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Wellbeing During Examination Periods

Mrs Besenzi, Leader of Wellbeing

In this pack, you will find helpful strategies to support with wellbeing

both before and during your examinations (for students and families).

Please speak with your subject teachers, Personal Tutor or Mrs Besenzi if you'd like to know more.

Remember to use your STRIPE skills too.

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/// You are **AMAZING** *

* You are **STRONG** ☆

☆ You are **LOVED** ☆

* You are **TALENTED** ☆

/// You've Got This! ☆



Self Manager

Team Player

Reflective & Resilient

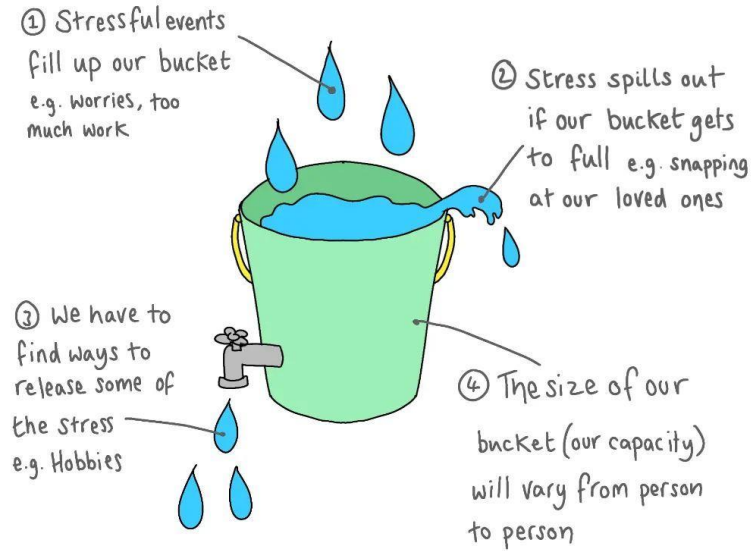
Innovate & Create

Participator

Enquirer

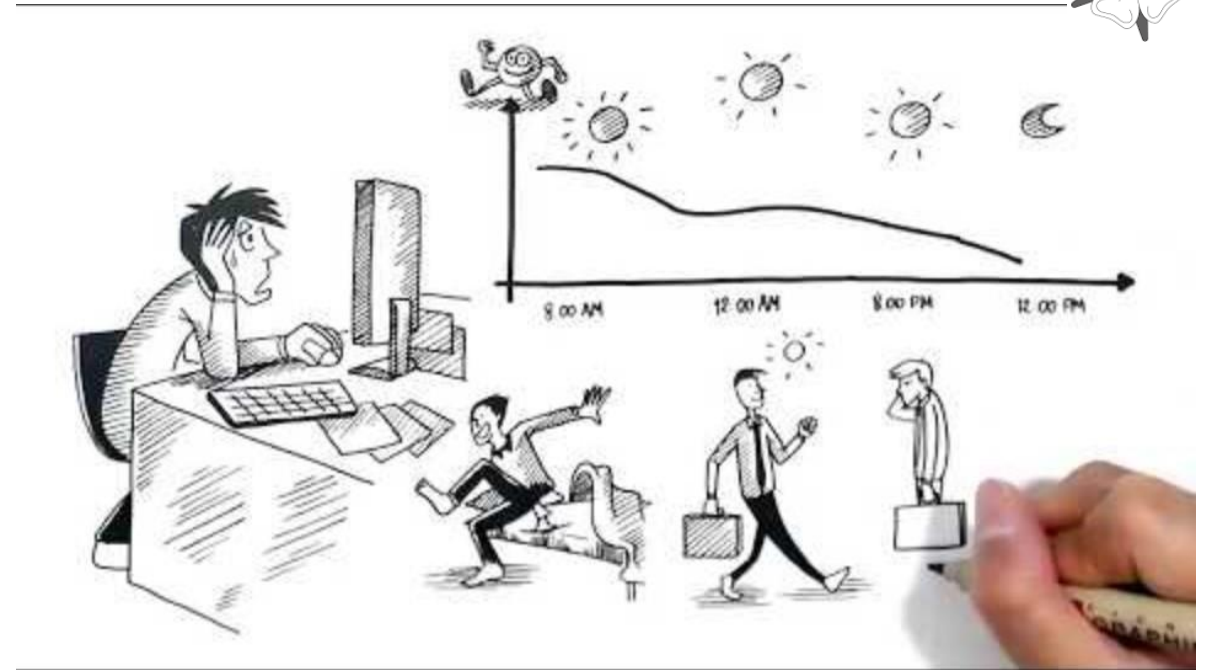


Stress Bucket Analogy



@creative.clinical.psychologist

@Dr.JulietYoung



What is stress?

Stress bucket

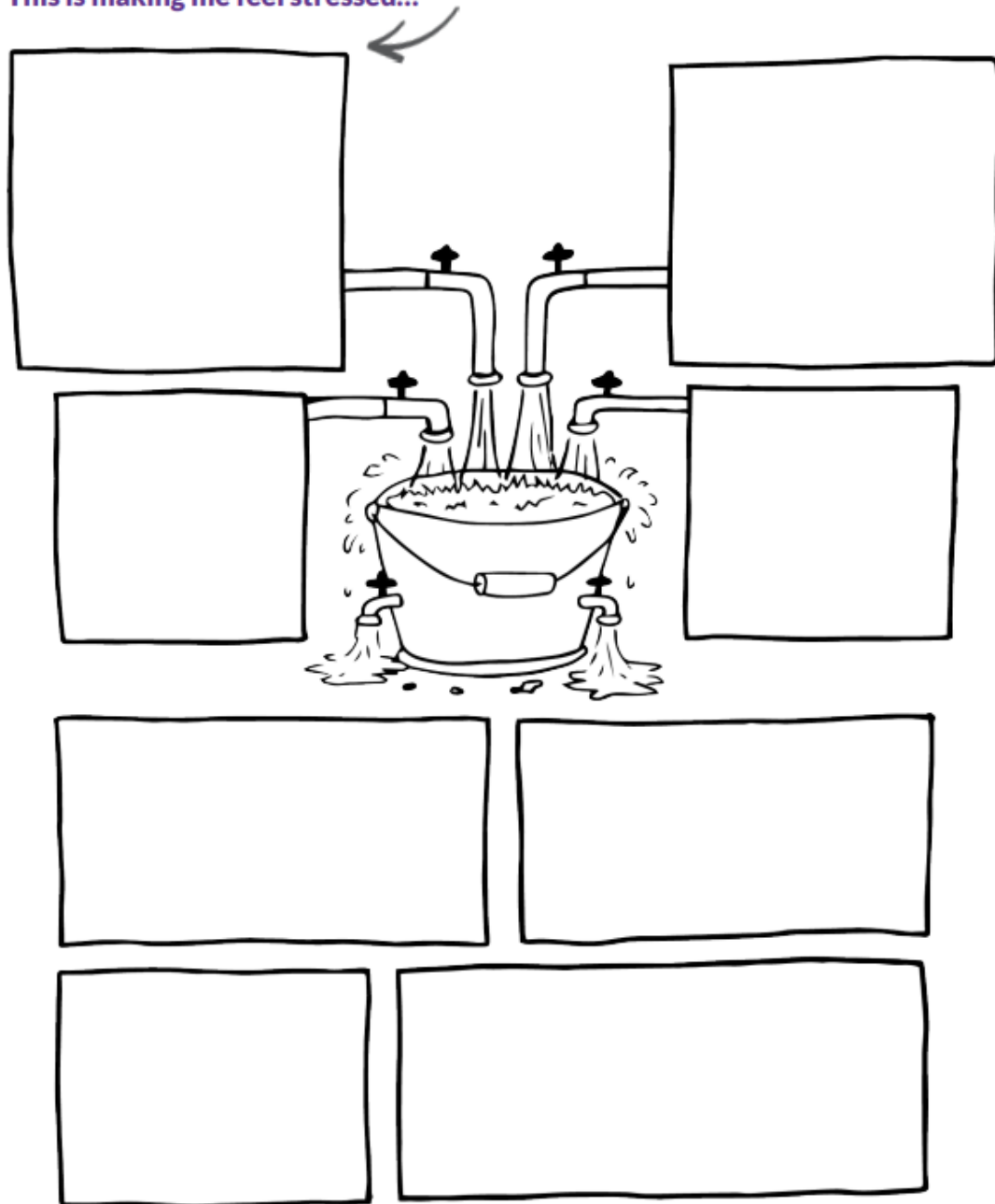
It is normal to feel stress at times. Some stress can be good, but too much can cause you to feel anxious or depressed, which might affect your sleeping, eating habits and general wellbeing.

When you feel worried, the stress bucket is a visual way for you to communicate this, and this can help the adults in your life best support your needs.

Instructions:

1. Above the bucket are taps and the things that cause you stress. Using the boxes, draw or write the things that are making you worry. It might be too much homework, friendship issues, back-to-school anxiety.
2. The below taps are the things that help you release stress. Using these boxes, write or draw the things that help you manage this feeling. It could be talking to friends, exercise or spending time with pets.
3. You might find it helpful to discuss your stress bucket and the things that help you.

This is making me feel stressed...





stem4's mental health apps



A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm
www.calmharm.co.uk • [@calmharmapp](https://twitter.com/calmharmapp)



A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety
www.clearfear.co.uk • [@clearfearapp](https://twitter.com/clearfearapp)



A free app to help teenagers manage low mood and depression
www.movemood.co.uk • [@appmovemood](https://twitter.com/appmovemood)

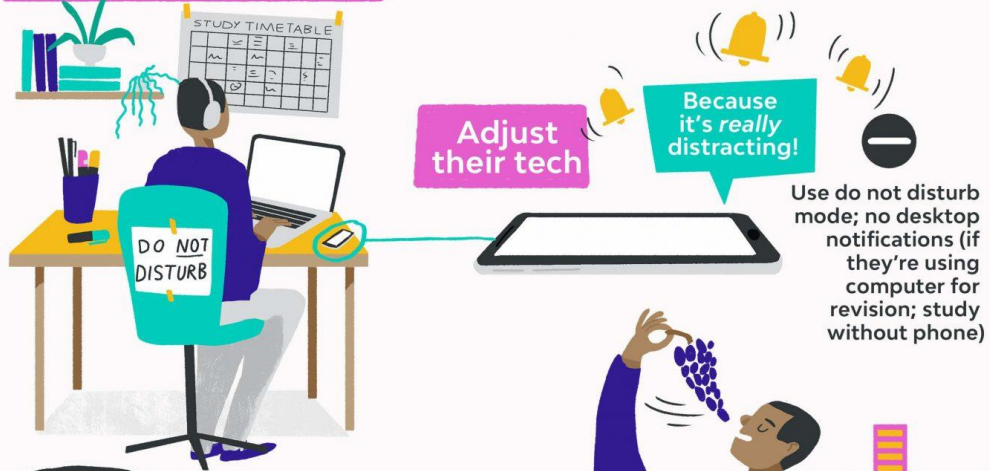


A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support
www.combinedminds.co.uk • [@combmindsapp](https://twitter.com/combmindsapp)



How to make your home a revision-friendly environment

Their own study space



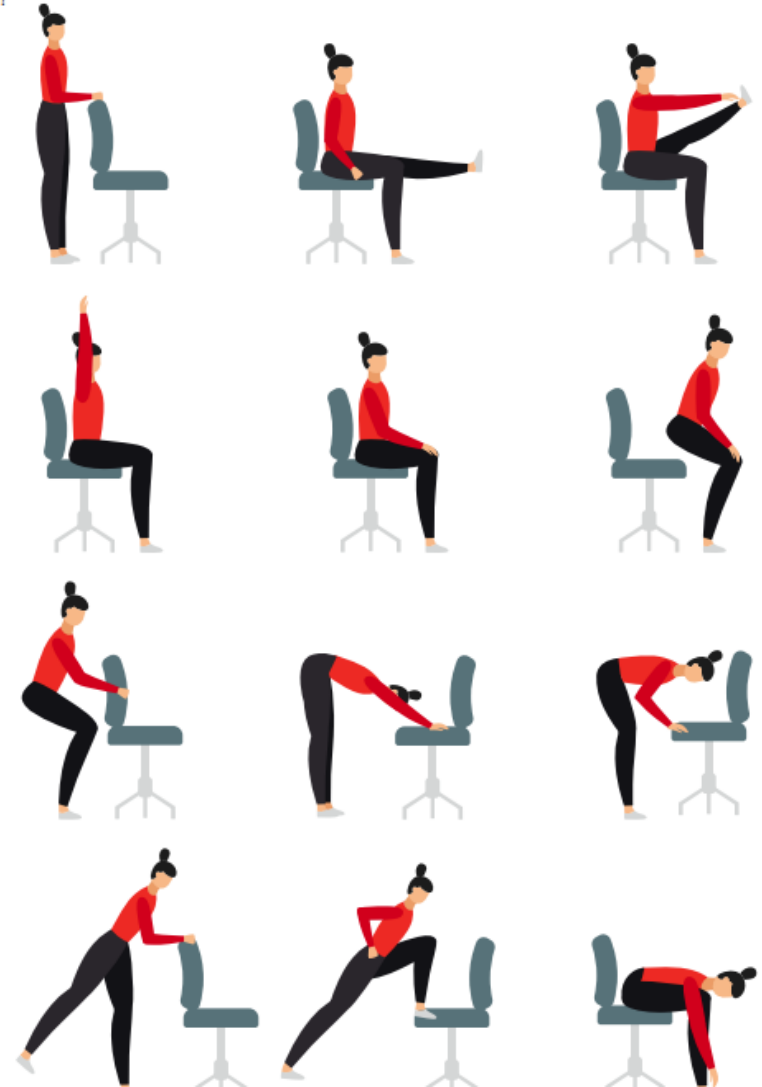
Teen & parents - so teen can voice their feelings & worries about anything & you, the parent, can help & comfort them

Movement at home

Exercise can help relieve tension and stress, while also making you feel better through the release of 'feel good' hormones, called endorphins. From a brisk walk to yoga, movement is a great way of looking after your wellbeing. If you are able to, the yoga poses below are a good way to practice movement and listening to your body.

As you move into the positions, notice what feels good and what doesn't. Keep bringing your attention back to your breathing as you move through the poses.

Acknowledge how different moves make you feel. Are you frustrated, proud, determined, or relaxed?



Recreation





Coping with exam pressure

The pressure to do well can really get on top of you and only add to the existing stress of exams. It could be from your school, your family, your friends, or yourself. Even if the people around you aren't putting pressure on you, you might still want to make them proud. But remember, no matter what your results, your mental health is important too.

Whether you feel stressed right before your exams, or it builds up over time, here are some things you can do to ease the pressure:



Be kind to yourself

Reflect on all the things you've already achieved, in or outside of studying. Write a list of what you rate about yourself, and what others like about you too. Doing things you're good at and enjoy can really boost your self-esteem.



Talk about feeling under pressure

If people around you – like your school or family – are putting pressure on you, be real with them about what you think you can handle. Make it clear if your expectations are different from theirs. And if you need to, have a word with a teacher you trust about the stress you're under at home.



Don't compare yourself to others

Try not to stress about how others are prepping for exams. Focus on what you can do. You might feel like other people are smashing it, revising more than you, or just not stressing out as much. But we're all different and that's okay. Remember, your friends are coping with exam stress too. They might be just as on edge as you.



How to deal with exam stress

Exam stress can feel lonely and a heavy load to carry, but you don't have to tackle it alone. Lots of young people find exams difficult and it's okay to need support.

Don't hold it all in – try talking to someone about what's on your mind. If someone knows you feel stressed, they can have your back, encourage you and listen when you need them to. It could be a friend, family member, carer, community/faith leader, teacher, or anyone else you trust. You don't have to go through this alone.

Check out our tips below to help you get through exams.





In the lead-up to your exams

- Ask for any practical help you need
- Ask for access arrangements if you need them
- Check in with your friends
- Find a study group, or start your own

When exams start

- Get organised the night before
- Try relaxation techniques
- Don't compare your answers
- Reward yourself

A nice long soak in the bubble bath?



A yoga class at sunrise?



Sweating it out on a run?



A cosy night in with a good book?



Getting out into nature?



A nutritious home-cooked meal?



A long talk with friends?



“ Having habits that you can do regularly, especially away from a screen, is so important. It feels productive, gives you something you can rely on, and builds self-confidence. ”

Danny, 21

[The best thing I've done for my mental health](#)

Positive Exam Prep Reminders

Drink Lots of Water

Eat Healthy Snacks

Take Some Deep and Calming Breaths

Organise Your Revision into Chunks

Remember to Use the Loo!

Rest, Relax and Sleep Well

Take Regular Breaks

Get Some Fresh Air

Think Positive Thoughts

Celebrate Your Success

Do Your Best and Be Kind to Yourself

Stretch and Exercise

Before your exams focus on these wellbeing actions

Revision Timetable

Use the revision timetable below to plan your revision and brain breaks.

You don't need to fill in every day or section of the timetable - simply use the timetable to plan what works best for you. We have included a blank section at the end of each day too in case you need to plan in extra revision time.



| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: |
| Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: |
| 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: |
| Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: |
| 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: |
| Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: |
| 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: |
| Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: |
| 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: | 20 minutes revision: |
| Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: | Brain break: |
| | | | | | | |

How to Structure an Hour of Revision



Step 1: Choose a past paper

These can be found on the internet (as long as you know the examining board for your subject). Alternatively, you could ask your teacher whether they have any past papers. You will also need access to the paper's mark scheme.

Step 2: Pick a question

Decide which question you would like to complete. Don't just pick questions you know you can do – target the topic you are revising that session. If the questions are short (for example, on a maths paper), choose a few questions – aim for between 15 to 20 marks.

Step 3: Revise

Spend 20 minutes revising the information you need to answer your chosen question/questions.

Step 4: Do the question

Next, spend 20 minutes answering your chosen question/questions.

Step 5: Mark your answer

Use the mark scheme for the past paper to check your answer. Using a mark scheme will also give you a better idea of what examiners expect in an answer.

Step 6: Get feedback

Show your work to a teacher or tutor. Ask them whether your marking is accurate and how you could improve your answers.

How to set up an Effective Study Plan

An effective study plan can help you make the most of your time and improve your memory and retention of information.

Here are some steps to set up an effective study plan:



01

Determine Your Goals

What do you want to achieve with your study plan? Knowing your goals will help you prioritise your time and focus on what's important.

02

Create a Schedule

Plan a regular time for studying, considering any other commitments you have. Stick to this schedule as much as possible to help establish a routine.

03

Break Down the Material

Divide the material you need to study into manageable chunks rather than trying to study everything at once.

04

Use Active Learning Techniques

Incorporate active learning techniques, such as repetition, association, visualisation, and active recall, into your study plan.

05

Mix Up Your Study Materials

Alternating between different study materials, such as textbooks, notes, videos, and flashcards, can help to keep you engaged and improve your retention of information.

06

Take Breaks

Regular breaks can help to prevent burnout and improve focus. Taking short, active breaks, such as stretching or walking, can be especially effective.

07

Get Enough Sleep

Sleep is essential for memory consolidation and recall, so ensure you get enough sleep each night.

08

Evaluate Your Progress

Regularly evaluate your progress to see what is working and what isn't. This will help you adjust your study plan as needed to maximise your results.

09

Stay Motivated

Find ways to stay motivated, such as setting achievable goals, celebrating small successes, and finding a study partner or group.



REMEMBER:

An effective study plan works for you, so don't be afraid to experiment and make adjustments as needed.

Circle of Control

Preparing for tests and exams can be worrying and at times you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed.

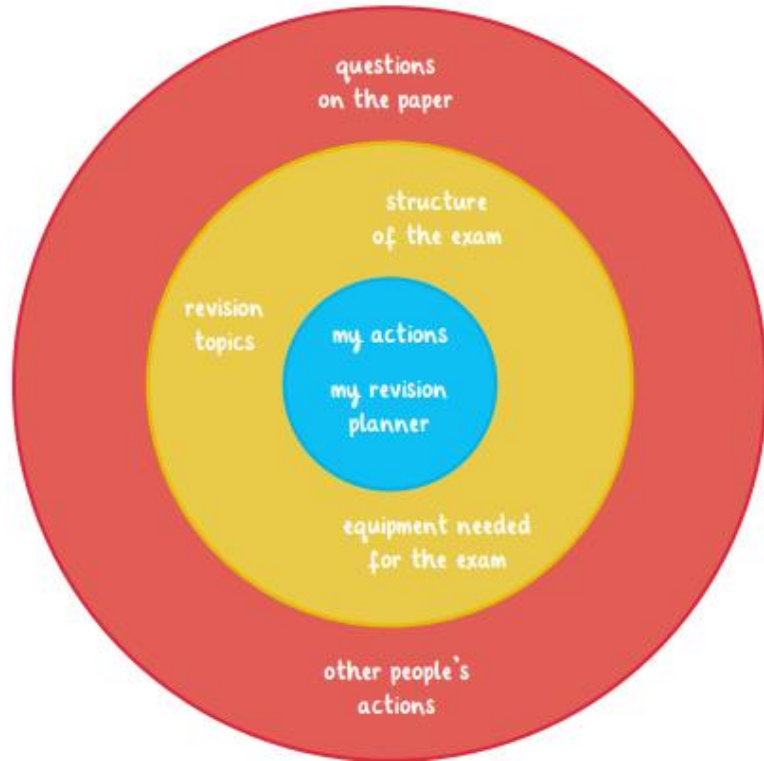
This activity can help you think about what you can and can not control to allow you to focus on your exam preparation a little better.

The **inner circle** is for the things you can control, for example, what you know and the things you can change.

The **middle circle** is for the things you have some influence over but not full control. For example, your revision list or topics which will be on the test.

The **outer circle** is a place for you to write down things you have no control over at all and can not do anything about. An example of this would be other people's actions and the questions on the exam paper.

Example:



My actions

How long the exam is for

When I revise

How many marks are available

How long I revise for

Structure of the paper

My revision planner

Types of questions, long, short,

Topics I need to revise

multiple choice

My nutrition/hydration

Questions on the paper

Equipment list

Other people's actions

Where the exam is

Mindfulness Activities: Body Awareness

Meditation can help us to clear our thoughts, enabling us to concentrate better. It can also help to lower levels of stress and anxiety by reducing negative emotions.

The idea of this exercise is to relax your body, remain still and then begin to focus on each part of the body and how it feels. Set a timer for 10 minutes and move through each step.

Step 1

Lie on your back or sit on a comfortable chair and close your eyes.

Relax your arms and make sure your palms are facing up. Your feet should be slightly apart.

Step 2

Bring your attention to your breathing.

Focus on the rhythm of breathing in and out. You could try bringing your attention to an area where you can feel the breath more easily, such as the nose or the belly.



Step 3

Bring your attention to your body.

Notice how your body feels. This could be anything from the chair or ground beneath you to how your clothing feels.



Step 4

Now think about the different parts of your body.

Focus on different parts of your body and how each area feels. For example, notice if different parts feel heavy or light or whether there is no sensation at all.

Start with your toes and then move upwards:

- toes
- feet
- lower legs
- knees
- upper legs
- pelvis
- abdomen
- chest
- lower back
- upper back
- shoulders
- upper arms
- elbows
- lower arms
- wrists
- hands
- fingers
- neck
- face and head (mouth, nose, eyes, ears, forehead, top of head, back of head)

Step 5

Open your eyes.

Slowly blink your eyes open. You could put your hands over them first to help with gradually adjusting to the light. Wait a moment before standing up by taking a deep breath and exhaling.

Mindfulness Activities: Using the Senses



Meditation can help us to clear our thoughts, enabling us to concentrate better. It can also help to lower levels of stress and anxiety by reducing negative emotions.

The idea of this exercise is to focus and take notice of something you are experiencing with each of your five senses. Set a timer for 10 minutes and move through each step.

Step 1

Focus on 5 things you can see.

Look around you and focus on five things you can see. Try to look beyond and pick things that you wouldn't usually notice.



Step 2

Focus on 4 things you can feel.

Notice four things that you are feeling right now. This could be the warmth of the sun, the chair or ground beneath you or even the feel of your clothing.



Step 3

Focus on 3 things you can hear.

Listen carefully and take note of three things you can hear around you. They could be things which are close by or far away.



Step 4

Focus on 2 things you can smell.

Notice the smells that you usually block out, good or bad.



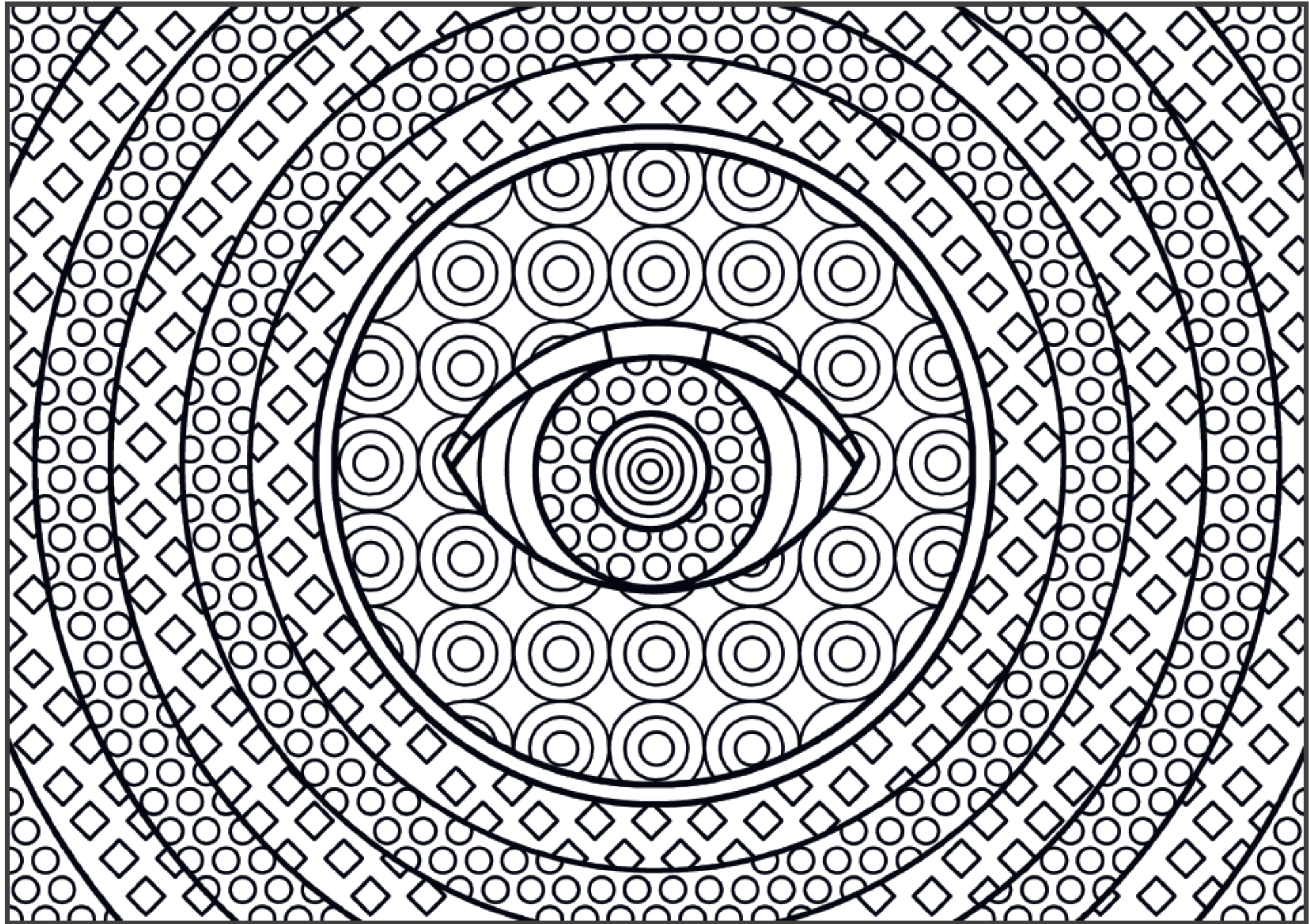
Step 5

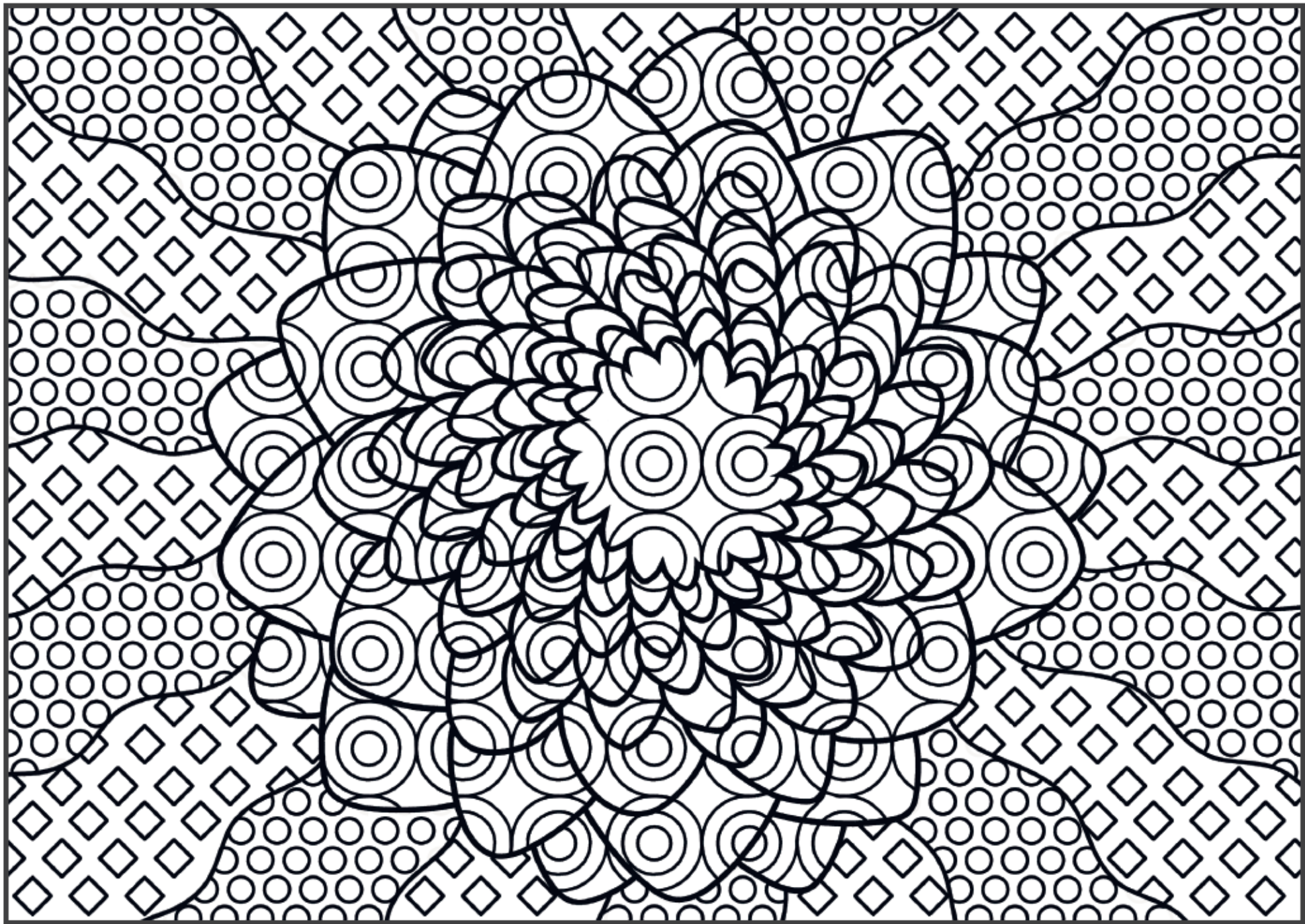
Focus on 1 thing you can taste.

Think about the thing you can taste at this very moment. You could open your mouth to taste the air or take a sip or a bite of something and focus on that.









Quick Relaxation Techniques Before and During Exams



Before the Exam: Get a Good Night's Sleep

It's important to be well-rested before your exam as it helps you to feel calm and alert. Try meditating before going to sleep or listening to ambient sounds. This will help you to unwind and sleep better.



Before the Exam: Meditate

Meditation is a great way to calm your mind and reduce your anxiety. You can listen to guided meditations anywhere and they can last anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes. Try to find a quiet space on your own while waiting to go into your exam and spend 5 minutes quietly meditating.



Before the Exam: Exercise

Exercise is a great way to release stress and anxiety if you can take a short walk before your exam, or even walk to your exam. Alternatively, try some relaxing yoga moves first thing in the morning.



Before the Exam: Eat

You can often feel too nervous to eat before an exam but try to eat something small. Certain foods can help reduce stress and anxiety. For example, oranges, oats, bananas and even dark chocolate can help to bring relief.



Quick Relaxation Techniques Before and During Exams



During the Exam: Breathing

Once you get into the exam, if you begin to feel anxious, close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose, hold that breath for a count of 3, then breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat 5 times.



During the Exam: Drink

You will be able to take a drink into the exam, take some water and add some drops of a relaxing herbal tincture. This can help you to feel calm during the exam.



During the Exam: Focus on the Questions You Can Answer

Anxiety can often occur if we read a question that we don't know the answer to. Take the time at the start of the test to read all the questions. Make a note of all the questions you confidently know the answers to and start by answering those, then move on to the ones you're less sure of. Save the ones you're really struggling with until last.





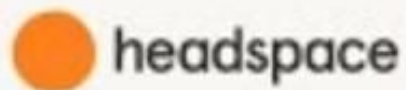
Breathing Techniques

[10 Breathing Exercises to Try: For Stress, Training, and Lung Capacity \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/breathing-exercises)




Exam Stress?

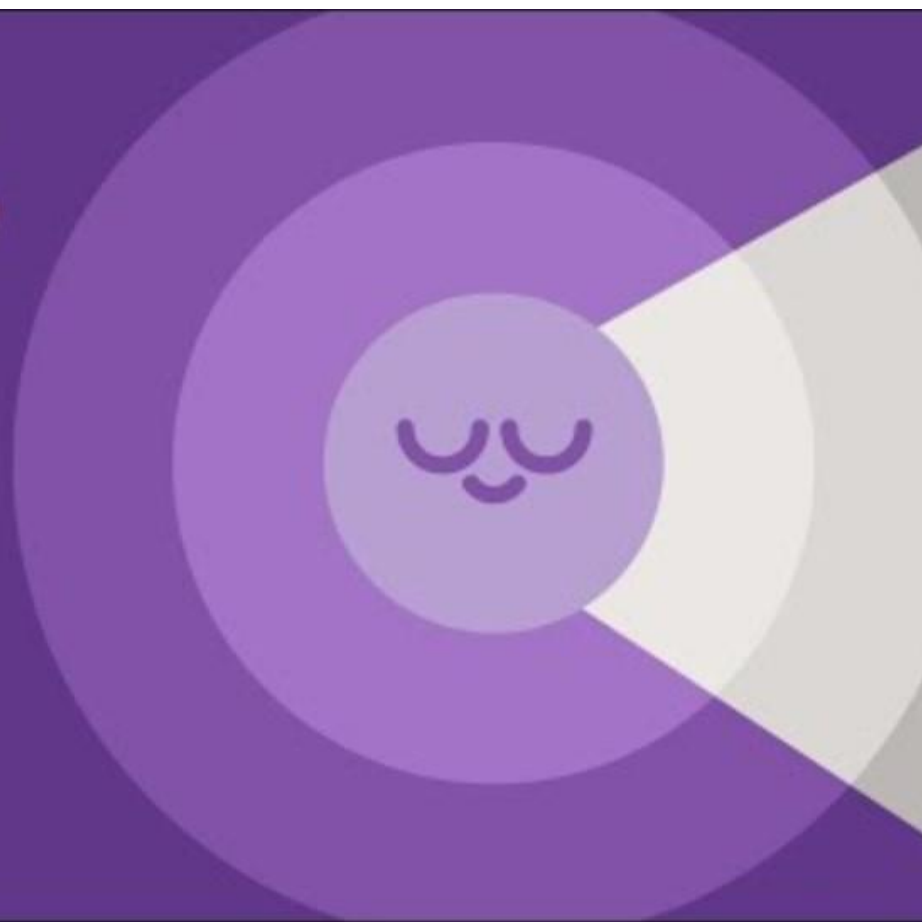
Find Calm & Focus





2-Minute Focus Reset

 headspace



Wellbeing

Easy mindfulness activities for you to enjoy

Mindfulness activities involve no more than being fully present and engaged in the moment, and being aware of our thoughts and feelings without judging them or getting too caught up in them.



Cooking

Notice the smell and texture of each ingredient.

Focus on the precision of repetitive tasks, such as chopping and stirring.

Recognise the **taste and smells** of different foods as they cook.

Involve the **family** and reconnect.

Dancing

Move your body and dance if you can.

Put on music that you enjoy and notice how you feel when your body responds.

Notice how different **songs, lyrics and rhythms** make you feel.

Create a wellbeing playlist of songs that affected your mood positively.



Appreciate or tend to nature

Feel the texture of the soil, the roughness of weeds or the softness of flowers.

Take in the **smells** of freshly cut grass and nectar.

Look at the changing colours, textures and patterns of plants and flowers.

Listen to the sounds of birds, lawnmowers and watering of plants.

Relaxation



Sleep techniques

Sleep is important for our physical and mental wellbeing. However, it is often most difficult to sleep during times when we need it most. Try and use the techniques below to help you wind down and set yourself up for sleep.

1. Journal before bed

Using a notebook or a piece of paper, you can write about anything; how you are feeling, tasks you completed, movements you made, or even worries and concerns that you have. If you have written down your worries, how about trying to do our 'circles of control' task with your list? Below is a template you can copy to help you get started.

| Today I am grateful for... | Things I'm worried about... |
|---|---|
| <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Movements I made... | Things I'm excited about... |
| <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |

Relaxation



2. Breathing exercises can help calm anxiety

Here are a few you can start with.



Breathing in colour

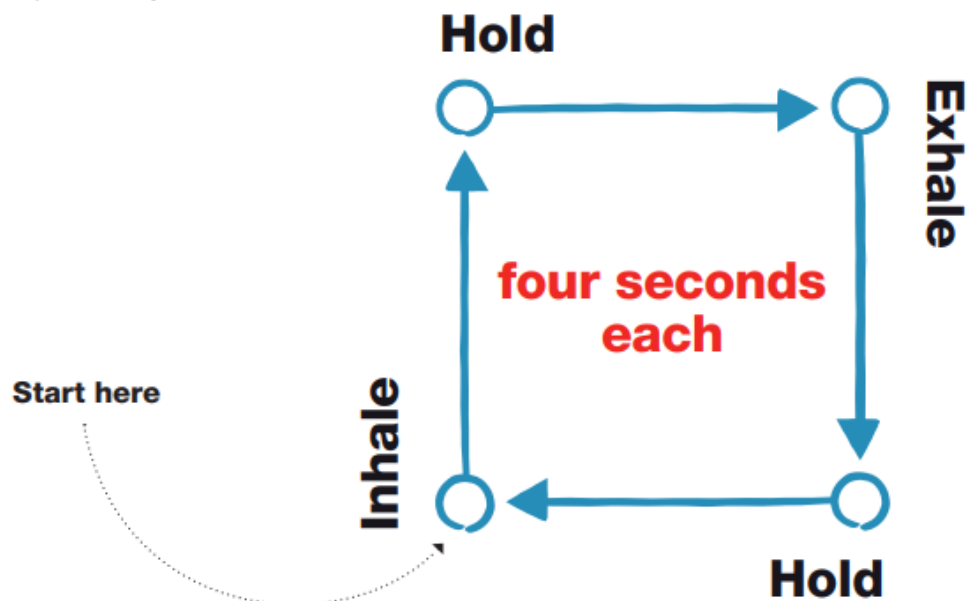
- Picture a colour you associate with happy, positive thoughts.
- Now picture another colour; for thoughts that are not positive.
- Take a slow breath in. Now picture breathing in that wonderful, positive colour. Imagine the breath is reaching your fingers and toes.
- Take a slow breath out and imagine you're breathing out the negative colour.
- Blow it far away from you.
- Repeat this exercise a few times.

Does it help? How do you feel now?

Box breathing

- Take a deep in breath. As you breath in, count to four slowly. Notice the air entering your lungs.
- Now hold your breath and count to four. Avoid inhaling or exhaling.
- Release your breath slowly, again for four seconds.
- At the end of your breath, hold it for another four seconds.
- Repeat this process as many times as you need.

Did it help? How do you feel now?



3. Set a routine

Try to set a time to get into bed to create a routine, helping your body get used to regular sleeping times.



4. Limit screen time just before sleep

If you can, also attempt to remove 'blue light objects', such as phones and laptops, from your sleeping space.

5. Do something for you

Finding something relaxing that you enjoy doing before bed can help towards a better night sleep. Maybe read something that interests you, dim the lights, have a cup of calming decaffeinated tea or listen to music.



Mindfulness in nature

Recreation



Go to a space outside that you love, such as a garden, park or leafy street. Try our mindful walking in nature routine.

- **Walk** at a natural, slow pace.
- **Focus on your breathing**, take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then settle into a natural rhythm.
- **Now take a look around you**; how does it feel to be outside?
- **Notice your senses**. What can you hear? What can you see? What can you smell? What can you touch?
- Are you able to **pick up a leaf, or touch the bark of a tree?** What do you notice about how they look and feel?
- When you are done, **shift your attention back to your walking**. How could walking in nature help others around you to feel more connected and how can you pass this on to help someone else?

If you are unable to go outside, **look out of a window**. Take a note of what you can see. You could draw plants or animals you have seen and try to find out their correct names, for example.



GOOD LUCK!



Text SHOUT to 85258

shout 85258 here for you 24/7

YOUNGmINDS
fighting for young people's mental health



mind



stem4's mental health apps

CALMHARM

A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm
www.calmharm.co.uk • @calmharmapp

CLEARFEAR

A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety
www.clearfear.co.uk • @clearfearapp

MOVE MOOD

A free app to help teenagers manage low mood and depression
www.movemood.co.uk • @appmovemood

COMBINED MINDS

A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support
www.combinedminds.co.uk • @combmindsapp