

Mindfulness and Wellbeing

Mindfulness for worry or anxiety

1. Balloon Activity: Write all your worries on the balloon, take a pin & burst worries. They are only temporary!

2. “Sea of Stress” - Write & draw what causes them to feel worried/ anxious/ stressed

3.

5 Senses Meditation

If you are feeling stressed about an exam or start to stress out when in an exam, try some grounding - in 3's..... Notice ...

3 things you can see

3 things you can smell

3 things you can hear

3 things you can feel.....

Now take 3 deep breaths.

Remember this technique if worry takes over - try to use your senses.



Wellbeing Ideas

Wellbeing ideas - Breathing exercises, guided meditations and progressive muscle relaxation exercises are all suitable techniques to use in our daily lives to **help us to relax and manage our anxieties and fears.**



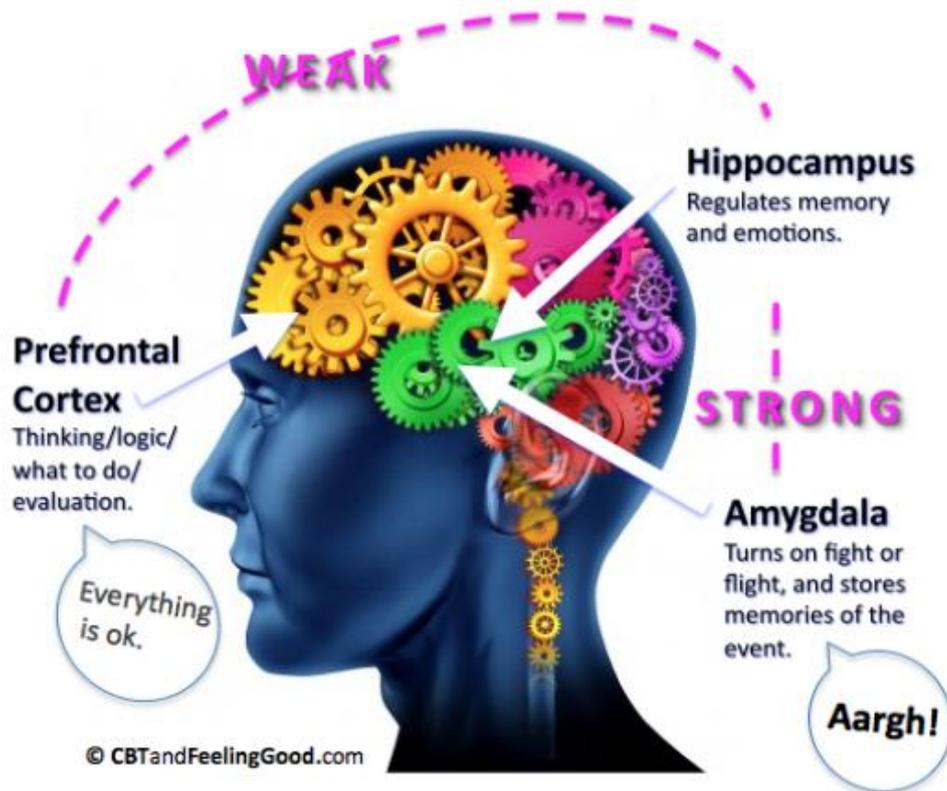
Mindfulness is about paying more **attention to the present moment**- to your thoughts and feelings and to the world around you without judgement. It can improve your mental wellbeing. It can help us to enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. It is about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, we can positively change the way we see our lives and ourselves.

It helps with stress and anxiety. Mindfulness is an evidenced based intervention and it helps us to deal with issues more productively. We can ask, “Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just caught up in my thoughts?”

It helps us to notice signs of stress and anxiety and to deal with them better.

It is beneficial but it is not for everybody. Some people find it easier to go for a walk or do other activities to cope with an over-busy mind.

We are living in a very difficult period right now. Fear is a pandemic that has taken so many people in over the last few weeks. Fear depletes the immune system and it turns off the pre-frontal cortex part of your brain, which is the part of your brain that is responsible for reasoning, behaviour and speech. So, when we are in fear and stressed, we can't even reason with ourselves, never mind trying to figure out what is going on outside of us. It plays a role organising cognitive thinking and behaviours. It gives the orders and if you shut it down or cut it off, we are all running around confused and in a frenzy.



<https://www.drharrybarry.com/resources/>

See Dr Harry Barry's website with useful videos on anxiety and panic attacks. Breathing techniques help to regulate the prefrontal cortex and restore order to the chaos within. Practicing breathing exercises helps bring you back into your body and it turns your mind back on, so you are able to think rationally again and see clearly. It boosts the immune system, releases stress, cleanses toxins, increases your energy and reconnects the mind and body. Different breathing can be incorporated into your daily life to help you to reduce stress and restore calm and logical reasoning. A lot of these techniques help to manage anxiety, but they need to be practiced regularly to keep stress as low as possible.

Mindful Breathing Exercise

Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or in a chair.

Once seated, close your eyes, and breathe deeply and slowly.

Focus your awareness on your senses.

What can you smell?

What can you feel?

What can you hear? What can you taste?

Now bring all of your attention to your breathing.

Breathe in through your nose.

Do not breathe in deeply or force the breath in.

Simply allow the air to naturally flow in.

Notice the feeling of your lungs expanding.

Then, when it is time, breathe out gently through your mouth.

Pay attention to the feeling of the breath as it flows slowly from your mouth.

Keep your attention focused on your breathing.

You may start to think about other things, and that's ok, just refocus your attention on your breathing.

Try to breathe in calmness.

Breathe out your worries and stress.

Keep the air, moving slowly in and out of your body?

Let the parts of the body that are touching the floor, or the chair slowly sink into it as your body becomes more relaxed.

Enjoy the slowness of your breathing and the sense of relaxation and quietness of your body.

BOX BREATHING



Inhale ...2 ...3 ...4



Hold ...2 ...3 ...4

Rest ...2 ...3 ...4

Breathe.



Exhale ...2 ...3 ...4



Breathing Exercises

Four In, Four Out Slow Belly Breathing

1. Close your eyes.
2. Breathe through your nose.
3. Deliberately slow your breathing down.
4. Breathe from your relaxed belly.
5. Keep your breaths smooth, steady, and continuous.
6. Breathe in while counting slowly "1-2-3-4."
7. Pause.
8. Breathe out while counting slowly "1-2-3-4."
9. Pause.

Whole Body Muscle Tensing and Relaxing

1. Take a very deep breath in with your mouth open; fill your lungs up.
2. Hold your breath.
3. Tense muscles all over your body.
4. Count 5-10 seconds.
5. Let go of all the tension in your muscles and slowly let your breath out.

4-4-4-4 Breathing

1. Breathe in while counting to 4. Make it a deep, belly breath.
2. Hold your Breath while counting to 4.
3. Breathe out while counting to 4.
4. Hold your Breath while counting to 4.
5. Do this sequence 2 more times.

4-6-4-6 Breathing

1. Breath in for a count of 4.
2. Hold for a count of 6.
3. Breathe out for a count of 4.
4. Hold for a count of 6.

The Sigh

1. Breath in.
2. When you breath out, open your mouth and let the air out so you hear the sound of the air releasing, a soft sigh sound.
3. As you let the air out, relax your shoulders, neck and other muscles and let go, like you're melting.

Buteyko Small Breath Holds

1. With your mouth closed, take a small, but calm and relaxed, breath in.
2. Take a small breath out.
3. Hold your nose closed with your hand.
4. Hold for a count of 5.
5. Release.
6. Gentle, soft breathing in-between sets.
7. Tongue rests at the roof of the mouth; Teeth slightly apart; jaw relaxed; Drop shoulders; relax chest and belly; Relax facial muscles.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Close the right nostril with your right thumb. Then inhale slowly through your left nostril.
2. Then close the left nostril with your right index finger and open the right nostril by removing the right thumb. Exhale very slowly through the right nostril.
3. Then draw the air through the right nostril as long as you can do it with comfort and exhale through the left nostril by removing the right index finger.
4. This is one round. Do 12 rounds.
5. Breathing in and out should be as slow, soft, steady and long as possible. But don't force.

4-7-8 Breathing

1. Exhale all the air out through your mouth.
2. Curl the tip of your tongue up to touch the hard ridge behind your upper front teeth and hold it there for the duration of the exercise.
3. Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Don't force it, but take a good breath as this has to last for the next 15 counts.
4. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
5. Open your mouth and exhale through your mouth (still pressing the tip of your tongue to the hard ridge behind your upper front teeth) for a count 8. of You will make a sound as the air moves around your tongue. You may want to purse your lips if this helps you to direct the flow of your exhalation.
6. Repeat 4 times.

(instructions written by madlynlovewithlife.com)

The Complete Breath

1. First, inhale completely at the abdomen.
2. Continue to inhale by filling in the mid-section, the area of the diaphragm.
3. Continue to inhale by filling the chest, allowing the upper chest and the shoulders to rise.
4. Then systematically release and empty from the upper portion, then the mid-section, and finally empty completely at the abdomen.

(www.swamij.com)

Relearn How To Breathe (Don Campbell)

1. Inhale deeply
2. Exhale with a short burst (as if blowing out a candle). This helps activate your diaphragm.
3. Exhale with a long, slow finish to empty the lungs. Breathlessness is from not expelling enough CO2.
4. Inhale, filling your lungs from the bottom to the top, instead of taking short sips. Most use a third of their lung capacity.
5. Hold for a moment to allow oxygen to saturate the cells.
6. Exhale slowly and completely.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 for five minutes.
8. Do this exercise five times a day

Useful Apps for Wellbeing

There are apps that are suitable for all users to engage in mindfulness, guided meditations, breathing exercises, body scans, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to challenge negative thinking and to tackle anxiety and stress, improve mood, focus and attention and overall wellbeing.

Headspace

This app uses mindfulness and meditation to help you perform at your best each day. Whether you need to find a place of calm, keep your mind fit or reduce stress, headspace has hundreds of themed mindfulness and meditation sessions to support you.

It is free on Android and iPhone.

Calm

This App is designed to reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and help you feel happier.

It focuses on meditation, breathing, sleep and relaxation. The app delivers meditations that can help you distress, relax your body and mind and promote better sleep.

It is the ideal app if you are new to meditation, but it also has meditations for regular practitioners of meditation. Meditation sessions vary from 3-25 minutes. It is free on Android and iPhone.

Moodnotes

Moodnotes is a thought journal and mood diary. The app can be used to capture your feelings and improve your thinking habits through the implementation of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and positive psychology.

It helps you to track your mood and increase your self- awareness. Learn to identify “traps” in your thinking and gives you ways to rethink the situation. If you happen to enter a “thinking trap”, Moodnotes will provide suggestions and useful perspectives to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing

Pacifica

Pacifica is an app that helps the user with anxiety and stress. It provides a toolbox to deal with daily anxiety and stress.

It helps you to break cycles of unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours through mindfulness meditation, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, mood tracking and relaxation.

The app has audio lessons and activities that help you cope with stress and depression. It sets daily challenges to help you tackle anxiety each day and reach your long-term goals.

It is free on Android and iPhone.

Happify

This app helps you to overcome negative thoughts and stress and helps to build resilience. Whether you are feeling stressed, anxious or sad it helps you to regain control of your thoughts and feelings.

It uses evidenced based interventions including mindfulness, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and positive psychology to break unhelpful thought patterns and fight negativity and form new healthy habits.

It is free on Android and iPhone.

Mind Shift

It is a mental health app that is designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It encourages you to take charge of your life, deal with intense emotions and face challenging situations.

It is free on IOS and android

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

Progressive Deep Muscle Relaxation Exercises can be extremely beneficial to help with anxiety and stress management. Here is just an example. There are lots available online.

Take a deep breath and tense each muscle group (hard but not to the point of cramping) for five to 10 seconds, then exhale suddenly and completely relax the muscle group (do not relax it gradually). Give yourself 10 to 20 seconds to relax before moving to the next muscle group.

Breathe

Before you begin, take a deep breath through the nose – filling lungs completely and holding for a moment. Release through your mouth until you are out of breath. Do this three times.

Hands

Clench them – 5-10 seconds – relax. Do this twice.

Wrists and Forearms

Extend them and bend your hands back at the wrist – hold 5 – 10 seconds – relax.

Biceps and Upper Arms

Clench your hands into fists, bend your arms at the elbows, and flex your biceps. Hold 5-10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Extend your arms up towards the ceiling – push as if there were an imaginary wall there. — hold 5-10 seconds and relax. Do this twice.

Shoulders

Shrug them up towards your ears. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and relax. Do this three times.

Forehead

Wrinkle it into a deep frown. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax.

Around the Eyes and Bridge of the Nose

Close your eyes as tightly as possible. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. (Make sure you remove contact lenses before beginning the exercise.)

Raise your eyebrows as high as you can – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax.
Do this 3 times.

Cheeks and Jaw

Smile as widely as you can – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Around the Mouth

Press your lips together tightly – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. (Check your facial area for tension).

Back of the Neck

Gently stretch your head back – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Front of the Neck

Touch your chin to your chest – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice. (Check your neck and head for tension).

Chest

Take a deep breath through your nose and hold it for 3 seconds, then exhale through your mouth. Do this twice.

Back

Arch your back backwards – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Stomach

Suck it into a tight knot – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice. (Check your chest and stomach for tension).

Hips and Buttocks

Press the buttocks together tightly – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Lower Legs

Raise each foot and point and curl it down – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice

Tense your right calf for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Tense your left calf for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Feet

Squeeze (tighten) your right foot for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Squeeze (tighten) your left foot for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Breathe

Finish this relaxation exercise by taking a deep breath through the nose – filling lungs completely and holding for a moment. Release through your mouth until you are out of breath. Do this three times.

Keep Pressing Forward

Doing this progressive muscle relaxation exercise once can be a start of helping you to relax. To experience long-term benefits, it is best to engage in this activity several times a week. May I even suggest making this a daily self-care practice? It does not take a lot of time and can even be done prior to going to sleep. You might even experience sleep that is more restful.

Mental Wellbeing Tips for Handling the Corona Virus

Create and Maintain a Routine.

It is very tempting to sleep in and or to stay up late when you do not have to be up and ready for school. Try not to change your usual habits of getting up at a certain time and going to bed at a reasonable time. Showering and getting dressed properly is important too.

Create a Workspace

Have a designated area where you work that is a different place to where you sleep or relax will be important- if you can. Be organised and have everything you need for study.

Take a Break

Build little breaks into your routine. Study in shorter periods to be more productive. Chat with a friend for a little while, go for a walk or have a cup of tea. Take a break for better clarity, concentration and a better mood. Take breaks every 40-45 minutes for five minutes incorporating stretching, breathing, getting daylight and hydration.

Plan Your Study

It is important to stay calm and focused. Your day might not follow the same routine as school timetable. It may suit you better to change subjects around and check what you have not completed in the curriculum and develop your plan.

Set a time for study- preferably 2-3 hours early in the morning, outside of any homework or tasks you will need to complete for teachers. Focus should be on quality of study and not time. Shorter study times are more beneficial for maintaining concentration.

Useful Contacts

Aware

Aware is a mental health charity, which is able to help people manage their mental well-being during the coronavirus outbreak. You can contact the support line if you are concerned about your mood or the mood of a loved one on 1800 80 48 48, seven days a week between 10am-10pm. You can also email on **supportmail@aware.ie**, where someone should respond within 24 hours. You can also log onto the charity's website (**aware.ie**), where they have compiled information on how best to manage stress and worry, including how to connect with loved ones, physical exercise, nutrition, sleep and relaxation techniques.

Samaritans

Samaritans urge anyone to get in touch with them about “anything that’s troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue feels.” Volunteers listen with “no judgement, no pressure” to help you work through what is on your mind. The charity also provides information and contact details for specialist supports for specific issues. You can call the charity free on 116 123 or email a volunteer at **jo@samaritans.ie**.

PIETA HOUSE SOUTH EAST

Pieta House provides free therapeutic interventions to people who present in suicidal distress and to those who engage in self-harm. The service is free of charge, but we gladly accept donations. Telephone- 051 858510, email- **info@pieta.ie**

Teen- Line Ireland Freephone Helpline

Freephone Helpline 1800 833634

www.teenline.ie

Childline

Available 24 hrs, 365 days a year

www.ispcc.ie

Email: ispcc@ispcc.ie

Jigsaw

Jigsawonline.ie-

Turn2Me.Org

This site uses technology to promote mental wellbeing. It helps people to get help, lets people know that they are not alone and facilitates a safe

online community space that allows people to talk and reach for help. Mental health professionals facilitate online support groups and Counsellors provide Online Counselling.

PRACTICAL WAYS STUDENTS CAN LOOK AFTER THEIR MENTAL HEALTH EACH DAY

The infographic features a central graphic of a human brain, split vertically and composed of many colorful, geometric segments. Surrounding the brain are 30 practical tips for mental health, each accompanied by a small icon and a checkbox. The tips are arranged in a circular pattern around the brain.

- Wake up and practise some deep breathing
- Write down 3 things you are grateful for
- Speak to someone about how you are feeling
- Engage in a thought diary
- Write down a list of your worries
- Challenge unhelpful thoughts
- Schedule in some fun activities in your week
- @BELIEVEPHQ
- Let people know how you are feeling
- Engage in something you are good at
- Surround yourself with people who make you happy
- Disconnect from social media
- Eat a well balanced diet
- Disconnect from technology
- Do something that makes you feel proud
- Catch up with a friend
- Keep yourself active throughout the day
- Practise some meditation
- Get a good nights sleep
- Use all your senses to engage with an activity
- Close your eyes and imagine being in a safe place
- Practise some progressive muscle relaxation
- Listen to music that relaxes you
- Practise postponing your worries
- Problem solve to overcome a worry
- Identify your thinking errors
- Remind yourself of your achievements
- Identify a list of all your strengths
- Identify how you can use your strengths in your day
- Go for a long relaxing walk
- Volunteer at a local charity
- Engage in some exercise
- Join an exercise group
- Take a break from what you are doing
- Focus on the present. Stay in the here and now
- Practise self care (E.g. have a bath)
- Assess your feelings each morning when you wake up