

# Farmer wellness first

Farmers constantly have to tap into wells of strength. It takes strength and resilience to navigate the many challenges they face. It is also a test of strength to reach out for help when the stresses of farming become too much.

Recognizing the need for help and reaching out is not easy. Some of the agencies and people you can reach out to for support are here.



**Grain Farmers of Ontario Farmer Wellness Guide:**  
[www.gfo.ca/farmerwellness/support-resources/](http://www.gfo.ca/farmerwellness/support-resources/)



**Farmer Wellness Initiative: 1-866-267-6255**, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Learn more at:  
[www.farmerwellnessinitiative.ca](http://www.farmerwellnessinitiative.ca)

What can you do in addition to asking for help? Here are some stress management techniques you can use.

## 5 Daily Easy and Free Activities

Farmers often rely on to-do lists to help get through busy days. Here is a self-care “to-do list” with a few tips that can help boost your well-being each day.



### Stay connected

If possible, take time with family, or head out for a walk with a friend or neighbour. If meeting in person is not possible, hop on a video chat with friends and family.



### Get some fresh air and exercise

Getting sunshine and fresh air will not only lift your mood but can also help you sleep better and think more clearly.



### Shower and get dressed

When you're feeling down, everything can feel like an obstacle. But simply taking a quick shower and getting dressed, can leave you feeling more uplifted and motivated.



### Unplug

Information overload is a real thing. Schedule some time away from devices each day and take a break.



### Reach out

We need each other more than ever. Reaching out to a friend you trust even just to talk about the busy day you had can make a world of difference.



## Breathing exercise

**The Power of a Pause**, when you feel overwhelmed, this technique will help bring calm so you can think clearly about what you should do next. Breathe in for 4, hold for 7, out for 8, Repeat.

4

### Inhale

Sit comfortably. Relax your mouth and jaw. Slowly inhale through your nose for a count of four seconds.

7

### Hold

Hold your breath for a count of seven seconds.

8

### Exhale

Open your mouth slightly and exhale for eight seconds, drawing your diaphragm in. Repeat the cycle three more times.

## The 4Rs of Laughter

A good laugh can be the best medicine. Laughing can increase your mental well-being by:

**Releasing endorphins**, which is linked to positive mood

**Reducing stress**, anxiety and depression

**Reinvigorating** your blood circulation and immune system to fight illnesses

**Reminding** you about the joy you can feel in life

**How to find laughter when you don't feel up for it?** Try to laugh with friends or family, watch a comedy or read a funny story.

## The Business of Better Sleep

Farming is both physical and mental. Getting a good night's sleep can lead to better thinking, decision-making and a quicker response – elevating productivity and keeping you safe on the farm.



A few ways to improve your sleep:



- **Put away your devices.** (phone, laptop, iPad) at least 30 minutes before bed



- **Make where you sleep your haven.** Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet while sleeping



- **Get active during the day.** Walking around your farm for 30 minutes daily at a comfortable pace is a great and simple way to get your blood circulating.



- **Lower alcohol and caffeine at night.** Avoiding stimulants can leave you feeling sleepy faster.



- **Unpack your day.** Take a moment during the evening to reflect on your day. **Then** imagine closing it like a book while **taking three deep breaths** in and out.