thoughts can strengthen relationships, while negative thoughts can create conflict.

Negative and repetitive negative thoughts can contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Positive and balanced thoughts can support mental health. Our thoughts can either be obstacles to our personal development if they are self-sabotaging or a driving force for self-development if they are positive and motivating. Positive and inspiring thoughts can act as a powerful source of motivation, they can increase our energy and drive us to pursue our goals.

Being aware of and managing our thoughts is therefore essential to promoting a healthy lifestyle, relationships and overall well-being. Mental health and physical health are intimately connected, and a positive thinking environment can promote holistic health.

WORKING WITH THE THOUGHTS

⁶Do not worry, but when you call and pray, give thanks to God and let him know all your desires. ⁷Then the peace of God, which is worth more than anything we think, will give your hearts and your thoughts protection in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Working with your thoughts means being aware of them and actively influencing them in a positive way. Here are some strategies for managing and changing your thoughts:

Bible:

Bible words can provide spiritual guidance and positive influence on our thoughts by offering hope, wisdom, gratitude and a foundation for dealing with life's challenges in a positive way.

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your thoughts, that you may determine what is the will of God: that which is good, pleasing to him, and perfect.

Romans 12:2

Prayer:

Prayer makes a difference - on all levels of our lives! The Bible encourages us to pray, and also promises us that our thoughts will be protected through it.

Do not worry, but when you call and pray, give thanks to God and let him know all your desires. Then the peace of God, which is worth more than anything we think, will give your hearts and your thoughts protection in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Self-reflection:

Take regular time for self-reflection. Reflect on your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Identify negative thought patterns and explore alternative perspectives.

But he (Jesus) often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

Luke 5:16

Affirmations:

Use positive affirmations to reframe your thoughts. Repeat positive and empowering affirmations to create a positive mindset. In Tikva we use edifying Bible words.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT):

CBT is a therapeutic method that focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns. A therapist can help you challenge and reframe destructive thoughts.

Basic cognitive skills:

Learn basic cognitive skills such as reevaluating and reframing negative thoughts. Challenge exaggerations and cognitive distortions.

Visualization:

Use positive visualization to create mental images of desired outcomes. This can increase motivation and create a positive internal image.

Physical activity:

Regular physical activity has positive effects on the brain and can help reduce negative thoughts. Exercise releases endorphins that can improve your mood.⁽²⁾

Self-love & acceptance:

Focus on self-love and acceptance. Accept your feelings and thoughts without judging them. Be kind to yourself and treat yourself with compassion.

... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mark 12:31

Positive company:

Surround yourself with people who have a positive and supportive influence. Positive relationships can help shape and strengthen your thoughts.

Bibliotherapy:

Bibliotherapy means using literature as a tool for personal development. Read books and texts that inspire and promote positive perspectives.

Sleep & rest:

Adequate sleep and rest are essential to maintaining positive mental health. Tired thoughts can exacerbate negative feelings.

Therapeutic support:

If negative thoughts are overwhelming, professional therapeutic support may be helpful. A psychologist, counselor or therapist can provide guidance and tools to manage and reframe thoughts.

Working with your thoughts takes patience and practice. By being aware of your thoughts and actively trying to change negative patterns, you can promote a positive and healthy mental attitude.

CALM MOVEMENTS AND STRETCHING CAN HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS ON OUR THOUGHTS AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

Stress reduction:

Physical activity, including gentle movement and stretching, has been shown to reduce levels of stress hormones such as cortisol.⁽³⁾ By reducing stress, it can help alleviate worry and negative thoughts.

Relaxation:

Stretching and gentle movements can promote relaxation in the muscles and nervous system. This can create a feeling of calm and peace, which positively affects thoughts.⁽⁴⁾

Focus on the body:

By focusing on the body's movements and feeling where there is tension, you can shift your attention from worrying thoughts to bodily sensations. This can act as a form of mindfulness and help calm an overactive mind.

Improves mood:

Physical activity, including stretching, releases endorphins, the body's natural "feel good" hormones. This can improve mood and create a more positive mental atmosphere.⁽⁵⁾

Better sleep quality:

Gentle movements and stretching can promote relaxation, which in turn can improve sleep quality. As already noted, a good night's sleep is essential for dealing with stress and having clearer thoughts during the day.⁽⁶⁾

Incorporating gentle movement and stretching into your routine can be an effective way to promote both physical and mental health and create a more balanced and peaceful state of mind.

MUSIC & THOUGHTS

Calm music has several positive effects on our thoughts and mental well-being. Soothing music can reduce levels of stress hormones and promote relaxation. It can help relieve feelings of anxiety and stress, which in turn positively affects thoughts.

By focusing on the music, you can create an atmosphere that promotes being intentionally present, which can help ease your mind and reduce stress. Music has a powerful effect on our emotions, which can help stabilize mood and promote a sense of calmness and harmony. It can be especially helpful when dealing with negative thoughts and feelings. Listening to calm music before sleep can improve sleep quality. The relaxing effects of music can create a calmer state of mind and facilitate falling asleep.⁽⁷⁾ We have several people who use the Tikva music to fall asleep more easily. We recommend that you try it too. Calm music can be a powerful tool to positively influence our thoughts by reducing stress, promoting relaxation, improving focus and creating a positive emotional experience.

THE BIBLE & THOUGHTS

*Peace I leave to you. My peace I give you. I do not give you what the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not lose heart.*
John 14:27

Something that affects our thoughts is of course what “truths” (words, voices, things) we fill ourselves with.

For the word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and penetrates so deeply that it separates soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and lays bare the intentions and thoughts of the heart.
Heb 4:12

When we read God's word, our thoughts will be laid bare, exposed. It may sound scary, but it's just the opposite.

*Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!*
Psalm 139:16-17

Our thoughts are exposed and brought forward in a new light. Here we need to reconsider our thoughts based on the thoughts of truth. "How unfathomable are your thoughts unto me, O God"! The Bible is absolutely crucial for our thoughts to be in line with God's thoughts and for us to be transformed through the renewal of our thoughts in order to have healthy thoughts.

Whoever believes in Jesus as the son of God, according to the Bible, is:

- A child of God - John 1:12
- Righteous - Romans 3:28
- Forgiven - 1 John 1:9
- Light of the world, Matthew 5:14
- Without condemnation, Romans 8:1
- Chosen, 1 Thessalonians 1:4
- Beloved. Romans 8:39

God's fatherly love wants to reach you deeply, God's fatherly love wants your thoughts to be renewed and permeated by the truth in His Word so that you are transformed. God is Almighty, God is love, God is merciful, God is omniscient, God is faithful, God is Peace. Let your thoughts be permeated with the truth from God's word. We speak God's truth over all the participants in Tikva when we read the Bible words. Here we want to announce thoughts of truth. We help spread hope when we read God's word. We join and point to God's thoughts, the thoughts of truth.

Some passages in the Bible about thoughts (NIV):

- Psalms 92:5 How great are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts!
- Psalms 139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- Psalms 139:17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!
- Psalms 139:23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, "declares the Lord", plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- Proverbs 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.
- Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.
- Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
- Psalms 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.
- John 14:1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me
- John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

- Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- Psalms 46:11 "Be still and consider that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on earth."
- John 14:1 Do not worry. Believe in God, and believe in me.
- John 14:27 Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give you what the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not lose heart.
- Matthew 6:34 So do not worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow brings its own worries. Every day has enough of its own torment.

Bible words can positively influence our thoughts:

Hope & comfort:

Many Bible verses contain messages of hope and comfort. By reading and reflecting on such verses, we can strengthen our faith that there is hope and light even in difficult times. For example, verses about God's love and care can assure us of security and hope.

Wisdom & guidance:

The Bible contains many verses that offer wisdom and guidance for various aspects of life. Considering these verses can help us make wise decisions and navigate life's challenges. It provides a stable basis for thought patterns.

Renewal of thought patterns:

Bible words often call for renewal of thought patterns and to focus on what is positive and constructive. By regularly reading and reflecting on Bible words, we can shape our thoughts in a way that is more in line with Christ's teaching.

Gratitude & joy:

Many Bible verses emphasize the importance of gratitude and joy. Consciously reflecting on God's blessings and rejoicing in them can create a positive frame of mind and influence our thoughts in an optimistic direction.

Managing fear & anxiety:

The Bible contains verses that call us to surrender our fears and worries to God. Internalizing these messages can help us better deal with fear and anxiety by trusting in God's goodness and power.

Believe in yourself & others:

Bible words can strengthen faith in both oneself and others. Verses that emphasize that we are made in the image of God and that we are deeply loved can shape our thoughts about our own worth and dignity, while influencing our view of our fellow human beings.

Bible words provide spiritual guidance and positive influence on our thoughts by offering hope, wisdom, gratitude and a foundation for dealing with life's challenges in a positive way.

BREATHING & THOUGHTS

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

Breathing has a profound effect on our thoughts and overall mental state. Here are some ways breathing affects our thoughts:⁽⁸⁾

1. Stress reduction:

Deep and conscious breathing can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which counteracts the stress response. This reduces the production of stress hormones such as cortisol and can thereby reduce feelings of anxiety and tension in the mind.

2. Focus & clarity:

Conscious breathing can improve oxygen supply to the brain. Increased oxygen supply can improve concentration, focus and cognitive ability. It can lead to increased clarity of thought and increased ability to handle complex tasks.

3. Emotional regulation:

Breathing is connected to the limbic system in the brain, which controls emotions. Conscious breathing can affect emotional regulation by balancing emotions and creating a sense of calm. It can be especially useful for dealing with negative thoughts and feelings.

4. Awareness:

By focusing on breathing in the present moment, you can practice being present and reduce distractions in your thoughts. This can promote a more conscious and balanced mentality.

5. Relaxation:

Deep breathing, especially diaphragmatic breathing, activates the parasympathetic nervous system and promotes the body's relaxation response. It can reduce muscle tension and promote a sense of calm, which positively affects the state of mind.

6. Sleep quality:

Conscious breathing and relaxation exercises can improve sleep quality. As the mind has calmed and negative thoughts shifted, relaxed breathing can then reduce insomnia and promote more regular and deeper sleep.

Being aware of the breath and integrating conscious breathing into everyday life can be a powerful method to influence and improve our thoughts, feelings and overall mental health.

TIKVA & THOUGHTS

Tikva can contribute to healthy thought patterns

Tikva, with its combination of stretching, soothing music, biblical words and prayer is a holistic method that can promote well-being on several levels. Tikva creates a space for God's thoughts to take hold. The Bible calls us to renew our thoughts. We want to focus on that within Tikva.

Our thought patterns are formed because we have thought the same, or in similar ways several times before. The more often we think a particular thought, the stronger that signal becomes in our brains. Although it is difficult to change thought patterns, it is possible. Tikva wants to contribute to filling people with positive, hopeful words from the Bible. The words are reinforced through all the elements in Tikva from the music, the breathing, the stillness and the movements. Tikva can positively influence our thoughts:

1. Physical wellbeing:

Stretching and gentle movements help to dissolve tension and increase flexibility in the body. This can reduce physical discomfort and promote better body awareness. The physical activity combined with relaxation can also reduce muscle tension and promote good posture and movement.⁽⁹⁾

2. Psychological wellbeing:

Calming music has been shown to have a positive effect on mood by reducing stress and anxiety. Stretching and gentle movement can help release endorphins, which can improve mood and reduce feelings of anxiety. The positive impact on psychological well-being can be further enhanced by reflecting on biblical words that emphasize hope, gratitude and inner peace.⁽¹⁰⁾

3. Spiritual wellbeing:

Bible words and prayer add a spiritual dimension to the routine. It allows moments of reflection, contemplation and communion with God. The spiritual perspective can provide a sense of meaning, comfort and trust in something greater than oneself. Integrating spiritual elements into the routine can strengthen spiritual health and contribute to a deeper connection with one's faith.

4. The synergy of the combination:

By combining these different elements, a synergy is created that can amplify their positive effects. Stretching and movement combined with soothing music can create a harmonious atmosphere for reflection and prayer. Bible words can act as a guide for positive thoughts and feelings. Prayer can be a way of expressing gratitude and hopes for the future.

5. Balance and wholeness:

This combination strives to create balance and wholeness in overall well-being. It is a method that not only focuses on the physical or mental, but also includes the spiritual dimension. Tikva is a form of exercise that promotes overall health and contributes to a balanced view of life.

Practicing Tikva regularly can help create healthy habits without becoming a fixation. It becomes an investment in one's well-being that encompasses the whole person, from body and mind to spirit.

TIKVA MEANS HOPE

Focusing on hope can have a powerful impact on our thoughts and overall mental health.

Hope means believing in a positive future. By cultivating a positive outlook, we can influence our thoughts to become more focused on opportunities and progress instead of obstacles and difficulties. Hope acts as a resilience against life's challenges and setbacks. When we have hope, our thoughts tend to be more focused on overcoming obstacles rather than getting stuck in them.

Hope can break the negative thought cycle and reduce the tendency to get stuck in destructive thought patterns. When we feel hope, we open up to positive thoughts and solutions rather than being trapped in negative spirals. Hope is closely related to optimism. Being optimistic means expecting the best, and this can color our thoughts with positive expectations and perceptions. Hope can reduce the experience of stress by offering a belief that even in difficult situations there can be a way forward. This can change how we mentally interpret and deal with stressful situations. Hope can motivate us to create and pursue goals and purposes in life. By having clear goals and a sense of purpose, our thoughts can be directed toward meaning and progress.

Hope provides a positive and forward-looking energy that can affect our mental energy. It can increase motivation and enthusiasm, which in turn affects the quality and orientation of thoughts.

Actively cultivating and focusing on hope, by visualizing positive future prospects, pointing to the promises in God's word and seeking opportunities even in difficulties, can be a strategy to shape and improve our thoughts and thereby our mental health.

tikva

INSIGHT

A Tikva instructor lives in self-awareness.

Search me, O God, and know my
thoughts, try me and know my anxiety,
see if my way leads away from you, and
lead me in the eternal way.

Psalms 139:23-24



INSIGHT

- In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding - Ephesians 1:7-8
- Wisdom is a fountain of life to the wise, but folly brings punishment to fools - Proverbs 16:22
- And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God - Philippians 1:9-11
- We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives - Colossians 1:9

Insight is not just a superficial understanding of something, but it is a deeper, more comprehensive understanding. It's about being able to see past the obvious and understand the underlying causes or patterns that govern different situations or phenomena.

Insight can come in different ways. It can be the result of reflection, where you actively think about a situation or experience and then draw conclusions based on this. Insight can also come from accumulating knowledge and experience over time, which gives a broader and more nuanced understanding of different subjects or situations.

Having insight also often means being able to see connections between different ideas or events that may not seem related at first glance. It is the ability to draw parallels and identify patterns that may be hidden to others. Insight is valuable because it can lead to making more informed decisions, solving problems more effectively and having a deeper understanding of people and the world around them. It is a quality that can be trained and developed by being open to new perspectives, continuing to learn and reflecting on experiences.

Insight is important for several reasons:

Better decision-making:

Insight allows us to see beyond the obvious and understand the underlying factors in different situations. This leads to wiser and more informed decisions.

Learning & growth:

Through insight, we can learn from our experiences and grow as individuals. It enables personal and professional growth and development through reflection and understanding of our actions and their consequences.

Problem solving:

Insight allows us to see problems from different perspectives and find innovative solutions. It helps us identify patterns and connections that can be the key to solving difficult problems.

Relationships:

Insight into oneself and others is important for building and maintaining relationships. Understanding other people's feelings, perspectives and needs can strengthen bonds and facilitate communication. Insight gives an ability to understand other people's views, needs and feelings. It is fundamental to being able to show compassion, love and respect towards others.

Empathy & understanding:

Insight can lead to increased empathy and understanding of other people's situations and perspectives. It can contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate social culture.

Deeper spiritual understanding:

Through insight and self-reflection, one can deepen one's understanding of God's word, the Bible. It is not only about reading the texts but also reflecting on their significance for one's own life and faith. Insight can give a deeper understanding of God's message and its application in everyday life.

Insight can give a deeper understanding of the relationship to God and other people. It includes an awareness of one's need for forgiveness, love and community, and how to live according to God's will towards others. Insight means exploring one's own spirituality and relationship with God. Only by reflecting on one's faith, doubts, questions and experiences, can one develop a deeper understanding of one's own spirituality and how it interacts with God's plan. This can then lead to insight into understanding how big a place the Holy Spirit has in one's life. A deeper spiritual understanding through insight is not only about theoretical understanding but also about practical application. It is about living in line with one's insights, practicing love, forgiveness and service according to Christ's example. Insight serves as a way to integrate faith and lifestyle, to gain a deeper understanding of God's will, and to live according to Christian principles. Allowing insights to influence one's beliefs and actions can lead to a more meaningful spiritual experience and a more authentic relationship with God and others.

Creativity & innovation:

Insight can act as a catalyst for creativity and innovation. By seeing connections in new ways and thinking outside the box, you can come up with new ideas and solutions.

Reduced stress:

Having insight into different situations can reduce stress levels. When you understand and can handle situations in a more balanced way, you become less likely to react with worry or anxiety.

Effective leadership:

For leaders, insight can be an important factor in making wise decisions and understanding the needs and perspectives of their team members. It can contribute to better leadership and organizational culture.

Insight is thus a key component for personal development, effective leadership, good relationships, spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of the world around us.

INSIGHT - FIRST STEP TO CHANGE & IMPROVEMENT

Motivation or desire can be important factors when we want to change something. But insight is often the first step for change to occur. This is due to:

Current state awareness:

Change begins with understanding and acknowledging one's current state. Insight means becoming aware of your own thoughts, behaviors or situations that need to change. Without this awareness, it is difficult to identify what needs to change.

Motivates to action:

When one has insight into a situation or behavior, it can create motivation to act. Insight can act as a catalyst to take steps towards change and improvement because one sees the importance of not remaining in the current state.

Creates understanding of the need for change:

Insight can show why change is necessary and why it is important not to remain in the current state. This can mean seeing the consequences of not changing or getting a clearer picture of the potential benefits of change.

Identifies possible solutions:

Insight can lead to seeing possible solutions or alternatives to one's current state. By understanding what is not working, you can start thinking about how to improve or change the situation.

Opens up for learning & development:

Insight means being open to learning and developing. It is difficult to change if you are not aware of what needs to be improved or learned.

Insight is thus a key step in initiating change, as it creates awareness, motivation and opportunities to identify and implement solutions to improve a situation or behavior.

BODY MOVEMENTS & INSIGHT

Body movement and physical activity can play a significant role in its contribution to deepened insight, such as:

Stimulate the mind:

Through physical activity, the brain can be stimulated, which can increase our ability to concentrate and think creatively. It can make it easier to come up with new ideas or see connections that might not have been obvious before.

Promote reflection:

The form of exercise involved in Tikva, with its calm movements, can create a contemplative atmosphere that promotes reflection. It can help unburden the mind and open up new insights.

Body & mind sensations:

By being aware of the body's movements and sensations, one can also become more aware of one's own thoughts and feelings. This can lead to a deepened self-awareness.

Creative outlet:

Some people find that physical activity, such as dance or artistic movement, gives them a creative outlet. It can be a place where new thoughts and insights are born.

Stress management:

Engaging in physical activity can reduce stress and release tension. This can create a more relaxed state which in turn can facilitate insights and clarity of thought. Integrating body movements and physical activity into one's routines can thus function as a complementary method to deepen insight, open up new perspectives and promote an increased awareness of both body and mind.

TIKVA & INSIGHT

In Tikva, we practice stretching through dynamic and static exercises to promote blood circulation and increased mobility. Stretching, in addition to being good for the body's flexibility and mobility, can also help increase insight:

Mental relaxation:

Stretching often means focusing on your breathing, and being present in the moment. This can create a relaxed mental atmosphere that facilitates reflection and insight.

Physical awareness:

When you stretch, you become more aware of your body, its limits and how it feels. This also increases awareness of the body's response to various movements and can also enhance awareness of one's moods and thoughts. What does the body want to tell you now?

Time for reflection:

Stretching can be a more relaxed, quiet time where you can reflect on thoughts and feelings while performing the movements. It can provide an opportunity for deeper thoughts and insights when you allow yourself to be more present in your body and in the moment.

Interweaving of body & mind:

By combining stretching with calm music and Bible words, you can create a stronger connection between the body and the mind. This can lead to a more comprehensive experience and open up a deeper insight.

Improved mental state:

Stretching can release tension and stress in the body, which in turn can improve the mental state. When you feel more relaxed and more balanced, it can more easily lead to increased insight and clarity of thought.

In conclusion, stretching can be more than just a physical activity. By integrating it into one's relaxation and reflection routines, it can create a platform for deeper insights and a heightened awareness of body and mind, something we strive for in Tikva. In this reflection and awareness of body and mind, we want to invite God's presence to work in every person. God always wants us well, and when we are relaxed and more aware of both body and mind, God wants to lead us to important insights that in turn lead to necessary changes.

MUSIC & INSIGHT

Calm music can be a powerful resource that can contribute to deepened insight:

Relaxation & reduced stress:

Calm music that we use at Tikva can lower stress levels and create a relaxed atmosphere.⁽¹⁾ When the body and mind are more relaxed, it is easier to focus and reflect more deeply.

Stimulate creativity:

Some people find that calm music can open up their creative side. It can make it easier to explore new ideas and perspectives.

Contemplative state:

The Tikva music can help create a contemplative state, which can facilitate increased self-awareness and understanding.

Emotional connection:

Music has the ability to affect our emotions. Quiet music can help create an emotional connection that enables a deeper insight into our own thoughts and feelings.

Listening to calm music can be a tool to create an atmosphere that promotes deeper insight, reflection and understanding. It can also be an effective way to create a calm and peaceful environment that facilitates concentration, personal development and opens up to the Holy Spirit. The TIKVA music is specially written to be able to contribute to just this, while at the same time it is written to honor God.

THE BIBLE & INSIGHT

The Bible is the word of God and its truths are a source of deep insight:

Spiritual Guidance:

The Bible contains many words of wisdom and principles that can provide guidance and insight in various life situations. By reflecting on these, one can gain a deeper understanding of how to live in accordance with one's faith in these words.

Self-reflection:

Many passages in the Bible call for self-reflection and self-examination. By considering the words of the Bible in relation to one's own life, it can awaken thoughts and insights about one's own actions, thoughts and feelings.

Spiritual growth:

The texts of the Bible can serve as a source of spiritual growth. By contemplating its message, one can grow in one's faith and understanding of God's intentions.

Comfort & inspiration:

Bible words can also serve as a source of comfort and inspiration during difficult times. They can provide strength and hope as well as guidance to deal with various life challenges.

Relationships & morality:

Many of the Bible's stories and messages concern relationships, moral considerations and ethical principles. By delving into these texts, one can develop a greater understanding of how to interact with others and live according to moral and ethical guidelines.

In conclusion, the words of the Bible can serve as a source of wisdom, guidance and spiritual growth. By reflecting on its message, one can gain deep insights into life, faith, relationships and personal development.

When reading the Bible with an open mind, it can lead to a deeper insight into our thoughts, our way of life and our values. It also leads us to having the right perspective on things. Often we may start from our own understanding and prevailing societal norms, but God's word points out that it is the principles of His kingdom that we must follow.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5 - 6

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of
your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good,
pleasing and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*
John 14:27

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no
record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

THE COMBINATION = TIKVA

The combination of calm movement, calm music and Bible words is powerful and promotes deep insight in several ways:

Relaxation & focused attention:

Gentle movements that are used in Tikva, combined with calm music can help create a relaxed atmosphere. This state of relaxation makes it easier to focus and direct attention to the Bible words one is reflecting on.

Contemplative/reflective state:

A contemplative state facilitates in-depth reflection and understanding. It can be a time to be present in the moment and let your thoughts wander around words and messages from the Bible.

Sense perceptions & self-awareness:

The combination of physical movement and music can increase awareness of body and sensory sensations. This can make it easier to reflect on and interpret the Bible words you take in, which can lead to increased self-awareness.

Spiritual connection:

A spiritual atmosphere makes it easier to connect to deeper spiritual dimensions. A combination of all these Tikva elements can help deepen the understanding of the spiritual truths found in the Bible.

Stress reduction & increased well-being:

The combination of the elements in Tikva can reduce stress and promote a sense of well-being. This creates an environment more conducive to deep reflection and insight.

Mind impact & synergy:

Each component - movement, music and the words of the Bible - affects different sensory experiences. Calm movements engage the body and create a physical presence and awareness. Calm music affects emotions and can create a relaxed and calm atmosphere. The words of the Bible arouse thoughts and spiritual feelings. The combination of these three elements engages multiple senses simultaneously, which can intensify and deepen the experience and together they create a synergistic effect.

Focused attention:

Combining these elements creates an environment that facilitates concentration and focused attention. The calm and relaxed atmosphere can make it easier to immerse yourself in the words of the Bible and reflect on its message without distractions or external disturbances.

Inner growth & reflection:

This combination can create a platform for inner growth through self-reflection and spiritual development. By integrating physical activity, music and Bible reading, you can create space for personal reflection that can give rise to new insights, understanding and guidance in one's life.

In conclusion, the combination of calm movements, calm music and Bible words can be powerful by engaging multiple senses at once, creating a coherent whole, creating focused attention and allowing for inner growth and reflection. This creates a favorable environment for deeper insights and personal development. The combination can create a harmonious environment that promotes deep insight by creating relaxation, increasing awareness of the mind and body, and facilitating spiritual anchoring and reflection on the Bible's words and its message.

HOPE & INSIGHT

Hope plays a critical role in insight:

Open to possibilities:

Hope is about believing that there is opportunity and potential for change and growth. This opens up the mind to seek and embrace new perspectives and insights.

Motivates exploration:

When you have hope, you are more inclined to explore and search for new solutions. This increases the chances of discovering new insights and understanding.

Provides strength during challenges:

Hope can be a source of strength and endurance during difficult times. When you have hope, you are more likely to continue to pursue insight even when it is challenging or resistance is strong.

Increases motivation for self-reflection:

Hope can drive a person to reflect on their situation and search for opportunities for change and improvement. This can lead to deeper insights and awareness into one's own situation and the outside world.

Creates a positive frame of mind:

Hope contributes to a positive state of mind, which can facilitate insights and creative thinking. When you feel positive and optimistic, you are usually more receptive to new thoughts and ideas.

Stimulates to look ahead:

Hope means looking ahead and believing in opportunities for improvement. This can lead to actively seeking out and embracing new insights and ideas that can lead to positive change.

Hope can be critical to insight because it creates a mental attitude that is open to change and growth. It can act as a driving force to continue exploring, learning and growing, which in turn can lead to deeper and more meaningful insights. It is precisely HOPE that Tikva wants to convey.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

Psalms 42:6

USING THE INSIGHT

Insight in and of itself can be valuable, but it is what you do with it that can make it meaningful and rewarding. Here are some ways to use and apply insight:

Reflect & integrate:

Use the insight to reflect on its meaning and how it can be applied to your life or situations you face. Try to integrate it into your thoughts and actions.

Make wise decisions:

Use the insight to make informed and wise decisions. Think about how it can guide your actions or what changes it can inspire. When you use insight to make decisions, you can base your actions on principles found in the Bible. This may mean that you take into account, for example, moral and ethical guidelines that are anchored in the Christian faith, asking yourself, does it line up with God's word?

Mentor others:

If your insight is related to something that others can benefit from, share it with them in order to mentor and support. It can be in your work life, personal relationships or other contexts where your insight can be valuable. Through insights into how you yourself have received grace and forgiveness in your faith, you can guide others with mercy and compassion. The insights can also guide you in supporting others through Christian principles of love and support.

Self-development:

Use the insight as a platform for personal growth and development. This may mean working on areas where you see that change or improvement is needed.

Contribute to society:

If your insight has wider implications, consider how it can contribute to society. This can be by getting involved in volunteer work, contributing to discussions or initiating changes that are relevant in your community.

Continuous application:

Insight is not static. Continue to use it as a guide to further learn, grow and adapt to life's changes or situations that may arise.

Seeking spiritual growth:

Insights into your spiritual journey can help you continue to grow in your faith. You can identify areas where you need to grow and develop according to the Christian faith.

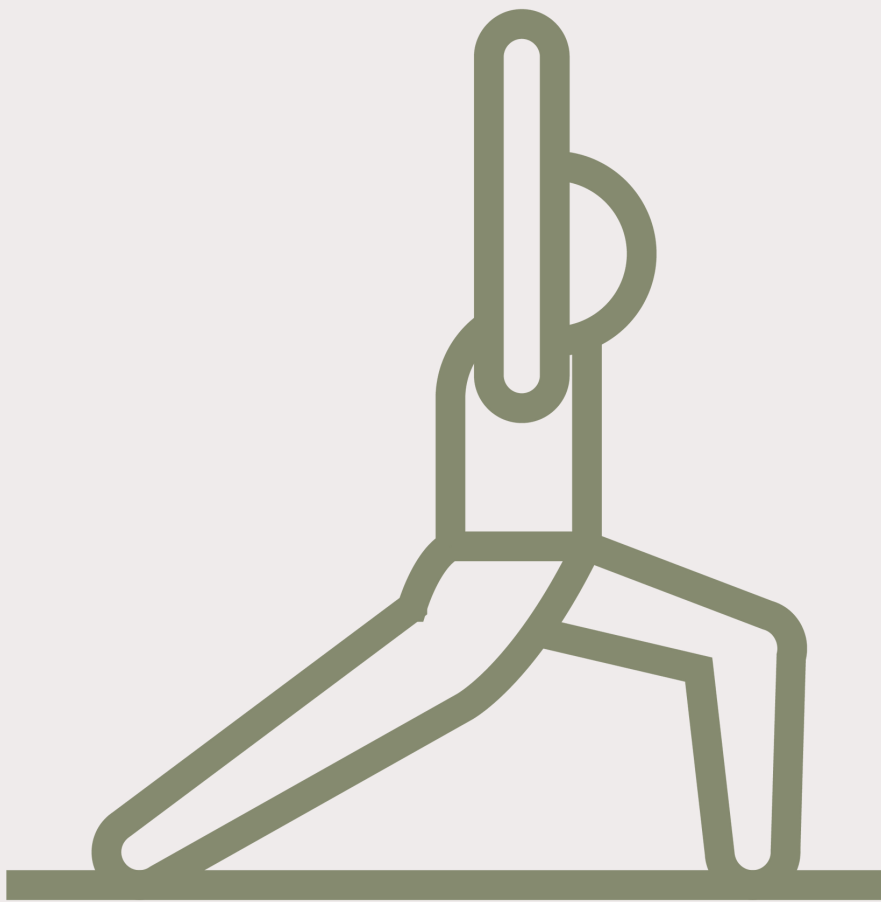
Using your insight in a meaningful way is about making it practical and relevant to your life and to the people and situations that surround you. The real value of insight lies in how it affects your actions, your relationships and your personal development.

Applying insights based on Christian values means looking at the insights through the lens of God's word. It is about using these insights to live in accordance with the faith one professes and to contribute to a world characterized by the principles of God's kingdom.

The logo for 'tikva' is displayed in a large, bold, lowercase serif font. The letters are dark grey, and the overall style is clean and modern.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODY

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Romans 12:1



How are you made and what makes you feel good? First and foremost we need to be reminded that we are created in the image of God. Because of Jesus, God knows what it means to be human and to live in an age like our own, with its challenges and problems. Among all of these things the Bible encourages us to, "Be still and be know" (Psalm 46:10) . This means that in the midst of the storms of emotions I can choose to calm down, take a deep breath and remind myself of who God is. A Tikva Class is one such opportunity to 'be still and know' and over time it can become a part of your lifestyle where you are reminded to breathe hope no matter what you are facing. Tikva is a tool that helps us prioritize the healthy habits that make us and creation feel good. It is about a lifestyle of everyday choices that we make regularly based on the knowledge that there is grace and hope

BODY AWARENESS - BOTH MOVEMENT AND EXPERIENCE

The physical body is not a separated or a detached part of the human being, but we as humans are an integrated whole with spirit, body and soul. The body can be likened to a vessel in which we live and experience the world around us. It is also in the body that we feel emotions and experience different physical needs. Body awareness is therefore both about our movements with the body as well as the experiences we carry with us.

Body awareness includes an awareness and knowledge of the body's functions, ability to move, movement patterns and body control. In addition, it includes an awareness of the body's signals and experiences. The more we learn about the body, the more we realize its complexity. Body image also arises through body awareness. The way we treat our body will in turn affect how we feel and think about it. Tikva can be a fantastic tool that has the conditions to integrate with the whole person - spirit, body and soul.

BODY FUNCTIONS

The body consists of around 40,000 billion cells. Each cell is an independent unit, which in cooperation with each other creates a body - a human being. Human physiology is, of course, unfathomably complicated and the goal for many of us is not to understand it in detail. This chapter is more about creating a basic understanding of the body's structure, different systems and body processes.

Understanding the different functions and how they influence each other and are closely connected, we will see how they form a functional unit that keeps our body alive.

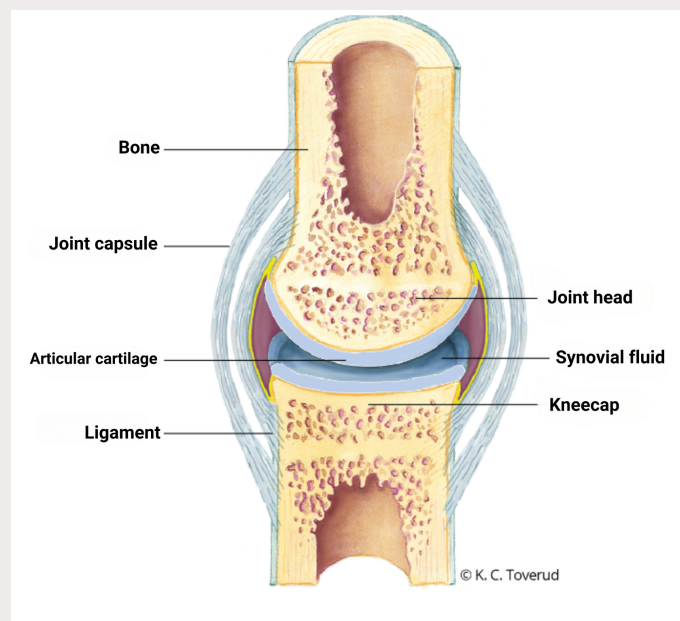
THE LOCOMOTOR APPARATUS

Our bodies include a skeleton that is held up by approximately 650 skeletal muscles. The bones of the skeleton form a system of levers that can be turned about axes in the movable joints. The muscle power is transmitted to the bones by means of tendons that attach the muscles to the skeleton. When the muscle is shortened, the attachment points of the tendons are pulled towards each other and the legs move.

To explain the movements of the joint, one often talks about planes of motion and axes. There are three different planes and three different axes. We have different types of joints, divided by appearance and what movements they allow; Hinge joints (e.g. knee, elbow, fingers), swivel joints (e.g. between radius and elbow), saddle joints (e.g. ankle joint) and ball joints (e.g. hip and shoulder joints).

JOINT HEALTH

The joint consists of the parts of the skeleton where two or more bones meet and move in relation to each other. There is also articular cartilage on the contact surfaces of the leg ends, which provides shock absorption and better fit and distribution of joint load. Around the joint is a protective membrane of connective tissue called the joint capsule. This gives stability to the joint and prevents displacement. As extra reinforcement, there are also tendons and ligaments that are integrated into the joint capsule.



Load and movement play a crucial role in maintaining good joint health. Through regular physical activity*, the muscles and ligaments around the joints are strengthened, which provides stability and reduces the risk of injuries. At the same time, movement promotes the circulation of synovial fluid, which lubricates the joint and promotes the exchange between nutrients and waste products in the joint cartilage. Avoiding overload and varying movement patterns is also important to optimize joint health. Overall, a balanced combination of loading and movement is key to maintaining joint health and mobility over time.

*Physical activity refers according to FYSS Sweden, ("Physical activity in the prevention and treatment of disease") : "All body movement that is a consequence of skeletal muscle contraction and that results in increased energy consumption".

MUSCULATURE

Skeletal muscle consists of long, cylindrical muscle cells called muscle fibers. Each muscle fiber contains several myofibrils, which in turn consist of the proteins actin and myosin. This device enables muscle contraction.

There are two main types of skeletal muscle fibers: fast-twitch and slow-twitch.

Fast-twitch fibers contract quickly but tire easily, while slow-twitch fibers contract slowly but can work for a longer period of time. The muscle's composition of these fiber types varies depending on function and activity.

DISCOMFORT FROM MUSCLES & JOINTS

Pain in muscles and joints can in many cases be linked to lifestyle and influenced by modern lifestyle factors. More people have sedentary jobs and the use of technology is increasing, which can lead to poor posture and increased strain on the neck and shoulders. Other occupations require monotonous movements and heavy lifting which can also increase the risk of overexertion and pain. Other risk factors for problems from muscles and joints can be overweight, long-term stress, lack of sleep and physical inactivity.

A theory that explains the origin of pain is called "Cinderella Syndrome". The thesis is based on the fact that our muscle fibers have different properties. Just like Cinderella who got up first and went to bed last, the slow/endurance muscle fibers start working early and continue to be active throughout the workout until the muscle is no longer tense. But if the same muscle is constantly tensed, the muscle fibers can then find it difficult to relax and stop tensing they may even be active during the night when they should be relaxed. When the muscle statically tenses in that way, it affects the blood supply in the muscle, which then decreases. If the blood supply decreases, the availability of oxygen also decreases, which means that the muscle does not work as well and loses the ability to transport waste products away and the environment in the muscle becomes acidic (lactic acid). It causes pain and can also be experienced as muscle knots and stiffness.

EFFECTS OF STRETCHING

There is no clear support in the research that stretching would prevent injuries and soreness. However, clinical experience shows that regular stretching and other mobility training play a role in making the body more flexible. The movements performed during a Tikva session include both static and dynamic stretching.

Dynamic stretching:

Dynamic stretching is a type of stretching that involves controlled, active movements through a full range of motion. The movement is usually repeated several times. By working dynamically, the blood circulation in the muscle

increases, which makes it warm and soft. The increased blood supply also helps the muscle's recovery. In addition, this type of stretch contributes to activating surrounding muscles and coordinating movements, which can improve coordination and neuromuscular activation. Dynamic movements positively stress the joints, which we know is good for general joint health.

Static stretching:

Static stretching involves stretching the muscle to its maximum length and then holding it in that position without movement for a certain period of time. By staying still and maintaining a static stretch of the muscle, range of motion and flexibility can increase over time. This type of stretch can also help to reduce muscle tension and increase relaxation in the muscles.

SLEEP

We humans need sleep to recover and process impressions from the day. It is believed that sleep is important for the brain's plasticity, i.e. its ability to change and reorganize. We need rest to recover from today's challenges and prepare for tomorrow's.

What happens in the body when we sleep?

When we sleep, the body unwinds; breathing rate, heart rate, temperature and blood pressure drop. The muscles relax, the body's immune system is activated, memories are stored and the production of stress hormones decreases. Good quality sleep reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, elevated blood fats, diabetes, depression and fatigue syndrome.

How long we need to sleep varies from person to person. An adult needs somewhere between six and nine hours of sleep per night, while infants and teenagers need more. However, the amount of sleep seems to decrease with increasing age. The need for sleep is greatly influenced by how effective the sleep is, i.e. how much deep sleep you have had. Sleep is usually divided into two phases; NREM sleep (non-rapid eye movement, deep sleep) and REM sleep (rapid eye movement, dream sleep). The depth of sleep varies during NREM sleep, but the deepest sleep usually occurs at the beginning of the sleep period.

How to improve your sleep?

Many people suffer from sleep disorders and there are many reasons why this could be. Most commonly, stress and anxiety keep us awake and prevent relaxation. It is not dangerous to have one or a few nights of disturbed sleep, but prolonged disturbed or interrupted sleep becomes noticeable in everyday life through impaired performance, concentration and a weakened immune system. Sleep disorders affect hormone regulation which is linked to appetite regulation and , in turn, can cause weight gain as hunger increases.

The body feels and functions well with routines, this also applies to sleep. Going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time enables better quality of sleep. Stress, caffeine and light increase our level of alertness and can make it harder to fall asleep. Relaxing, turning off the lights and limiting stressful moments can help you sleep better. Physical activity and sunlight during the day are also factors with strong research support for improved sleep and increased health.

STRESS

Stress can be likened to conducting an orchestra where each part of the body represents an instrument. When the conductor (the stress response) provides clear signals, each instrument (body system) is expected to work together to create a well-balanced melody. In a stress reaction, the conductor becomes intense and each instrument plays faster and stronger to meet the demands. Problems arise if the orchestra falls out of tune or if some instruments take over and others are ignored. Dealing with stress then becomes like restoring order in the orchestra, giving each instrument the right amount of attention and adjusting the tempo to find a way back to a balanced and beautiful melody.

Stress is the body's physiological and psychological reaction to demands, situations or stressors that are experienced or perceived as challenging or overwhelming. When we talk about stress and its function in the body, we need to be aware of two different nervous systems called the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Sympathetic nervous system

This system is activated to prepare the body to face the upcoming challenge. This reaction is called "fight or flight" and the stress response involves different stress hormones, eg adrenaline, norepinephrine and cortisol, which are sent out into the body and affect energy levels, immune defenses and various organs and tissues. When the sympathetic nervous system is active, heart rate increases, the heart's stroke volume increases, breathing increases and the blood begins to be distributed to the arms and legs. The body gets ready for physical and mental stress.

Parasympathetic nervous system

The parasympathetic nervous system is the opposite of the sympathetic system. When this is underway, the heart rate drops, stroke volume decreases, breathing becomes less labored, and blood is redirected to focus on the gastrointestinal tract. Levels of stress hormones drop and "feel good" hormones increase, such as oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin.

Stress is normal and can be adaptive to deal with challenges. However, prolonged or excessive stress can have negative consequences for health when the body is not given time to recover and reduce the activation of the sympathetic nervous system. Physical stress can be felt in the muscles making them stiff and sore can then be experienced as a mental stressor. In the same way, mental stress for prolonged periods of time can negatively affect the muscles.

Tikva can help the individual to direct the body/orchestra to a calmer tempo, a slower pace. Through calm movements, breathing, music and being in a safe atmosphere, can help the body to increase the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system.

BREATHING

We can survive for about 3 weeks without food, 3 days without water but only 3 minutes without air, without breathing. Breathing, we know, is vital. When we stop breathing, we stop living.

We breathe in to oxygenate the blood and breathe out to expel carbon dioxide. A normal breathing rate is approximately between 12-20 breaths per minute. It is a function controlled by the autonomic nervous system, but we can also influence breathing with our will. We have both superficial (sternomastoid, intercostal) and deep (diaphragm) respiratory muscles that work together to do this.

We feel as we breathe or we breathe as we feel

When we have a relaxed or rested breathing pattern, we breathe through the nose. This means that the air has time to be heated, moistened and cleaned before it reaches the lungs. Many things can affect our breathing including mental stress as well as physical pain. This often leads to shallow breathing or to hyperventilation. The consequence of hyperventilation is a changed PH value in the blood which is not good. The basic environment that is then formed affects the muscles and, together with other physiological functions, can develop pain. One way to counter shallow breathing or hyperventilation is deep breathing. This means that carbon dioxide is expelled and removed slowly from the blood and not at an elevated rate as it occurs during hyperventilation.

Deep breathing:

Deep breathing can also be called abdominal breathing because it looks like you are breathing with your stomach, instead of your chest. The difference is that with abdominal breathing you mainly use the diaphragm when inhaling and it is therefore not as energy-demanding as with shallow breathing where many muscles are activated and required. Here too, calm and harmonious music has a positive effect and helps breathing to be slower and deeper.

Calm and slow deep breathing has been shown to be able to directly affect the autonomic nervous system through an increased activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. Studied effects of this are lowered heart rate, blood pressure and reduced levels of stress hormones. In addition, food digestion and bowel movements increase. Deep breathing can increase oxygenation in the blood and provide more nutrients to the body's cells. Breathing is used as a tool, for example, in childbirth to help the woman save energy and more easily maintain a sense of control and presence during the pain. The pain can be reduced if the body manages to relax.

Deep breathing and relaxation are closely linked. Research*4 shows that conscious breathing can affect our psychological and physiological health. When we breathe deeply and consciously, we focus on drawing the air into the lungs and then slowly letting it out. It signals to the body that we are in a safe state and can help the body move from a stress response to a relaxation response, which can be a powerful method for dealing with tension, stress and anxiety.

Tikva uses breathing to help individuals relax. This is done by starting the sessions with deep breathing and during the rest of the session breathing in through the nose is encouraged. Tikva also uses instrumental music to further help the body lower blood pressure, heart rate and reduce cortisol levels in the blood. All of this helps relieve stress, slow down and help the muscles relax and recover. There is therefore good support that Tikva relaxation and stretching can provide good tools to combat stress symptoms.

PAIN

"An unpleasant sensory or emotional experience, associated with or described in terms of perceived or threatened tissue damage".

The above quote is how the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) describes the phenomenon of pain. It is an experience that is fundamentally necessary for our survival. Pain is a subjective experience that cannot always be linked to an existing injury. Therefore, it is difficult to make an objective description of it. Pain needs to be understood based on the individual's experience of it and behavior based on it.

Pain can also be named differently based on their specific causes or origins. It can be nociceptive (from skin or muscles), visceral (from internal organs) or neuropathic (from nerve damage or other nerve dysfunction). Another type of pain is called psychosomatic pain.

Psychosomatic pain can occur when emotions, stress or psychological factors affect the body's physiology and create physical symptoms, even if there is no direct physical injury or illness. It is a complex interaction between the mind and the body, where emotional stress can manifest as physical pain.

Pain can also be divided into acute or long-term pain. Acute pain often occurs due to an injury, for example, which means that it responds well to treatment. The other form of pain, long-term or chronic pain (), lasts longer than 3 months and can be much more difficult to manage. Today, approximately 20-35% of the adult population lives with some type of chronic pain, and women to a greater extent. What makes long-term pain complex is that it affects the body so that it becomes more sensitive to pain, it can create social isolation, reduced activity level and sometimes depression.

For individuals with long-term pain conditions, physical activity may be recommended for pain relief. The activity should then be at least 10 minutes long, carried out continuously and reach a medium intensity level. Above all, strength and movement training have been shown to have a positive effect on function and reduce pain. Physical activity is not only recommended for the physiological effects it has, but also because it breaks isolation, provides increased body awareness, it strengthens self-confidence and thereby trust in one's own abilities, reduces depression and anxiety and creates a distraction. All these factors play a role in how the individual experiences and manages pain.

For a person with long-term pain, this can be difficult, as there may be fear that more pain will occur by doing exercise. Fear of movement becomes a behavior that contributes to increased inactivity. Tikva can be a good place to start regardless of ability. In addition to the physiological effects of the movements, the participant has the opportunity to come to a context that breaks social isolation, works with self-image and self-confidence in community and through the biblical words.

Pain management & the role of instructor

In the role of instructor, you will come across people with various forms of pain and it is easy for the participants to turn to you for advice. Remember that it is not your

job to diagnose, but to refer them to a physiotherapist or a health center if necessary. However, you can give suggestions on how they could adapt the exercise, if possible. The participants know their body best and also have their own responsibility to seek further individualized care or additional support in exercises from a physiotherapist.

Tikva can be done by many! However, people with pain must be allowed to decide for themselves what they can and cannot do. With increased confidence in their own abilities and the improved general condition, in time they may dare to do more!

SUMMARY BODY AWARENESS

Body awareness refers to the knowledge and understanding of one's own body, its movements, physiological reactions and sensory experiences. It means being present and aware. Body awareness also involves paying attention to the body's signals, such as pain, tension, relaxation, or other physiological and emotional reactions. People who develop good body awareness can be more attuned to how their bodies are affected by different activities, stress, diet and emotional states. It can also be an important aspect of various exercises and therapies that focus on promoting a holistic view of health and well-being. Body awareness can be practiced and improved through Tikva.

tikva

WELLBEING

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ - 1 Thessalonians 5:23
(NIV translation)



WHAT IS WELLNESS?

Wellness means an overall feeling of wellbeing on several levels, including physical, mental, spiritual and social. It's about feeling at ease, healthy and balanced both mentally, spiritually and physically. This includes having good health, feeling happy, living close to Jesus, having meaningful relationships, and feeling engaged in life and one's purposes.

Well-being is a broad term that encompasses several aspects of people's lives.

Physical well-being:

Is about having good physical health. This means eating nutritious food, regular exercise, adequate sleep and avoiding harmful habits such as excessive alcohol consumption or smoking. Well-being is strongly linked to physical health. When we feel good physically, we usually have more energy, less pain and better resistance to disease.

Mental Health:

Well-being includes the mental and emotional aspects of overall being well. o It's about feeling mentally strong, having the ability to handle stress, deal with difficult situations and experience positive emotions.

Social well-being:

Is about having meaningful and supportive relationships, feeling included in society and being able to communicate and interact in a positive way with other people. When we feel good, we often have more to give to our relationships. Positive well-being can contribute to better communication, greater empathy and more harmonious relationships.

Spiritual well-being:

This can mean different things to different people but can include a sense of meaning, purpose and spiritual satisfaction that comes from, for example, meditating, reflecting on life or feeling a connection to something greater than oneself.

Environmental well-being:

Is about creating and maintaining a healthy and favorable environment for people and ecosystems. This concept focuses on ensuring that our surroundings, from local to global levels, promote the health and well-being of both current and future generations. Having a healthy and safe environment, where people feel comfortable and safe in their surroundings, can also affect one's overall well-being.

Work performance:

Well-being in a job is about performing well. When an individual feels physically, mentally and emotionally balanced and in overall harmony, their performance at work tends to improve significantly. Because we feel good, we are usually more productive, creative and motivated.

Quality of life:

Feeling satisfied with life, experiencing joy and having a sense of meaning and purpose are fundamental to a high quality of life. Well-being plays a central role in creating this sense of satisfaction.

Long-term health

By promoting wellbeing, we can prevent long-term health problems and improve our longevity and quality of life.

Wellbeing is about creating balance and harmony between these different parts of life. They are not always a static or fixed situation but they are aspects that one can actively work on and improve over time. Maintaining this in balance can lead to an overall sense of wellbeing and happiness.

In summary, wellbeing is important because it is not just about being free from illness or discomfort, but also about feeling joy, harmony and a meaningful purpose in life. It affects almost every aspect of our lives and is an important component of a healthy and fulfilling life.

GOD-GIVEN BODY & SOUL

The Bible emphasizes that the body and soul are God's gift and that we are responsible for caring for them. Maintaining wellness is one way to honor this gift.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have within you and which you have received from God? You do not belong to yourselves. God has bought you and the price has been paid. Then honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Caring for the body is about seeing it as a gift from God and a place where the Holy Spirit lives. It means treating it with respect, that is taking care of your health in spirit, body and soul. The Bible also encourages balance and moderation, which can be translated into avoiding excesses and taking care of the body without becoming fixated on it.

Taking care of one's health involves not only physical well-being but also a spiritual practice and development involving prayer, contemplation and a deepened relationship with God as it becomes a path to holistic well-being.

The Bible gives wisdom about caring for the body as part of the spiritual walk and having a healthy balance between spirit, body and soul.

Principles of moderation, balance and self-control are found throughout several parts of the Bible. Here are two examples:

- Proverbs 25:16: If you find honey, eat just enough – too much of it, and you will vomit.
- 2 Timothy 1:7: for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

The Bible gives guidance on being responsible and reasonable in our actions and choices, including about the body. It is about treating the body well, without exaggerating or becoming a slave to the various desires or needs that one might have.

A HEALTHY BODY & SOUL

When the body and mind are in balance and healthy, it can be easier to focus on spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, contemplation and Bible reading. Reduced discomfort or distracting physical ailments can make it easier to be present during spiritual practices. A healthy soul contributes to more stable mental health, which can make it easier to deal with stress, worry and doubt. A healthy body also provides more energy and stamina, which can make it possible to devote more time to spiritual practice without feeling exhausted or tired.

Nurturing the soul can increase awareness of other people's needs and create a loving and compassionate attitude toward others, something that aligns with God's heart. Nurturing both body and soul can lead to a sense of stability and gratitude to God for the gift of health and well-being. The Christian tradition has historically promoted several habits and behaviors that have contributed to well-being

HISTORICAL CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS AND HABITS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO WELL-BEING

Through prayer, contemplation, and regular devotions, the Christian tradition has for centuries promoted regular times for inner stillness. Practicing these often can reduce stress, increase mental clarity and provide a sense of calm. The church's community and commitment to support one another, especially in difficult times, has fostered a sense of belonging and social support that is important for psychological well-being.

By reflecting on biblical texts and their messages, people have found comfort, inspiration and guidance for their lives. This can boost emotional well-being and provide a sense of purpose and meaning. Christian principles of forgiveness and mercy have promoted emotional health by reducing bitterness and increasing a sense of inner peace.

The tradition of resting and recuperating one day a week, such as the Sabbath, has emphasized the importance of taking breaks and rest. This has been shown to have positive effects on stress management and general well-being.

In summary, these are examples of how the Christian tradition has already for a long time provided frameworks for healthy habits, that is, by promoting spirituality, community, reflection and moral values that lead towards holistic well-being.

ORA ET LABORA

"Ora et labora" is Latin and means "pray and work". It is a principle often associated with Benedictine monks and their monastic life. The principle is about balancing spiritual life with work and integrating prayer and work into daily life.

This means that one should engage in both prayer and work as an integral part of one's daily routine. For Benedictine monks, this means that they divide their time between prayer, Bible reading, spiritual exercises and manual work such as farming, crafts or other tasks that need to be done within the monastery. "Ora" represents the spiritual part, the time spent in prayer, contemplation and spiritual exercises. It is the time set aside to draw closer to God, reflect on life and grow in one's spiritual faith. "Labora" represents physical work. The monks work for a living, but the work is also seen as a form of service and as a spiritual exercise. By working, they see it as participating in God's creation and serving the community.

The principle of "ora et labora" emphasizes the importance of balance in life, where spiritual life and worldly activities are not seen as opposed but complementary. It is about uniting spiritual and practical life to achieve a harmony between prayer and work. The principle of "ora et labora" from the Christian tradition are related to well-being in the following ways.

Balance:

By integrating prayer and work, the principle creates a balance between the spiritual and practical life. This contributes to a sense of harmony and well-being, as one is not completely dominated by the other either spiritual practices or practical tasks.

Spiritual development:

The regular time devoted to prayer and spiritual exercises promotes spiritual growth and awareness. This can contribute to a sense of meaning and satisfaction.

Work as a service:

Seeing work as a form of service and as part of spiritual practice can provide a deeper sense of purpose and satisfaction from the work one does.

Structure & routine:

This principle creates a structure for the day that includes time for prayer, reflection and physical work. A regular routine creates stability and predictability which can be positive for well-being.

Meaning & context:

Following this principle gives one a sense of belonging to a community and to a larger, meaningful whole, this can then contribute to a sense of connection and wellbeing.

In conclusion, the Christian tradition of "Ora et labora" can contribute to well-being by creating a balance between spiritual and practical aspects of life. It promotes spiritual growth, gives meaning to work and creates a structured daily routine. It helps individuals find harmony and purpose in their daily lives.

Tikva wants to contribute to creating a healthy balance in life, where we can practice stopping, directing our eyes to Jesus and using our bodies when we pray.

CALM MOVEMENT TRAINING & STRETCHING

Stretching and gentle movement training have positive effects on wellbeing:

Reduces tension & stress:

By performing stretching exercises, the muscles can relax and tension is relieved. This can help reduce physical and mental stress.

Improves flexibility & mobility:

By regularly stretching and performing gentle movement training, you can improve your flexibility and mobility, which can reduce the risk of injury and improve the body's overall function.

Focus on breathing & conscious presence:

Many stretching and movement exercises include a focus on breathing and mindfulness. This can help calm the mind as well as increase concentration and presence in the moment.

Stimulates circulation:

By performing various movements and stretches, blood circulation can be improved, which can increase the supply of oxygen to the muscles and organs, thereby promoting well-being.

Promotes balance & coordination:

Many forms of movement exercise focus on balance and coordination, which not only improves the body's physical abilities but can also boost self-confidence. Including such exercises regularly in the routine can provide both physical and mental benefits that contribute to an increased sense of well-being and a better balance in life.

WHO'S EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF EXISTENTIAL HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) has eight dimensions of existential health. These provide a comprehensive view of people's well-being and self-rated health.

Hope:

Hope is a feeling of faith in the future and a belief that things will get better. It's about having a positive outlook on the future, which gives motivation and drive to keep moving forward, even when it's difficult.

Wholeness:

Wholeness means that the physical, mental and emotional are linked and in harmony. It is understanding and appreciating the interplay between one's thoughts, feelings and actions, which can lead to a balanced lifestyle.

Harmony:

Harmony is about finding a place where you feel free to be yourself. It is experiencing inner balance and being in harmony with one's surroundings, which creates a sense of calm and contentment.

Wonder:

Wonder means being able to experience the world with curiosity and openness, like a child. It's about appreciating the beauty in small things and maintaining a sense of fascination and gratitude.

Meaning of life:

Knowing the meaning of one's life provides a sense of purpose and direction. It is understanding why one is here and what gives life deeper value, whether it is personal relationships, service to others or personal development.

Spiritual strength & contact:

This means feeling connected to something greater than oneself, which can be spiritual or existential. It is about finding strength and comfort in the spiritual dimension of one's life.

Personal beliefs:

Having a life map, an inner compass that guides through life. It is about having beliefs and values that guide one's decisions and actions, which can provide a sense of security and meaning.

Community:

To feel part of something bigger, a context or community. It can be to contribute to something outside oneself, be part of society or to understand one's role and importance in the world.

These dimensions represent different aspects of existential health and provide a holistic view of well-being, not simply as the absence of illness but as the presence of positive and meaningful elements in life.

Existential health is an important parameter in your overall health. Tikva contributes towards existential health.

THE BIBLE AND WELLBEING

For the word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and penetrates so deeply that it separates soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and lays bare the intentions and thoughts of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Bible verses can contribute to wellbeing in the following ways:

Meaning & purpose:

Bible words can offer a sense of meaning and purpose in existence. They can provide answers to existential questions and provide guidance for understanding one's place in the world.

Comfort & hope:

There is comfort and hope in the words of the Bible, especially during difficult or challenging times. The messages of hope, faith and perseverance that exist throughout the Bible can serve as a source of comfort.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Guidance for morals & ethics:

Bible verses can offer guidance for making decisions and managing relationships in an ethical and moral way. It can provide guidelines for living a good and meaningful life.

Inner peace & tranquility:

Reading Bible verses can help create inner peace and tranquility. Reflecting on these words can help lower stress levels and create a sense of overall well-being.

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

Psalms 1:1-2

Community & belonging:

The Bible forms a basis for community and togetherness within the church. This community can be a source of support and well-being.

Personal growth & reflection:

Bible verses can serve as inspiration for personal growth and reflection. They can spur self-reflection and the development of a more positive attitude towards life.

Here are some examples of Bible verses that provide inspiration and comfort:

- Psalm 23:4 - Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- Isaiah 41:10 - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
- Philippians 4:6-7 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Proverbs 3:5-6 - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. Remember him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
- John's Gospel 14:27 - "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. Not such peace as the world gives do I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not lose heart." "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

These are just a few example verses from the many that can be found in the 'Tikva Words' page. The Bible contains many verses that provide comfort, support and guidance.

HOPE & WELLBEING

*Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
Psalms 62:6*

Hope is a powerful emotion and mental attitude that can affect wellbeing

Positive view of the future:

Hope gives an optimistic view of the future. It can increase motivation and give a sense of purpose and goal in life.

This can be an important factor in managing stress, anxiety and depression. Having firm faith in God's plan and promises can create a more positive outlook on life and the future. Hope within the Christian faith often provides a sense of purpose and meaning, which is an important factor in overall well-being.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

Strengthens mental wellbeing:

When one feels hope, one usually experiences less negative emotions and an increased sense of satisfaction with life. It can help deal with life's challenges and create a positive frame of mind. Hope in God's presence and promises can provide a sense of stability and calm, which can help reduce anxiety and stress.

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5:5

Increases resilience:

Hope provides a form of mental resilience. It makes it easier to deal with setbacks and difficulties, which can lead to quicker recovery from difficult situations. By trusting in God's goodness and faithfulness, Christians can feel strength and courage when facing difficult situations.

Improves health:

A positive mental attitude fostered by hope can also have physical benefits. Research has shown that people with an optimistic outlook on life have a lower risk of certain diseases and overall better health outcomes.⁽¹²⁾

Promotes social support:

Hope can also increase the sense of belonging and strengthen social bonds. It can make it easier to reach out to others for support and create or maintain strong social networks. The fellowship with other believers and the sharing of the same faith and hope creates a stronger sense of community and social support. By strengthening faith and hope, Christians can experience an increased sense of inner peace, hope and well-being that positively affects their mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Hope means a firm belief in God's promises and His plan for people's lives. This hope can provide a sense of security, meaning and peace:

Trust in God's Plan:

Christian faith means having confidence in God's goodness and faithfulness. It creates hope for a meaningful future, regardless of difficulties and trials.

The hope of salvation:

In Christianity, hope is often associated with salvation and eternal life. This hope for God's grace and salvation gives a sense of peace and security in the face of life's challenges.

Support & community:

Christian community offers support and shared faith that can strengthen hope. Praying together, sharing the promises of the Bible, and being part of a community of faith can strengthen hope.

Purpose & meaning:

Hope within the Christian faith often provides a sense of purpose and meaning, as it involves living according to God's will and striving to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Confidence in God's Presence:

Believers often see God's presence as a source of hope and comfort, especially during difficult times. This can create a sense of well-being and security, even in stormy periods.

In conclusion, by basing your hope on God's promises and love, you can experience a deeper sense of well-being, security, and meaning in life, regardless of the challenges you face. Hope can act as a positive driving force that improves mental, emotional and even physical well-being. It provides a stable foundation for meeting life's challenges and helps create a more positive and rewarding life experience.

DIET & WELLBEING

Diet plays a crucial role in our well-being. A balanced and nutritious diet can affect several aspects of our health, which in turn affects our well-being.

Energy levels:

Proper nutrition provides the body with the necessary energy to carry out daily activities. A balanced diet with the right nutrients can contribute to an even energy level during the day.

Mental health:

There are studies that show that there may be a link between diet and mental health. Eating a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats can reduce the risk of depression and anxiety.⁽¹³⁾

Sleep quality:

Our diet can also affect our sleep. Avoiding heavy meals before bedtime and eating foods that promote sleep, such as magnesium-rich foods, can improve sleep quality.⁽¹⁴⁾

Immune system:

A healthy diet rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants can strengthen the immune system and help the body fight and reduce the risk of disease.⁽¹⁵⁾

Stomach & intestinal health:

A balanced diet high in fiber can improve gastrointestinal health, which is linked to overall well-being and energy levels.⁽¹⁶⁾

In conclusion, eating a diverse diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods can be a key to maintaining good physical and mental wellbeing.

PRAYER & WELLBEING

Prayer can have a powerful impact on well-being in some of the following ways:

Mental wellbeing:

By praying, many people get a feeling of calmness and inner peace. It can act as a form of meditation that helps reduce stress and anxiety. As a Christian, our belief is that prayer really works. Not only that it gives a good feeling, but that it actually makes a real difference. A true and genuine peace.

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give you what the world gives.
Don't worry and don't lose heart.
John 14:27*

Sense of community:

Communal prayer or praying in a group can create a sense of togetherness and community, which contributes to a sense of belonging and support.

Source of strength:

For many, prayer is a source of strength and comfort, especially during challenging times. It can serve as a place for reflection and searching for answers or guidance.

Focus & clarification of thoughts:

Prayer can help focus thoughts, create clarity, and provide a sense of purpose or set direction.

Empathy & compassion:

Prayer can also increase feelings of compassion and empathy for others by drawing us closer to God's heart, which is love.

The impact of prayer on well-being is individual and can vary from person to person, but for many it serves as an important part of their mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. It can be a personal ritual that gives meaning and support in life.

Prayer is deep and intimate communication with God. The Bible emphasizes the importance of prayer in several passages, supporting its role in well-being.

1. Confidence & peace:

Philippians 4:6-7: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

2. Faith & strength:

Jesus said in Matthew 21:22: If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. This underlines the importance of faith in prayer and that it can give strength and courage.

3. Connection & fellowship:

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It emphasizes the value of fellowship in prayer and that when people come together in God's name they can feel God's presence.

Prayer is an important tool for strengthening one's faith, seeking comfort and guidance, and expressing gratitude to God. It can serve as a place for reflection and personal development, while offering closeness to God and His plan for one's life.

The words of the Bible act as a guide and a supporting force for believers when it comes to prayer. They show the value of trusting in God and seeking a deeper connection with God through prayer, which in turn can strengthen spiritual wellbeing.

Prayer has a multifaceted impact on human wellbeing, and it extends to other dimensions of life:

Spiritual wellbeing:

Prayer is a central aspect of many religious beliefs and offers a path to connection with the spiritual or the transcendental. By communicating with God or what could be seen as the supernatural, one can feel grounded in a greater meaning or purpose. This can create a sense of peace, security and trust in a higher power, which is essential for spiritual well-being.

Physical wellbeing:

Prayer and spiritual practice can have a positive impact on physical health. People who regularly pray or engage in spiritual practices tend to experience lower levels of stress, which can have positive effects on the immune system and positively impact cardiovascular health.⁽¹⁷⁾

Mental wellbeing:

Prayer can be a source of comfort and support in difficult times. By expressing one's feelings, fears and hopes before God, one can feel a sense of relief and liberation. It can also help to increase compassion and empathy towards others, which is important for mental well-being.

In conclusion, prayer can be a powerful resource for enhancing spiritual, physical, and mental well-being by offering a sense of meaning, peace, and an experience of communion with others in community and that which is greater than oneself.

STILLNESS, SILENCE & WELLBEING

This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it."

Isaiah 30:15

Stillness and silence have a significant impact on wellbeing:

Stress reduction:

Silence can be a counterweight to the noisy and hectic life. By reducing ambient noise, activity, and creating a more relaxed atmosphere, silence can help reduce stress levels.

Mental clarity:

As surrounding distractions diminish, space is given for thoughts to clear and for inner reflection. This can lead to increased mental clarity and ability to focus on the essentials.

Recovery & energy:

Stillness and silence give the body a chance to recover. It can provide a sense of calm which in the long run can produce an increase in energy levels.

Increased awareness:

Surrounding yourself with silence can increase awareness of your environment, your thoughts and feelings. This can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and one's relationship to the world.

Spiritual reflection:

For many, silence has a connection to spirituality and reflection. By being in silence, one can create space for deeper spiritual reflection, prayer, meditation and contemplation.

Sleep & recovery:

Silence and stillness can also promote better sleep quality and recovery,⁽¹⁸⁾ which is essential for good health.

Actively seeking silence and stillness can be an important part of well-being and can be practiced through meditation, quiet walks, prayer, or simply creating space for silence in everyday life. It can be a powerful resource for promoting both mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Practicing silence and stillness in the context of Christian faith is not only about abstaining from external noise, but also about creating inner stillness, being open and responsive to the spiritual presence of God's Holy Spirit and His guidance. It can be seen as a way to strengthen one's spiritual bonds with God and thus contribute to a deeper sense of wellbeing and harmony.

"Be still and consider that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on earth".
Psalms 46:10

Silence can be a way to open up to spiritual understanding and to be receptive to God's voice. Jesus himself often withdrew to secluded places for prayer and reflection. The Bible says that God often does not speak in the storm or the obvious but in a still whisper (1 Kings 19:12). Silence and stillness can be a good tool to listen more intentionally to God's voice and guidance. Silence should be a time for prayer, meditative reflection and spiritual presence, to open one's heart to receive God's word and guidance. It can also be a time for introspection, that is, for self-examination and to pay attention to one's inner self and on one's relationship with God.

THE COMBINATION OF STRETCHING, CALM MUSIC, BIBLE WORDS, HOPE & A NUTRITIOUS DIET CAN WORK TOGETHER POSITIVELY TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING

Stretching & gentle movement training:

Regular stretching and gentle movement training such as Tikva can improve the body's flexibility, reduce tension and promote relaxation. This can improve sleep and increase body mobility, contributing to overall physical wellbeing.⁽¹⁹⁾

Calm music:

Music has the ability to affect mood and promote relaxation. Calm music can lower stress levels, increase focus and lead to a calm state of mind.⁽²⁰⁾

Bible verses:

Bible verses can serve as a form of spiritual guidance, providing comfort, increasing hope, and creating a sense of belonging and meaning.

Hope:

Hope can act as a driving force through difficulties and provide a positive outlook for the future. Keeping hope alive can provide motivation to continue striving towards goals and create a sense of meaning, which can positively affect mood and mental health.

Diet:

A balanced diet of nutritious foods can provide important nutrients that support the body's physical and mental health. Proper nutrition can improve energy levels, help maintain a healthy weight, and support the body's immune system and functions.⁽²¹⁾

Together, these elements holistically affect wellbeing by reducing stress, promoting physical and mental health, providing comfort and hope, and strengthening the body's basic functions. Integrating these habits into everyday life can create an environment that promotes an overall positive sense of wellbeing and balance.

HEALTHY HABITS WITHOUT FIXATION

Creating healthy habits is about finding a balance between being consistent and at the same time flexible and avoiding letting the habits rule your life. Here are some ways to create healthy habits without becoming fixated on them:

1. Focus on small steps:

Start with small changes instead of big overall changes. Taking small steps makes it easier to stay consistent and avoid overwhelming emotions.

2. Be realistic:

Set reasonable goals and expectations. Expecting too much all at once can lead to frustration and broken habits.

3. Flexibility is key:

Allow yourself to be flexible. Sometimes you may not be able to stick to every habit every day, and that's okay. Flexibility is part of a balanced lifestyle.

4. Prioritize health over perfection:

Strive to make healthy choices, but don't let the pursuit of perfection hold you back. Well-being is about the big picture, not about being perfect in every action.

5. Create routines:

Incorporating habits into your daily routine can make it easier to stick to them without feeling like they're taking over. It could mean doing certain activities at the same time every day.

6. Be aware of your feelings:

If you feel stressed or pressured by your habits, take a break and reflect on why that is. It is important to stay mentally healthy and not let the habits become a burden.

7. Reward yourself:

Celebrate progress and reward yourself for sticking to healthy habits. It can help you stay motivated.

Creating healthy habits is not only about sticking to them, but also finding a balance and feeling that they actually enrich and improve life. Flexibility and awareness are the keys to avoiding fixation or obsession on habits, even healthy ones, and instead creating a positive and sustainable change in lifestyle.

TIKVA

Tikva, which combines stretching, calm movements, calm music and reflection on biblical words can be part of a healthy and balanced lifestyle without it becoming a fixation.

Combining these elements provides a multifaceted approach to wellness that extends beyond physical exercise alone. It promotes a holistic view of health and can be one part of a variety of healthy habits without becoming fixated on a single activity or aspect of life.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Thessalonians 5:23

tikva

RELAXATION

(AVSLAPPNING IN SWEDISH)

It is good to wait quietly for the salvation
of the Lord. Lamentations 3:26



RELAXATION

Relaxation is a state of physical and mental calmness and reduced tension. It involves releasing stress, tension and anxiety, usually through various techniques or activities aimed at promoting calm, stillness and well-being. It can be achieved through methods such as deep breathing, contemplation, stretching, or by engaging in calming activities such as listening to calm music, reading or walking in nature. Relaxation is important for restoring balance to the body and mind, and it can help reduce stress, improve sleep, and promote better overall health.

In today's society, we are often characterized by a high degree of stress, a fast-paced life and constant demands, which can lead to overload, burnout and other negative consequences to our health. Relaxation thus becomes important because it gives us tools to manage and counteract this stress and tension. Through relaxation, we can restore balance in the body, lower stress levels and promote a more harmonious state between the physical and mental. It's a way to give the body and mind a chance to recover and can help prevent problems linked to long-term stress, such as sleep problems, anxiety, burnout and an array of other chronic health problems.

When we are relaxed, the stress hormones in the body decrease and the sympathetic nervous system, which is activated during stress, calms down. This allows the parasympathetic nervous system to take over and promotes a sense of calmness and tranquility. The physical effect includes lowered blood pressure, reduced muscle tension and improved sleep quality. On a mental level, relaxation allows us to create space for stillness and reflection, which can strengthen our mental health. It can help us deal better with stressful situations, improve our ability to concentrate and increase our creativity.

RELAXATION - HEALTH EFFECTS

Relaxation has a range of health effects* both physically and mentally:⁽²²⁾

PHYSICAL HEALTH EFFECTS:

Improved body awareness:

Body Awareness: By engaging in stretching exercises, a person can become more aware of their body and its tension patterns, one can then identify and through those exercises release tension.

Reduced muscle tension:

Relaxation reduces tension in the muscles, which can relieve pain and discomfort caused by prolonged tension.

Lowered blood pressure:

By reducing activity in the sympathetic nervous system, relaxation can lower blood pressure, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Better sleep quality:

Relaxation can improve sleep quality by calming the mind and body, which can contribute to deeper, more restorative sleep.

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS:

Stress reduction:

Relaxation reduces levels of stress hormones in the body and promotes a sense of calm and tranquility, which can improve coping with stressful situations.

Improved mental clarity:

Winding down and creating space for reflection can improve concentration and cognitive functions, leading to increased mental clarity.

Reduced anxiety & worry:

Relaxation techniques such as meditation and deep breathing exercises can reduce anxiety and worry by promoting a calm and balanced state of mind.

In conclusion, regular relaxation can thus support overall better health and well-being by managing both physical and mental challenges that arise as a result of stress and tension.

MUSIC & RELAXATION

Calming music has been shown to have several positive effects on relaxation:⁽²³⁾

STRESS-REDUCING PROPERTIES:

Lowers stress levels:

Well-chosen music, especially calm and harmonious music with a low tempo, such as the one that is used in Tikva classes can lower cortisol levels and reduce real and perceived stress.

Promotes relaxation:

Calm music can stimulate the body's relaxation response, reducing tension and promoting a more overall relaxed feeling.

POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON MOOD AND MIND

Mood & emotions:

Calming music can positively affect mood by creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere, which can reduce anxiety and worry.

Focus & awareness:

Many people find that calm music helps to focus the mind and supports a deeper awareness or presence in the moment.

Physical effects:

Regulates breathing and heart rate: Calming music can help regulate breathing and heart rate, which in turn can lead to a more relaxed physical response.

Improves sleep quality:

Listening to calm music before sleep can help create a relaxing routine and improve sleep quality.

In conclusion, calming music can be an effective method for reducing stress, promoting relaxation and creating a more peaceful state of mind.

BREATHING & RELAXATION

Breathing plays a crucial role when it comes to achieving relaxation. Conscious and deep breathing can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which reduces activity in the sympathetic nervous system (which is linked to fight-or-flight responses) and leads to an increased sense of relaxation. Deep breathing and relaxation exercises are powerful yet simple techniques that can be used anywhere and anytime to achieve a sense of calm and peace.

Breathing techniques

There are several breathing techniques that can be effective in promoting relaxation and calmness. Some of the most prominent techniques include:

Deep breathing:

This involves taking long, slow breaths through the nose and then slowly exhaling through the mouth. The focus is on letting your stomach expand as you breathe in and then slowly let the air out. This technique is the one we mainly use in Tikva.

4-7-8 Breathing:

This involves breathing in for four seconds, holding the breath for seven seconds, and then breathing out slowly for eight seconds. This technique can help balance the nervous system.

Nasal Breathing:

Breathing through the nose has been shown to have benefits for calming the nervous system and increasing the effects of relaxation.

Box breathing:

Box breathing is a breathing technique where you inhale, hold your breath, exhale and hold your breath again in regular and repeated cycles, for example 4,4,4,4 seconds, forming a "box" or "square" in breathing.

To summarise, the effectiveness of the techniques can vary from person to person. It may be worth trying different techniques and to see which one is the best to achieve relaxation and calmness in different situations. Regularly practising breathing techniques can also increase their effectiveness over time.

THE BIBLE

Bible verses can serve as a form of contemplation or reflection that helps calm the mind and create relaxation. Reading and reflecting on Bible verses can bring a sense of peace, hope and comfort, which can be very soothing to both mind and soul. For many people, Bible words can serve as a path to inner peace because of a trust in something bigger than themselves.

The process of reading, reflecting or memorizing Bible verses and longer passages can help shift focus from everyday stress and worries to a more spiritual and calming dimension. It can also help to regain perspective and become a reminder of important values such as patience, love and hope.

Bible words can be used for guided meditation, where the words and messages can evoke different feelings and thoughts that lead to inner peace and clarity. These thoughts can provide perspective on life and help relieve stress and anxiety. As already touched on above, for many, Bible words are a source of comfort and strength in difficult times. They can provide an experience of belonging and trust in a greater power, that is God, which in turn can lead to a deeper sense of relaxation and peace. Reading, meditating or reflecting on Bible words can thus be part of a relaxation routine that supports both spiritual and mental health.

THE COMBINATION

The combination of stretching, gentle movements, breathing, soothing music and Bible words can create an environment for relaxation and inner peace. Combining these elements creates a holistic experience that can promote relaxation on the physical, mental and spiritual levels. It is like a healing symphony working together to provide a sense of overall well-being.

Regularly incorporating this combination into one's daily routine can help promote overall well-being. It's not just that relaxation is nice for the moment, but it can also have long-term health benefits by promoting a more balanced and peaceful lifestyle.

A RELAXED VIEW OF ONESELF

Having a relaxed view of oneself as a Christian means accepting God's love and forgiveness for one's mistakes and shortcomings. The Bible teaches that God loves the world, everyone (John 3:16), and those who are children of God do not have to bear the burden of guilt or shame for their mistakes (Romans 8:1).

It does not mean that one ignores mistakes or shortcomings, but allows oneself to be human and practices forgiveness towards oneself. Having a relaxed view of oneself as a Christian is about focusing on growing in faith and relationship with God, and not being too harsh or self-critical.

Bible words like "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". (Matthew 11:28), "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) and "I know what thoughts I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) can provide comfort and remind of God's love and forgiveness, helping to create a relaxed view of oneself as a Christian.

A RELAXED VIEW OF OTHERS:

... You shall love your neighbor as yourself...
Mark 12:31

Having a relaxed view of others as a Christian means practicing love, compassion and forgiveness towards other people. It's about seeing people through God's eyes and giving them the same grace and forgiveness that one receives from God. Bible words such as "Carry one another's burdens, and you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2) encourage us to support each other and share burdens. Having a relaxed view of others as a Christian is also about avoiding judgement, being patient and trying to understand others' perspectives and challenges. (Matthew 7:1-5)

It's about seeing people as worthy and loved by God, regardless of their mistakes or background to accept people as they are, without rushing to judge or criticize them. Striving to treat others with mercy and respect, about being humble enough to admit your own faults and shortcomings while being prepared to forgive others for their mistakes, just as you wish to be treated yourself, is a central part of having a relaxed view of others. (Matthew 7:12)

By applying Jesus' teachings about love and compassion, Christians often strive to treat others in a way that reflects God's love. It means being sensitive to the needs of others, being willing to help and support them, and giving them space to be themselves without fear of being judged.

A relaxed view of others is also about trying to see the good in people, even when they may not act in a positive way. It does not mean that one turns a blind eye to mistakes or problems, but that one chooses to deal with them with love, understanding and reconciliation instead of creating separation or condemnation. Being open to listening, understanding and forgiving, just as Christ did, can contribute to a more harmonious and loving relationship with other people, which in turn can create a deeper understanding of one's own faith and Christian teachings.

TIKVA & RELAXATION

Regular practicing Tikva can help create a more relaxed view of oneself and others. Through stretching, slow and controlled movements, breathing and calm music, you can create an atmosphere of calm and peace of mind. This opens up the opportunity for reflection and self-awareness, which is important for better understanding oneself and finding inner balance.

Integrating Bible words into this practice adds a spiritual dimension that helps focus the mind and spirit on God's word and its message more deeply. This can create a heightened sense of guidance, support and faith, which in turn can provide increased trust in God's plan and promote a sense of peace and acceptance.

By regularly practicing Tikva, one can also develop an increased capacity for compassion and understanding towards others. When one finds inner peace and well-being, it is easier to share this new-found strength with others and to treat them with love and compassion. It can also help create balance between body, mind and spirit. This promotes a more relaxed outlook on life and other people, where you can face challenges with greater patience and acceptance.

In summary, by incorporating daily the elements of calm music, gentle movements and Bible words, as found in the practice of Tikva, one can promote a state of relaxation and peace. This not only positively affects oneself, but also one's view of other people, particularly viewing it from a Christian perspective. It is about letting this practice shape your personal character and using it as a tool to live according to Biblical values and principles.

LEADING A TIKVA CLASS

TIKVA STRETCH

There are a few important elements to building and leading a Tikva class. It is important to welcome participants, explain what they are there to do, and begin with the basic position and breathing. Before finishing you will select about 15 exercises and 3-4 Bible words. It is also important to bring the end to a naturally peaceful end. Below are some guidelines.

Welcome & environment

Create a welcoming atmosphere. Begin by arriving early and setting up the space. If you want, you can use decorations to help people relax, for example candles or soft lighting. Personally greet everyone as they arrive. Ensure phones are turned off and encourage participants to remove shoes for comfort.

Introduce the basic position and clarify that this is their own moment where nothing should disturb them except their own thoughts, which we will explore and process.

Standing basic position

Tikva Stretch is based on a position that promotes naturally good posture throughout the body.

- Stand firmly with your feet on the floor, toes pointed forward and feet shoulder width apart. Keep your jaw relaxed and aim to extend your body towards the sky.
- Distribute the weight evenly across the feet for stable balance.
- Create a straight line from the ball of the foot through the knee up to the shoulder and head.
- Avoid overextending the knees and keep them "soft" with a slight bend. Check that the chest is relaxed
- Let the arms hang relaxed by the sides.
- Relax your shoulders and jaw.
- Keep the neck long with the chin pointing slightly downward to elongate the neck.
- Finish by closing your eyes and focusing on your breathing – in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Place the hands first on the chest and then on the stomach to further strengthen the awareness of the breath.

Breath 1:

- Focus on breathing with them.
- Put your hands on your chest and breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Move your hands down to your stomach and take a few belly breaths.

The first exercise called “Introduction” in the Movement Manual, is intended to allow the participants to stop and surrender their thoughts to God.

End of session:

The last exercise of the session is again the one named “Introduction”, designed to stretch the back, open the chest and give thanks for the positive thoughts that God has filled them with.

End the session by giving encouragement, such as: “what a nice group you have been” and that you noted that everyone has been working patiently and well. Thank your participants for coming and expressing your hope that they have had a good time and that they will now have strength for a new week.

The movements for Tikva stretch and how to explain them can be found separately in the Tikva movement manual.

EXAMPLE TIKVA RELAXATION

Welcome your participants and invite them to find their place and lay down their mats, blankets and pillows. Assure your participants that they have come to a safe place. Clarify with them about the volume of the music and if everyone can hear you okay. If this is the first time for some of your participants, they may find it difficult to relax and for this purpose you may want to provide them with pen and paper to write down distracting thoughts that may be detracting them from relaxing.

Encourage your participants to try the exercises, but if there are any that cause discomfort or pain, they have permission to skip it and to return to one they were comfortable with or to simply be lying down. When exercises are being done laying down on the back, they have the possibility to lie on their sides as well.

Below is an example of a Tikva relaxation session. It outlines, guides and gives cues as to how to perform each exercise and where the tension and relaxation should be felt and experienced.

EXAMPLE TIKVA RELAXATION

- Exercise 1

- Lie down comfortably.
- Feel how the body rests comfortably against the floor or mat.
- Close your eyes.

- Exercise 2

- Relax the jaws. Leave a small gap between the upper and lower jaw.
- Breathe calmly and focus on breathing.
- Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- Feel the stomach rise on the inhale and sink at the exhale.
- Notice how the body becomes more and more relaxed.

- Exercise 3

- Press the heels to the floor and tense the legs for a few seconds, then relax.
- Try to feel the difference between a tense and relaxed muscle.

- Exercise 4

- Tighten the buttocks and thighs for a few seconds then relax.
- Feel how the legs rest comfortably on the floor.
- Tighten the stomach, press the lower back to the floor. Relax.
- Pay attention on how the back and stomach are now relaxed.
- Check that the jaws are still relaxed.

- Exercise 5

- Place a hand on the stomach, and feel the breath coming all the way down.
- Lift both arms off the floor, clasp hands, tense, tense, tense, and relax by bringing them down to the floor beside the body.
- Pull both shoulders up towards the ears, relax and let the arms rest once again on the floor.
- Bite down, squint your eyes and make a grimace with all the muscles of the face, and release.

- Share Bible words or positive thoughts, such as:

- You are valuable just the way you are.
- You are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- You are best at being you.
- You may fail sometimes but you are never a failure as a human being.
- There are good plans for you, plans to prosper and for a future.

- Exercise 6

- The focus will now move down to the feet and toes.
- When the feet are relaxed this nice feeling can be felt in the whole body. Try to find it.
- Let that feeling spread all the way up your legs: calves, knees, thighs and hips.
- Be attentive to the lower body beginning to rest.

- Exercise 7

- Move the concentration to the hands and fingers, finding that same relaxed sensation found in the lower body.
- Let it spread from the fingertips, through the hands, wrists, forearms, elbows and shoulders.

- Exercise 8

- Focus the attention to the stomach and back.
- Place both hands on the stomach and feel it lift and sink with each breath.
- Find the relaxation in the stomach and back and let it spread up over the back and chest and finishing in the neck.
- Take the hands back down to the mat.
- Allow tension to loosen as you become more and more relaxed with each breath taken.
- Carefully let the head fall from side to side, stopping where it feels comfortable.

Share a Bible word or positive thought, for example.

- Don't worry about tomorrow.
- Each day has enough of its own burden.

You may want to also give participants an image that helps them relax, such as asking them to visualize their favorite beach where the sun is warm, the breeze is cool, and so on.

Resting phase:

- Rest for a while. Make sure to lie as comfortably as possible.

Allow participants have 10 minutes of relaxation in silence, with only the music playing quietly in the background.

Wake up the body

- Start to wake the body up, but maintain eyes closed.

Give a Bible word or positive thought.

Allow for a couple of minutes before continuing.

- Exercise 9

- Wake up the body by starting to move the fingers and toes.
- Stretch so that you become as long as possible.

Encourage participants to try these movements in the mornings when waking up so that the body has a gentle start.

- Exercise 10

- Lift one knee while extending both hands above your head.
- Make a snow angel.
- Lower the leg as the arms are lowered.
- Alternate 3-4 times with right leg and left leg.

- Exercise 11

- Pull both knees up towards the chest,
- With the hands, hold the legs under the thighs.
- With toes together, make circles with the feet.
- Take a moment of gratitude for your feet.

If a participant can not pull the legs up, encourage movement of feet and toes in a lying position.

- Maintain back flat on the floor, make circles with the legs and let the lower back be massaged.
- Extend one leg at a time, foot toward the ceiling. Repeat 2 times for each leg.

- Exercise 12

- Carefully roll onto one side of the body.
- Pull the knees up towards the upper body, lying comfortably.
- Place one hand under your ear (the one on the mat) and the other so that it the other ear.
- Bring the elbows together.
- Open up the elbows apart from one another, then close, repeat 5-6 times.
- The last time - stretch the arm and the whole palm so that the pectoral (chest) muscle is properly stretched.
- Turn over to the other side and do the same exercises.

Allow for the participants stay on their mat for a bit of time after the exercise. Here give a Bible word or positive encouragement.

Finishing

- Carefully sit up.
- Stretch the upper body and arms.
- Yawn.
- Gently move the head on to an angle, to stretch the neck (both right and left sides of the neck).
- Relax the jaw.
- Hold both hands together in front of the body and press away to feel the back arch like a cat's.
- Straighten the back once again.

Give an encouragement.

Concluding the session

Thank participants for attending. Bless them with peace and express your desire to see them again at the next session.

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