

Ways of Promoting Health, Wellbeing and Peace of Mind



Keeping Our Balance

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Ways to Enhance Your Health and Wellbeing

We all want to remain healthy and have a sense of wellbeing but, often, the demands of life and unhealthy habits or lifestyles prevent us from achieving this. Sometimes the pressures we experience from work, financial difficulties or relationship problems are hard to avoid. However, there are a number of skills and behaviours that you can learn and practice regularly that can protect you in varying degrees from the effects of stress and help you develop greater resilience.

In the following pages are described some of the many ways that you can take steps to enhance your sense of wellbeing and take greater control of your health. Research shows that people who actively take steps to improve their own health do better than people who passively wait for someone else to 'fix them'.

This booklet is not intended to be read cover to cover, unless you wish to. It is a collection of ideas for you to dip into when you feel the need for some tools or ideas to improve your health.

It is actually better to acquire the knowledge and skills to maintain positive mental health when you are feeling good. The things you learn have a chance to become habitual and this will sustain you and improve your resilience when, or if, life becomes more difficult later on.

If you are already feeling overwhelmed by the demands of your life, the contents of this booklet may provide you with ideas of how to get back into balance and find peace and increased resourcefulness.

All the topics that follow have research evidence to confirm their usefulness as tools to help you maintain or improve your mental and physical health, and developing a daily practice with the methods that appeal to you most, is an excellent investment of your time.

However, we all at times may need outside help and it is so important that you ask for help if you think you need it.

The Wonders of Our Natural World

The natural world around us is so wonderfully diverse. Everywhere we look we can see this beauty, its power and resilience. Even in urban areas, where weeds push through the tarmac and people have planned green areas or tree-lined roads, there are opportunities to appreciate nature which can benefit us. Man needs to be amongst the natural world for it lifts up our spirits and helps us to see how living things can survive and acclimatise to their surroundings. We need to experience this natural beauty and feel its order and harmony.

It is good to immerse ourselves in nature, to get away from the business of our everyday lives. Simply taking a walk in the woods can soothe away stress, refresh and rejuvenate. You might notice the atmosphere of calm, smell the freshness of unpolluted areas or catch a glimpse and marvel at wildlife in its natural habitat.

Enjoying the sights and sounds of the forest can lighten our mood and aid relaxation. It can improve our physical health and help us to be more active as our curiosity often persuades us to see what is around the next corner.



People can enjoy feeling connected to nature. Forests, moors, mountains, lakes, rivers, the sea and waterfalls are places where people experience a sense of peace and wellbeing. This is partly due to an abundance of negative ions which have been shown to have energising and refreshing effects and to help increase

mental clarity and our sense of wellbeing. There's something about the quiet calm of nature that can have a calming effect on our minds and bodies.

These free expanses are an invitation to all and it is common practice to recognise fellow walkers with a cheery smile or a spoken greeting which can reduce feelings of loneliness and improve our self-esteem.

Walking barefoot along the beach, listening to the lapping or crashing of the waves can be magical. Watching birds swoop for their next meal or enjoying one another's company as they dance or glide across the sky is fascinating and can take us out of ourselves to a peaceful space without the stresses and worries of our overcrowded lives.

Many people take for granted the beauty of their natural surroundings and rarely experience the benefits of being in the countryside. It is often the case that the benefits for your mental and physical health from connecting with nature can be profound. Not only are you absorbing negative ions, which increase the serotonin levels in the body, and help lift depression, but you are also relieving stress and boosting energy. Being in the presence of natural beauty, for many people, creates feelings of awe or wonder, and these states of appreciation in themselves have major benefits for your health.

So, if you are interested in improving your mental and physical wellbeing, make a decision to go out and appreciate the natural world around you. It will be very good for you and have a healing effect.



Walking in the Rain

It is well established that walking is a particularly good form of exercise to undertake regularly. However, most people choose to wait until the sun is out, the weather is warm and dry, and the conditions are conducive to being in the open air.



In the UK there are on average 159 days where there is some amount of rain, so it is fortunate indeed to discover that walking in the rain has some particular benefits for us.

The research is showing that if you go for a walk whilst it is raining, or just after it stops, there are a number of health benefits:

- Air quality is improved, with 20% reduction in pollutants.
- It boosts the functioning of your immune system.
- It improves your mood.
- It improves your brain functioning

So, how does this happen?

When rain hits the earth it stirs up bacteria in the soil and this produces the earthy smell that we experience after it rains.

The earthy smell has been called 'Petrichor'* by Australian scientists, and it comes in part from bacteria in the soil that release a chemical odorant called geosmin. The human nose is

particularly sensitive to geosmin which also causes the earthy taste in beetroot.



Also, related to this, the rainfall causes an increase of **negative ions** and when we breathe this in it causes an increase in serotonin which affects our mood, increased alpha wave activity (associated with relaxation), and reduction in inflammation in our body.

There has been a study that showed that patients with 'chronic' depression that had persisted for years and been unresponsive to the usual therapies, began to show improvement when exposed to negative ions for periods of time. Scientists are not sure quite why this works, but one theory is that negative ions become attached to oxygen molecules creating a state of super oxygenation similar to that achieved by intense aerobics.

The message here is clear, whenever it rains put on your coat and go for a good walk and enjoy the sense of wellbeing that comes from breathing in that beautiful smell that comes with the rain.



** Petrichor is that sweet, fresh, soothing scent, and it is seriously good for the soul.*

Improve The Quality of Your Sleep



A good restful night's sleep is as important for our general health and wellbeing as regular exercise and a healthy diet. However, our quality of sleep is vulnerable to many interfering factors such as stress, effects of what and when we eat and drink, blue

light from phones etc, and lack of a regular bedtime routine. Most people need seven or eight hours sleep but the quality of the sleep is also very important. Sleep is often described as having four stages **Awake, Light, Deep** and **Rapid Eye Movement** (REM) sleep. Each stage of sleep is important, and a person will typically cycle through the stages four to six times a night. Poor sleep can have a negative effect on our hormones, exercise performance and brain function. It can also lead to weight gain and increased risk of mental and physical health problems. Good quality sleep on the other hand can help you eat less, exercise more and has a beneficial effect on mental and physical health.

Here are some general guidelines for promoting restful restorative sleep:

- Avoid anything with caffeine before bedtime. It can take from 6 to 10 hours to clear your system!
- Avoid large meals for at least three hours before bedtime.
- No work or homework related activities for at least 2 hours before bedtime
- No screen time in the hour before bed. Blue light reduces melatonin which deceives your brain into thinking it's daytime.
- A nutritious diet is important for optimal sleep. High fat/low fibre leads to reduced deep sleep. Too much sugar causes frequent waking.

- Relax and calm yourself using progressive muscle relaxation, mindful breathing, music or anything else that works for you. Stress raises cortisol and adrenaline levels which interfere with sleep.
- Have a bedtime routine where you start to unwind and relax an hour or two before bed. This helps your brain to recognise that sleep is coming and makes it easier to get a good sleep.
- If possible, try to get to bed within half an hour of a set time each night, and get up at a similar time each morning. The repetition creates a habit that becomes easy to follow.
- Make sure that your bedroom is neither too hot or too cold. Twenty degrees suits most people.
- Avoid napping for more than 20 minutes during the day.
- Don't TRY to go to sleep. Sleep won't come through effort or willing it to come. Instead occupy your mind with pleasant relaxing thoughts, soft music or focusing on breathing or relaxation. If your mind is calm and you are ready for sleep it will come naturally and without effort.

If, in spite of everything, you find yourself unable to sleep, avoid tossing and turning in bed for prolonged periods of time. Your brain is very good at linking things that occur together, so if you are unable to sleep within a period of fifteen minutes, get up and sit in a comfy chair you have previously put near your bed.

Read a book until your eyelids get heavy and you are ready to sleep. At this point get back into bed and allow sleep to come. Repeat this whenever you sense that sleep is unlikely to occur, and you will gradually associate bed with feeling sleepy, and a good night's sleep will be effortless.



The Value of Exercise for Mental Health



Most of us are very familiar with the encouragement to exercise in order to improve practically all aspects of our health, especially cardiovascular health, brain health, strengthening of muscles and bones and our ability to do everyday activities. However, research is showing that exercise has great benefits for mental health too.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that about a billion people worldwide are living with a mental health problem, most commonly anxiety and depression. Since the Covid pandemic the WHO estimate an increase in mental health disorders of 26-28%! This is a massive problem that overwhelms the resources available to sufferers. Therefore, anything we can do to prevent problems or to help ourselves is increasingly important to know about.

A recent research study which reviewed over a thousand good quality research trials offers some encouraging results. Amongst their findings the following are important:

- It showed that exercise produced effects similar, and sometimes better, than those of psychotherapy or medication.
- Exercise has been shown to reduce inflammation which can lead to improvement for people suffering from mood disorders.
- It was found that doing 150 minutes each week of various types of physical activity such as walking, resistance training (weights), yoga or running significantly reduces depression, anxiety and psychological distress.
- For people over 45 and/or very unfit, many studies showed that walking 20-40 minutes each day was effective in improving depression and anxiety.
- For people unable to do other activities, chair -based exercise is still valuable.
- All forms of exercise can benefit mental health, although high intensity exercise produces the most benefit. Check with your doctor before undertaking any strenuous activity.

The research is confirming that exercise could be a first line treatment for some mental health issues and not just an added extra. The advantage of this is that it is in our own hands and we can get on with helping ourselves, even if we are sitting on a long waiting list for help. If we are receiving other types of psychological therapy or medication, exercise will be an added bonus.

Even if people have been very inactive or find exercise practically difficult, it seems that any activity or movement is better than none. If you start gently and gradually build up, you will improve your exercise capacity. Exercising with other people or joining classes can help you keep your motivation and enjoyment high.

Eating to Support Your Mental Health

A great deal of publicity has been given to the importance of a good diet in recent years, and most of us have heard of the importance of 'five a day' portions of fruit and vegetables. Much research has been carried out on the **Mediterranean Diet**, which has a high proportion of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, fish, olive oil and herbs and spices. The research consistently shows that this type of diet reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes. It also has been shown to improve depressive symptoms and cognitive functioning and may benefit anxiety symptoms.

Whilst most of us have a pretty good idea of what a healthy diet is, even if we find it hard to stick to, there is much less awareness of our **gut microbiome**, and its importance in our physical and mental health. Your microbiome has been described as a microscopic world within your intestines, consisting of trillions of microorganisms that live there and affect each other and influence many aspects of our overall health, both within your digestive system and throughout your whole body. When your microbiome is healthy and thriving, you will be too. When it is out of balance and depleted your health suffers too.

Your gut microbiome is considered to be your largest immune system organ and contributes up to 80% of your body's immune cells. It is also the source of 30 different neurotransmitters and 90% of the body's serotonin, (the feel-good hormone). Neurotransmitters are the body's natural chemicals that allow neurons to communicate with each other throughout your body and brain.



Research into a wide range of mental health problems has linked an imbalance in the gut microbiome with depression, stress, brain function, eating disorders, psychotic episodes and autism spectrum disorders.

How to Keep Your Microbiome Healthy

Probably the world's leading authority on the gut microbiome is Professor Tim Spector. He has written and researched extensively on the microbiome and has some suggestions for keeping it healthy.

- Try to eat 30 different plants each week. The more varied the better it is for your gut. This can include spices, herbs, nuts and seeds. It is not as difficult as you may think!
- Add colourful foods. They are rich in fibre and contain polyphenols which good gut microbes thrive on. This can include nuts, berries, seeds, brightly coloured fruits, extra virgin olive oil, dark chocolate and red wine.
- Eat fermented foods. A small amount of fermented food each day, such as live yoghurt, smelly cheeses, sauerkraut, kimchi, and kefir contain living microbes known as probiotics. A small amount each day is better than a lot in one go.
- Fast overnight. Avoid snacking and give your gut bacteria time to rest overnight. Also, at night, some gut microbes work to clean the lining of your gut, and this supports a healthy gut and immune system.
- Limit ultra-processed foods. They are known to be associated with unfavourable health outcomes. They also are not providing much fibre and other nutrients to feed good gut bacteria. Sugar and processed food can lead to inflammation throughout the body and brain, which may contribute to mood disorders, including anxiety and depression.

Food and eating are involved in all aspects of our life and can be the source of difficulties for some people, for example comfort eating when feeling stressed or low in mood and in eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia nervosa. If this applies to you seek help to address the issues, as your quality of life and

health are important, and things can improve with the right type of help.

On the other hand, for many people food is the source of much joy and pleasure, and there is little to match the experience of delicious food shared with good friends and family. If you are eating alone, try eating slowly and **mindfully**, where you savour the smell, texture and taste of every mouthful. Get rid of any distractions and fully bring your awareness to the present moment. Mindful eating has a number of benefits including promoting better digestion, keeping you feeling full with less food and helping free you from unhealthy habits around food and eating, such as eating too fast or too much.

It is a sad fact that, for many of us, eating becomes a routine activity that just serves the purpose of stopping us from feeling hungry. We ignore the quality of what we eat, the way in which we eat it, and the social context in which we eat it. We also ignore the effects our food has on our physical and mental health and feelings of wellbeing, and how this may impact our future. We are depriving ourselves of so much if we take food for granted, and the research really does show that food can make us happy and good food improves long term mental health outcomes on top of the physical health benefits.



The Power of Music to Enhance Your Wellbeing



Music is an important part of many people's lives. We use it to relax, express ourselves, process our emotions, worship, connect with others and generally improve our wellbeing. Our relationship to music is very personal and complex and it can shift from day to day or moment to moment based on our preferences, our mood, social situation and previous experiences. We usually listen to music simply because it gives us pleasure but it can have many physical, psychological and social benefits for us including

- **Benefits for your heart:** Research has shown that blood flows more easily when music you like is played. It also reduces heart rate, blood pressure and cortisol levels (stress hormones), and increases serotonin, endorphins and dopamine levels. This is why it can make you feel so good!
- **It raises your mood:** It relieves symptoms of depression as a result of the increased production of the hormone dopamine. This helps relieve the feelings of anxiety and depression.

Music is processed directly by the amygdala which is the part of the brain involved in mood, emotions and threat detection.

- **It reduces your stress response:** It triggers biochemical stress reducers and stimulates the parasympathetic branch of your autonomic nervous system.
- **It stimulates memories and emotions:** This can be very useful for people with dementia.
- **It helps manage pain:** Music reduces stress levels and provides a strong competing stimulus to the pain signals that enter the brain.
- **It helps with physical fitness:** It increases workout endurance and boosts physical performance.
- **Music helps you feel and express your emotions:** This is useful even for sad feelings we may try to avoid.
- **It helps your connection with others:** Engaging in music making activities such as drum circles, song writing or group singing can help emotional release and foster a sense of community.
- **It can improve learning and concentration:** Classical music can help you focus, research suggests. Music that has a beat of 60 bpm (beats per minute) increases the efficiency of the brain in processing information. This can help with studying and it is best to have it playing softly in the background. It may not be suitable for everyone!

A special word about singing and humming

Singing, whether you think you're good at it or not, has particular benefits for your health, wellbeing and connection to others. One of the important ways in which singing can benefit you is through its ability to stimulate your **vagus nerve**.

Your vagus nerve is the longest nerve in your body and it connects your brain to your gut, heart, liver, pancreas, gallbladder, kidneys, ureter, spleen, lungs, neck, pharynx, larynx, and oesophagus, ears and tongue. The vagus nerve is how the brain controls the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the Rest, Digest and Self Repair system. Thus it is very important for your health and wellbeing!

Now, it so happens that your vagus nerve is connected to your vocal chords and muscles at the back of your throat. So, singing, chanting, humming and gargling can stimulate these muscles and stimulate your vagus nerve. This has been shown to improve heart-rate variability and improve 'vagal tone'. This is very beneficial for your health and wellbeing.

What to do:

- If you're feeling stressed and need to calm yourself, try humming or say 'OM' to yourself. You should feel your heart rate slow down and feel calmer.
- Sing in the shower, and the louder the better!
- Join a choir or singing group, so that you get the benefits of regular singing, build confidence, and enjoy the social connection that develops with group singing.



States of Appreciation

Most people experience feelings of love, gratitude, caring, compassion, awe and wonder from time to time, when something in our experience triggers them. These feelings are pleasurable, but often fleeting, and we usually don't make a deliberate effort to prolong the experience of these **states of appreciation**.

In recent years, it has been recognised that these states have a beneficial effect on blood pressure, muscle tension, stress hormones, immune system functioning and heart rate variability. They also have the effect of improving mood and calming anxiety.

Regular periods of time deliberately focusing on and enjoying any of these feelings promotes health and a sense of wellbeing. This can be done in conjunction with other healthy practices such as relaxation, or on its own whenever it occurs to you to do it.

So, to start off, simply think of something you are grateful for, or someone you love, and become aware of the feeling that develops. Just stay with that feeling as long as you can.

If necessary, reinforce the feeling by finding other things that you are grateful for, or other people you love, and stay with the feeling for five minutes or so.

Things to note:

You can vary it by switching to other states of appreciation. Some people find it helpful to write a gratitude journal in which they record all the things each day they are grateful for.

With practice you will find it gets easier to find and sustain these feelings, as your nervous system strengthens the pathways that enable you to experience states of appreciation.



Dealing with Emotions

We all react emotionally to things that happen, or things we think about, every day. This is normal and healthy, and usually we process the feeling, or something happens to resolve it, and we move on.

It is said that there are four basic emotions: happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Of course, there are many variations on these core emotions, such as frustration, guilt, jealousy and irritability, but they all have a function of alerting us to something important. If we take anger as an example, it alerts us to a physical threat, or to something that violates our value system. The anger we feel allows us to act in whatever way we need to in order to protect ourselves.



Emotions need to be processed by our nervous systems and that can happen naturally over time, when the emotion is acknowledged and expressed. Problems arise when emotion is suppressed, as is typical in our 'stiff upper lip' culture. Suppressed emotions, such as anger, are linked strongly to physical illnesses like cardiovascular problems and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

So, what steps can you take if you are experiencing strong emotions of any kind?

- Pause before you act; name the feeling you are experiencing, and what is triggering it, e.g. *I am feeling angry today as no one seems to be listening to me.*
- Express the feeling, by talking to a friend you trust. Be completely honest with yourself. What you feel like holding back is what is needful and important to say.
- Keep a journal and write down your feelings in whatever way comes naturally to you, maybe in the form of a poem.
- Give yourself time and space for some vigorous exercise.
- Take a moment to reflect on whether there are other ways of interpreting the situation you are reacting to. If it's another person's behaviour, imagine what the experience would be like through their eyes and ears.
- If you are constantly irritated by trivial things, such as leaving the toilet seat up or down, ask yourself if this is really a threat to you, and worth the effects this emotion is having in your body. Find ways of getting things in perspective.
- If very intense feelings are triggered by traumatic or very distressing things that have happened to you in the past, it is important to seek effective psychological support in order that the origins of these feelings can be dealt with.
- Practices such as **Mindfulness Meditation**, or the **Quick Coherence Technique**, described in this booklet, can be very helpful in the processing of emotion and enable you to experience peace of mind again.

*"Don't believe
everything you
think!"
-unknown*



Share Your Inner Feelings With Someone You Trust



It is usually difficult to bare your heart and feelings to others. Often, we put on a brave face to cover what we feel are our anxieties. We think that we will become more vulnerable if we share our difficulties, stresses or anxieties.

Though we may have many supportive friends, our conversations may be at a superficial level. We may talk about family, friends, work, the state of the country, environmental or worldwide issues, but it takes great courage and trust to talk about our true inner feelings. You need to find a method of sharing your feelings that feel right for you. It may be a face-to-face chat, or you might feel more comfortable writing down your feelings or phoning someone.

You need to think about how and when this conversation will take place, and perhaps practise it in your mind. Opening up the conversation may be the most difficult. You need to be open and honest as well as direct and tell someone you trust how you are feeling at the moment; that you cannot cope with life or that everything is becoming too much for you and you need help. Talking to someone can often put your life into perspective, you can think more clearly about your feelings and sometimes the problem may be lessened or you can see a clear pathway to follow.

It may be that opening up to somebody helps and that you may need further conversations as what you say may be a shock for the person who thinks that you are coping well with all of life's situations.

Sometimes, we hope that people will notice that something is not right and wonder how they are going to approach you. Perhaps they have not noticed or do not want to interfere and are afraid of a bad reaction from you. Sometimes your work mates are sharing your workload and do not want to approach you for fear of adding to your anxiety. If you communicate how you are feeling to someone you trust they may be keen to listen and are relieved that you have shared your feelings.

A possible benefit is that talking may strengthen your relationship with the person you speak with. This will benefit both of you and make it easier for them to turn to you when they need support themselves.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to someone you know, you may wish to talk to your doctor or contact Derbyshire mental health support line by calling 0800 028 0077.

“Some days are just bad days, that’s all. You have to experience sadness to know happiness, and I remind myself that not every day is going to be a good day, that’s just the way it is!”

-Dita Von Teese

Being Kind

If you have ever felt lonely, you will know how much it helps to have even a small connection with someone else.

Exchanging a smile or friendly words can be comforting and lift our mood. Research shows that **being kind** is good for both parties. Being kind can boost our mood, help us feel more capable, strengthen our connections with others and even make us cope better with stress.

If you don't know where to start, you could try small but meaningful acts of kindness, such as offering a smile or a few kind words to another person. You could make their day but also feel better for it - **friendly connections with others are vital for our mental health.**

More inspiration about acts of kindness

We can also help others by doing volunteer work and getting together with other people to work for good causes. These things can help us feel connected with others and the world around us. It can give us the sense that we can make a difference. All of this is good for our mental health.

Be kind and help create a better world.



Our Connection to Other People



Our network of relationships within which we live, are vitally important for our health and wellbeing. We all, at times, need the social support of others. Our lives can be enhanced by positive interactions with friends and family, and it means that there are people to turn to in times of need or crisis. This can give us emotional support, help us problem-solve, keep things in perspective, and improve our positive self-image.

So, social support enhances our quality of life and acts as a buffer against the effects of stress and life events.

Isolation on the other hand, can be hazardous to our health, and recent studies have shown that it significantly increases a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that rivals that of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. Social isolation also was associated with a 50% increased risk of dementia.

So, what should I do?

- Make a special effort to nourish your friendships and connections by taking the initiative and keeping in touch with people you know and like.
- If you think you are becoming isolated, find ways of meeting new people, through joining clubs, volunteering and helping others or reconnecting with people you have lost contact with.
- If you notice that someone is isolated, show kindness and compassion by reaching out to them in some way. You never know, it might just save someone's life.

Be Curious and Open to New Experiences

Do you ever feel bored and long for a new challenge?

Sometimes, we might want to try something new but find it hard to start. We can admire people who jump into new experiences with ease like those people who join the London Marathon and don't mind coming last. It often takes courage to try something new; stepping out of our comfort zone can feel like taking a risk. *What if it's not for me? What if I'm no good at it?* How do we know if we do not begin?

There are so many possibilities: taking up a craft or hobby, learning a language, joining a social group, playing a musical instrument or doing something to help others. Helping people less fortunate than ourselves can be very rewarding, such as helping at a soup kitchen or volunteering to do work at a local charity shop. It could be something simple like smiling at people as we walk around the town. That smile could grow into a short welcome and then even a friendship. They say smile and the world smiles with you, and that can cheer us up.

It takes courage to change our ways but trying something new will bring joy and unexpected friendships. Have you noticed how people with a similar interest find one another? There are an infinite number of hobbies, interests and activities that you could explore. It's just a question of finding something that is **just right for you**. Take courage and use your imagination.



Make Plans to Look Forward to

We could start by being an armchair planner. Think of the adventures you could have, the places you could visit, the things you could make, the people you could meet. Let your imagination run riot and some of this imaginative thought may take seed and become reality.

Making plans can give us hope and increase our mental health. It is good to widen our horizons. Ideas can come from any source such as watching TV or videos, reading, or talking to friends. Get involved in something that you look forward to.

It is important to plan a simple thing every day to bring joy and love into your life and perhaps the life of others such as

- take a half-hour of peace to meditate or
- write a thank you note
- write a journal
- enjoy a bubble bath
- settle down and read a book
- take a walk with a friend and go bird watching
- experiment and cook a new meal
- write down all the things you are most grateful for right now



How to Practise Mindful Meditation



Being mindful means being very aware of one's current experience, at the same time as not forgetting what one is supposed to be doing. It involves focusing on all the sensory experiences of the present moment, such as what you can see, hear, feel, smell and taste, and excluding thoughts and feelings associated with past memories or thoughts about the future.

Mindfulness is a skill that improves with practice and it can help concentration and attention, improves the ability to deal with distracting or distressing thoughts, brings about easier emotional control and deepens relaxation.

Mindfulness is increasingly being used in the treatment of chronic pain, anxiety and depression.



The following is a useful exercise that can improve your ability to be mindful.

Mindful Breathing Practice

- 1) Sit comfortably in an upright chair with your back straight but relaxed. This helps you stay awake! You can have your eyes open or closed.
- 2) Bring your attention to the breath, really focusing on the sensations of breathing.
- 3) Other thoughts will come into your mind, and that's normal. Simply notice those thoughts and bring your attention back to your breathing.
- 4) You don't have to follow any thoughts or feelings that arise, don't judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. Just notice them and let them drift on by. Then gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
- 5) Likewise, you can notice sounds, physical feelings or emotions and again come back to awareness of your breathing.
- 6) If a **strong** feeling or emotion should arise, (e.g. fear, pain, anger or anxiety), direct your attention to the feeling as it occurs and just be with it, observing it. When it subsides, return to the breath. Distinguish between observation of the feeling itself and interpretations or thoughts about that feeling.
- 7) Practice mindful breathing for 10 or 20 minutes at a time, although even shorter times are still valuable.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation to Relieve Tension and Anxiety

Learning how to deeply relax the muscles in your body is a very useful skill for managing the stresses and demands of everyday life. It can also be very effective in managing anxiety, improving sleep and getting rid of tension headaches.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique that has been in use for over a century, and it can complement other types of therapy or treatment.

It is sometimes described as a stress management mindfulness technique and involves systematically tensing and then relaxing various muscle groups in your body in a specific way. When you deliberately tense a muscle and hold the tension for a few seconds, and then let it go, the muscle will automatically relax.



How to learn PMR

- To begin PMR, sit or lie down in a comfortable position and breathe slowly. Starting with your toes and feet, squeeze the muscles tightly as you inhale. Count to five and then relax your muscles as you exhale.
- Repeat two more times.
- Now do the same for all the other muscles in your body, progressing through your legs, stomach, arms, shoulders and neck.
- If you prefer you can start with the muscle groups at the top of your body and work your way down to your feet.
- With practice, (preferably daily), you will find you can relax more and more deeply and quickly, until you can relax by simply intending to.
- Many people find that listening to a PMR audio track is very helpful while learning to relax. There are many to be found on the internet, or commercially available. Find one that is pleasant to listen to and use it until you can relax just as well without it.

What does it feel like to relax deeply?

For most people the experience of deep relaxation is extremely pleasant and often unfamiliar. Many people describe feeling warm and heavy, but others may feel light and floaty. Along with this, your breathing will slow down, and this is a good opportunity to focus on *diaphragmatic breathing*, described elsewhere in this booklet.

How is this helpful?



Relaxation counteracts all the effects of stress on your body.

When you are feeling stressed, a part of your autonomic nervous system called the sympathetic branch is activated, and this governs your Fight, Flight or Freeze response.

When this occurs, there are many changes to your bodily functions that prepare you for dealing with a threat including increased heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension. Blood flows to your muscles and stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline are secreted.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic nervous system work in opposition to one another, so if one is dominant the other is suppressed.

When you relax deeply, the parasympathetic branch becomes dominant, and this governs the Rest, Digest and Self Repair functions of the body. Thus, deep relaxation switches off all the changes caused by the Fight, Flight or Freeze response.

From an evolutionary perspective, our Fight, Flight or Freeze response has been vital in helping us as a species survive threats and dangers. But it is designed to only be activated for a short time to deal with the threat, and then it switches off and the parasympathetic (rest, digest, repair) system becomes dominant.

In the modern-day world in which we live, the threats we face are usually rather different. The threats are less likely to be an attack by a lion, but more probably will be longer term threats such as financial worries, marital or family tensions, chronic pain or other health conditions, and a short burst of energy will not be enough to help you deal with it. Therefore, your Fight, Flight, Freeze response remains switched on, and **we are not designed for this.**

Eventually, if your body and nervous system does not get regular periods of rest, whatever is your most vulnerable system will fail and some type of illness will develop.

This is why it is important to recognise when you are experiencing stress symptoms and treat them like the warning light on the dashboard of your car. Don't ignore them, or mask them with drink or drugs, but look at what is going on in your life and see what you can change to get back into balance.



Even if there are things you cannot change affecting you, you can learn a method for protecting yourself through techniques such as PMR, meditation, mindfulness, states of appreciation, or whatever method of relaxation works for you.

A Simple Technique to Experience Peace of Mind

To calm a busy mind:

Find a comfortable position, sitting or lying down.

- Take in a deep breath through your nose, slowly breathe out.
- Be aware of the stream of thoughts going through your mind.
- Ask yourself the question

'I wonder what the next thought I'm going to have will be?'

Simply observe what follows, and if it is pleasant and calming, stay with it for as long as possible. You can repeat the question as often as you like. The gap between your thoughts, is the goal of many types of meditation, and that moment of stillness without thought, but with awareness, is deeply refreshing and restful for your mind and nervous system. As with all methods of relaxation and meditation, it is important not to try too hard to achieve any particular outcome. Adopt an attitude of playful curiosity and see what you can discover.

How to Get into a Positive Mental State

One thing that your brain is excellent at doing is linking things that occur at the same time. That is why certain smells or pieces of music can be so powerful at triggering our emotions.

This can work for us or against us, and many difficulties we face are caused by feelings triggered by things that just happened to be present when we were upset or disturbed. That is how some phobias develop for example.

Once we are aware of how this process works, which is often referred to as **anchoring**, we can use it to develop ways of deliberately getting into resourceful states almost instantly by creating new triggers. For example, you could develop an anchor



for feeling calm, or confident or a sense of wellbeing, or any of the states of appreciation discussed earlier.

How to anchor a positive state quickly and easily:

Decide on a positive feeling you would like to be able to experience more often, or in specific situations.

- Remember a time when you had that feeling strongly, and relive it including all the sights, sounds, smells or tastes involved in that memory.
- You may be able to intensify the feelings by making the images bigger or brighter or closer in your mind.
- When you have a good strong feeling to anchor, decide on a physical trigger, such as squeezing two of your fingers together, or adjusting your posture in a particular way, that you can associate with this feeling.
- To create the anchor, start off without the feeling, and then access the feeling you want to anchor so that you can feel it building inside you. At the point just before the feeling peaks, set your anchor, be it a pressure between your fingers, or altering your posture, and hold it for a second or two, and then release it while your resource state is at its strongest. Anchors will reflect the exact states they are associated with, so it is a good idea to anchor the feeling getting stronger.
- Now get out of the positive state and repeat the process again, bearing in mind that the anchoring process is like charging up a battery. The more often you do it, the stronger it gets.

Things to also be aware of are that the stronger the feeling you are trying to anchor, the stronger the resource state you will trigger. It is also important to repeat the trigger as accurately as possible. So, if you are squeezing your thumb and forefinger, for example, make sure the pressure is the same each time, and the parts of your fingers touching are also the same. The more accurately you repeat the trigger, the stronger the response will be.



- In order to make the resourceful state even easier to access, add a visual anchor, such as a colour that you think goes with the state. So, as you apply the physical anchor,

imagine your colour at the same time.

- You could also anchor a verbal /auditory trigger such as a word describing the state, e.g. calm or relax or confident.
- If you combine anchors from three of your main sensory systems, tactile, visual and auditory, you can create a powerful way to get into a positive helpful state when you need to.
- When you have gone through this process a few times, it is time to test your anchor. Do this by firing the anchor, when you are not already in the resource state, and see what you notice. If the anchor has been set effectively, you will probably notice a few seconds delay before a gradual change is noticeable in how you feel. To build the intensity of the resource feeling, repeat the anchoring process until you are satisfied with the strength of the feeling.
- Although the anchoring procedure seems complicated to read, it is simple in practice, and can be completed in a few minutes once you are familiar with it.
- As your brain is **always** linking things, if you associate a particular feeling with a situation through using anchors (such as talking to your boss), after a short time you will find that the resourceful feeling is triggered by the situation directly and you won't actually need the anchor.

Finally, if, in the course of your everyday life, good feelings are triggered naturally and spontaneously, remember to anchor them. **Every positive feeling you have ever had, or are experiencing in the present, is a potential resource for you in the future.**

How You Breathe Can Be Important

We are not usually aware of our breathing unless we are breathless or feel short of breath. Becoming more aware of how we breathe can be helpful, especially when we are feeling stressed or upset.

When stressed our breathing rate increases as our 'Fight, Flight, Freeze' response is triggered. Simple measures such as **deliberately slowing our breathing down** can be helpful in managing our stress response. When you breathe slowly and deeply, using your diaphragm, it signals to your nervous system that you are **SAFE**, and can help you to calm yourself. For a fuller discussion of how your way of breathing can contribute to anxiety and hyperventilation **or** greater feelings of wellbeing, see the section below.

How You Breathe Matters

Breathing is something that we all usually take for granted. Our bodies do it automatically so that our attention can be on other things. Most of the time this is absolutely fine, but when we are under prolonged stress, or experience a traumatic event, or a bereavement, the way we habitually breathe can have a big influence on how we react and cope with these situations.

“Deep breathing is our nervous system’s love language.”

-Dr Lauren Fogle
Mersy

How Are You Breathing Right Now?

Just do a simple check on your breathing style.

Sit comfortably and place the palm of one hand on your upper chest and the lower hand on your abdomen. As you breathe normally, in and out, **notice which hand moves the most.**

If it's your bottom hand, on your abdomen, it shows that you are using your diaphragm well to breathe. This is referred to as DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING, and is a healthy and good way

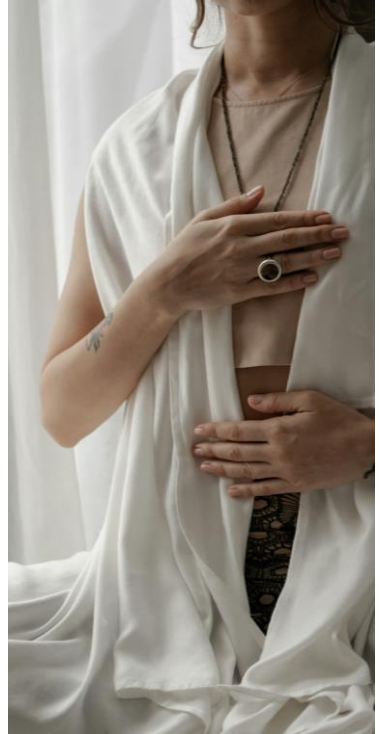
to breathe that makes use of your full lung capacity. Breathing using your diaphragm supports you in dealing with the challenges life can throw at you.

If your top hand moves the most, it suggests that you are breathing higher up in your chest, and most probably more shallowly and rapidly. This is sometimes called **CHEST BREATHING**.

Now, many people breathe this way throughout their whole lives and don't encounter any problems from it. Their bodies adapt to this style of breathing and they feel fine.

... But sometimes chest breathing can cause problems:

If you're a habitual chest-breather and encounter stress or trauma that increase your respiration rate, over time it can lead to **over-breathing** which causes unpleasant symptoms. This is known as **hyperventilation**.



Hyperventilation! What's Happening?

The important thing to be aware of is that when you breathe higher up in your chest for too long, you tend to breathe more rapidly and shallowly, and this has the effect of absorbing too much oxygen and exhaling too much carbon dioxide.

You obviously need oxygen for your cells, but the **carbon dioxide is necessary for the oxygen to be absorbed by your cells.**

When this situation is going on the acidity/alkalinity balance of your blood is changed in the direction of becoming too alkaline.

When this passes a certain threshold, a variety of unpleasant effects will be noticed, such as **light-headedness, dizziness, anxiety or panic, tingling or numbness in the fingers or toes or around the mouth, chest pain, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath or air hunger.**

A wide range of possible symptoms can be experienced, and as your blood circulates everywhere, it can affect any system in your body, such as your central nervous system, digestive system and neuro-muscular system. There will be a more comprehensive list of symptoms at the end of this section.

How People React:

Often, particularly if a person doesn't understand why they are feeling odd, they react to these physical symptoms with alarm, and often think something really serious is happening to them. These catastrophic thoughts, such as 'I'm dying' or 'I'm having a heart attack' or 'I'm going to faint', serve to increase their anxiety further, which then increases their breathing rate, which creates a vicious circle.

This is usually the pattern that people get into when they are having a panic attack, and the experience is so unpleasant that a fear develops of having a further attack. This can lead into patterns of avoidance of threatening situations, that compounds the difficulties. Help from a skilled counsellor or therapist is important, as this type of problem is usually very successfully treated.

Some people who hyperventilate chronically (for a long time) don't have panic attacks but **feel generally ill most of the time.**

What Can I Do About It? Check with your doctor:

As some of the symptoms of hyperventilation, such as chest pain or headaches, can be similar to more serious conditions it is important to talk to your doctor first, in case some other treatment is required.

Retrain yourself to breathe diaphragmatically:

This is easier to do lying down at first, and then progress to sitting, then standing.

- 1.) Lie down on your back with one hand on your lower abdomen, the other on your upper chest.***
- 2.) Inhale through your nose for about 4 seconds feeling your abdomen move out against your hand. Your upper chest should barely move.***
- 3.) Hold your breath for 2 seconds and then exhale very slowly through your mouth for about 6 seconds.***
- 4.) Repeat this for up to 20 minutes, twice a day, so that it becomes part of your regular routine.***

It is actually easier said than done to retrain your breathing as you may have been breathing high in your chest for your whole life. The muscle coordination involved in diaphragmatic breathing is completely different, so when you're not consciously thinking about it, you will revert back to your usual way of breathing. It can take weeks or months to learn a healthier way of breathing - where the new healthy breathing habit is so ingrained that it continues when you are not consciously thinking about it.

A good way to start is to spend two periods of 15-20 minutes a day practising and having little reminders around the house to check how you are breathing, such as a sticky note on the TV or mirrors. Whenever you see them, check how you are breathing and switch back to diaphragmatic breathing if necessary.

Benefits:

As soon as you start to do your **two daily breathing sessions**, you'll begin to alter your blood chemistry and move it away from that threshold where you start to experience unpleasant symptoms. This means **you start to have more resilience** in stressful situations, even if you start to over-breathe. This gives you time to switch to **diaphragmatic breathing**, think in a more positive coping fashion and handle the situation in an appropriate way.

For some people, simply knowing what is happening to them is sufficient to allow them to recover their normal way of functioning in the world. The fear of the symptoms, if you do not understand them, can be devastating for some people.

For other people, the hyperventilation may be driven by ongoing issues such as work-related stress, toxic relationships or financial pressures. These underlying problems, of course, must be addressed and it is vital to seek the appropriate help and advice in order to make changes in your life.

For some people, the anxiety that is driving the hyperventilation originates from deep-seated, historical problems such as early abuse, bereavement or unresolved traumatic events. In these situations, it is important that you receive effective psychological therapy to address the underlying issues. Be persistent in seeking it out until you get the help you deserve.



Symptoms of Hyperventilation

Hyperventilation Syndrome (HVS) is the name given to a collection of physical and emotional symptoms, largely brought on by hyperventilation. This happens when we over-breathe. The main signs of this are when we breathe much more quickly and more shallowly than our bodies need.

What are the symptoms of HVS?

Respiratory symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathlessness• tightness around the chest• fast breathing• frequent sighing	Cardiac symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• palpitations• tachycardia (rapid heartbeat)• chest pain
Tetanic symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tingling e.g. in fingers, arms or mouth• muscle stiffness• trembling in the hands	Temperature symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold hands and feet• shivering• warm feeling in the head
	Gastrointestinal symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sickness• abdominal pain
Cerebral symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• dizziness• blurred vision• feeling faint• headaches	General symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tension• anxiety• fatigue and lethargy• insomnia
These symptoms can, in some cases, be due to other physical causes than HVS, so it's important to consult your GP before assuming your symptoms are caused by hyperventilation.	

Heart-Brain Coherence

This is a relatively new and interesting stress management and health promoting tool, developed by the HeartMath Institute in America. They have carried out large amounts of research on the interaction between the heart and the brain, and challenge some of our previous assumptions. For further information on this, look at the HeartMath Institute website. <https://www.heartmath.org/>



What do we mean by coherence?

To simplify, under ideal conditions the messages sent from the heart to the brain and vice versa are smooth, orderly and coherent. This state of coherence is important in helping us to maintain our mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Coherence refers to a logical, orderly and harmonious connectedness between parts. In this state, our systems are performing optimally and there is synchronisation between the heart, respiratory system, blood pressure rhythms, and heart rate variability patterns, etc.

The benefits of coherence include, calmness, good energy levels, clarity of thought and good immune system function. When athletes are in the 'zone', they will be in a coherent state.

How to develop coherence:

Each of us is capable of enhancing our ability to experience coherence, and to learn to access a coherent state at will. One of the easiest ways of learning heart-brain coherence is through deliberately experiencing strong positive feelings, such as the states of appreciation described earlier in this booklet. By combining feelings of love, gratitude, compassion or caring with a heart focused breathing exercise, we can ease ourselves into a state of coherence, and this gets much quicker and easier with practice.

In contrast we quickly enter a state of incoherence when we are stressed, angry, anxious or depressed.

The Quick Coherence Technique



This exercise is a simple method of enabling you to develop a state of coherence whenever you like, so that it can help you deal with stress, promote feelings of wellbeing, and think clearly, even when under pressure.

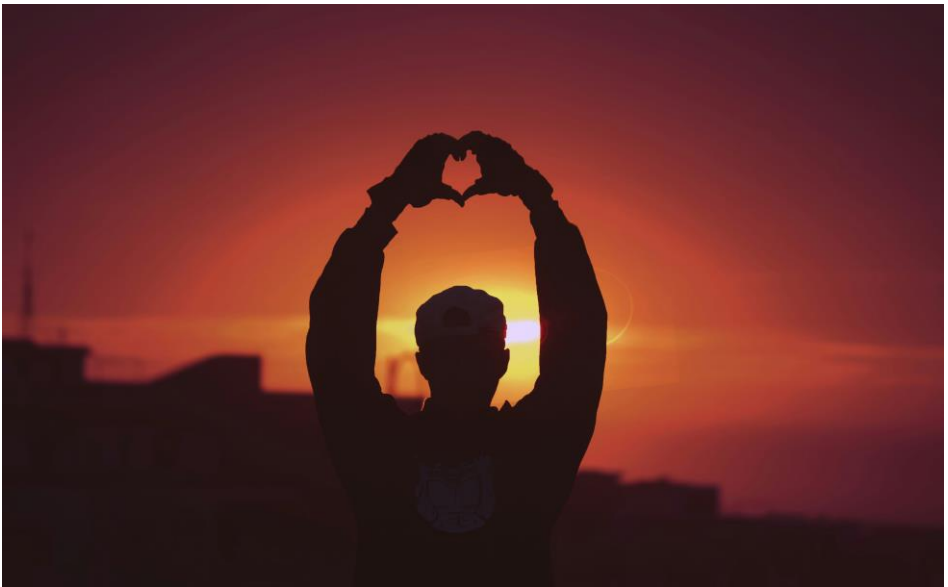
Step 1. Heart Focus. Direct your attention to the area of your heart, the area in the centre of your chest. Touch the centre of your chest, as that draws your awareness to the heart area.

Step 2. Heart Breathing. Breathe comfortably in and out, but slightly more slowly and deeply than normal for you. **Imagine that your breath is flowing in and out through your heart area.** Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural rhythm that feels comfortable for you.

Step 3. Heart Feeling. As you continue to maintain your heart focus and heart breathing, find a strong positive emotion. Think about someone or some memory that triggers in you feelings of love, gratitude or any feeling of appreciation. Stay with this feeling as long as possible to give your body time to move into a coherent state. You can think of different people, pets or situations, to help you sustain the feeling for longer.

Things to be aware of

- Research has shown that if you stay in a state of heart brain coherence for just five minutes, the beneficial effects on your physiology can last up to five hours!
- This becomes easier with practice, until you can just shift into a coherent state by simply intending to. The feeling of coherence becomes deeper and more profound the more you experience it.
- When you start to explore this, set two ten-minute periods a day to practise. After a while the practice sessions will become unnecessary, as this is quick and easy to learn.
- The degree of coherence is measured through measuring heart rate variability (HRV) or the gaps between the heart beats. Biofeedback machines are available that feedback to you when your HRV is at an optimal level, and therefore when you are in a coherent state. However, you don't need machines in order to benefit from this simple technique.



Final Thoughts

The title of this booklet included the phrase **‘keeping our balance’**. The idea of balance when considering our mental health is an important and useful one.

We all have many and varied demands on us, whether from work, family life, financial worries or demands we place on ourselves, such as perfectionism. Whether we cope with these demands and remain healthy and happy depends in large part on the resources we have supporting us. If our resources balance the demands on us, we are likely to function well in life and have a sense of wellbeing. If the demands outweigh our resources for a prolonged period, we are likely to feel stressed and our mental and physical health may suffer.

Typical resources that sustain people are support from friends and family, financial security, satisfying work or our religious faith. It can also include things such as good nutrition and adequate sleep. However, there are also internal resources which are equally important such as good self-esteem, having a purpose in life, having realistic expectations of yourself and dealing with your emotions in a healthy way. In addition, there are skills you can learn which enable you to manage your emotional reactions to life’s demands such as mindfulness, relaxation methods and healthy breathing.

If you think about a set of scales which is out of balance, it can often take the lightest possible weight to bring it back into balance. So too with our lives! If you feel that your life is out of balance, and the demands on you outweigh your resources, it may not require a complete upheaval of your life in order to achieve peace of mind or balance again. It may simply be necessary to apply your problem solving skills to an area of your life in order to reduce the demands, or develop a new skill such as mindful meditation or heart coherence to swing your scales back into balance. If you make a list of all the demands on you, and also all the resources that you feel support you, you can deliberately work to

reduce those demands that you can, and develop more resources to support you, until you feel balance has been achieved. You will know when it has, as a sense of wellbeing and peace of mind can gradually return to you.

This booklet has been developed to give you some ideas of resources that may be helpful for you. Some are simple and common sense, such as the advice on social networks, exercise, eating and sleeping, but some are simple skills that require some effort to learn, such as mindful breathing and heart coherence. But these skills can bring enormous benefits.

It is worth pointing out that nobody feels great all the time and it is normal to have ups and downs in our feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction with life. If, however, unpleasant feelings of stress, anxiety or low mood persist, it is important to recognize that and take steps to address the problems.

We hope that you find some of the ideas in this booklet useful to you, and that they become part of a healthy balanced lifestyle that brings you a sense of peace and wellbeing.



Finding Your Balance – Action Plan

Whether something is a demand or a resource can depend on how you perceive it. For example, looking after grandchildren could be a burden to one person or a joy to another. Look for the positive aspects of anything you see as a demand and, maybe, seeing it in a different way can lessen the demand on you, or even turn it into a resource!

Demands

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Resources

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Things I can change:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Resources I can develop:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Progress Diary

Date:

Progress:

What next....

Further Reading

Wonders of our natural world

[How nature benefits mental health - Mind](#)

Walking in the rain

<https://www.psychologies.co.uk/walking-in-the-rain-benefits/>

www.bbc.co.uk Just One Thing- with Michael Mosely

[Just One Thing - with Michael Mosley - Embrace the Rain - BBC Sounds](#)

Improve the quality of your sleep

[Insomnia - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Sleeping well | Royal College of Psychiatrists \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

www.sleepfoundation.org How to sleep better

The value of exercise

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9902068/>

Role of physical activity in mental health and wellbeing: a review

[Exercise and Depression - Antidepressant Effects - 2023 Update](#)

[\(psychscenehub.com\)](https://psychscenehub.com) Effectiveness of physical activity interventions for improving depression, anxiety and distress

Eating to support your mental health

[Food and mental health - Mind](#)

[What is an eating problem? - Mind](#)

www.zoe.com Professor Tim Spector

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGWbEIYD_Cw

How healing your gut will change your life

The power of music to enhance your wellbeing

[The Surprising Psychological Benefits of Music \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com)

How listening to music can have psychological benefits.

[How Humming Can Help Anxiety and is Good for Your Health \(oprahdaily.com\)](https://www.oprahdaily.com)

Is humming the new walking?

[Benefits of Singing: 10 Ways Singing Boosts Your Health \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com)

The health benefits of singing

States of appreciation

www.heartmath.com The HeartMath Institute

[The Science of HeartMath - HeartMath](#)

[HeartMath Appreciation Tool and Exercises | HeartMath Institute](#)

[Gratitude — Welcome to the Brain's Feel-Good Reward Center - HeartMath](#)

Dealing with emotions

[How to Control Your Emotions: 11 Strategies to Try \(healthline.com\)](#)

[Dealing With Difficult Emotions \(for Teens\) | Nemours KidsHealth](#)

Sharing our feelings

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/feeling-stuck-how-to-express-your-feelings>

[Learning How To Open Up To People | BetterHelp](#)

Being kind

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/kindness/kindness-matters-guide>

Connection to others

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/affect-health.htm>

Be curious and open minded to new experiences

https://www.clevelandlmc.org.uk/website/IGP367/files/NE%20&%20Cumbria_October_Psychology%20Spice_Article.pdf

The psychology of variety: How it improves our mental health.

Plan things to look forward to

<https://artofhealthyliving.com/does-planning-for-the-future-have-a-positive-impact-on-your-mental-health/>

How to practise mindful meditation

www.mindful.org Mindfulness and meditation

[Learn How to Meditate: A Mindful Guide to Transform Your Life](#)

[Mindfulness - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Mindfulness meditation | Age UK](#)

Progressive muscle relaxation

<https://www.healthline.com/health/progressive-muscle-relaxation>

The benefits of progressive muscle relaxation and how to do it

You Tube Newcastle Hospitals Progressive muscle relaxation - female voice. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=912eRbes2g>

To experience peace of mind

Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now: a guide to spiritual enlightenment. 1997 Namaste Publishing. 1999 New World Library.

Anchoring positive and resourceful states

<https://www.thelazarus.com/feeling-self-confident-best/>

Feeling self-confident and at your best.

<https://www.managementcentre.co.uk/blog/anchors-gaining-resourceful-states/> Anchoring process

How you breathe can be important

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/proper-breathing-brings-better-health/> Proper breathing brings better health. 15.1 2019.

<https://www.artofliving.org/us-en/breathwork/how-to-breathe/how-to-breathe-better> How to breathe better: a comprehensive guide to improving your breathing

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24860-hyperventilation-syndrome> Hyperventilation syndrome.

<https://www.physiotherapyforbpd.org.uk/> How you can help yourself

The quick coherence technique

[Quick Coherence Technique - HeartMath Help](#)



“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths...
Beautiful people do not just happen.”
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

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Chesterfield**