



# Relaxation & Wellbeing Workbook



## INTRODUCTION

If you are looking for ideas and techniques to help you relax and improve your wellbeing this booklet is designed to help you.

It includes a range of easy to use techniques to help you improve the way you cope with anxiety, deal with uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, and achieve a more relaxed state of mind.

Feel free to try out as many or as few techniques as you like. The booklet is not designed as a workbook to follow activities in sequence, it is intended as a mini-resource bank for you to use as and when you feel you need it.

Why not try to set aside a little bit of time each day to try some of these relaxation techniques? If you find any techniques particularly helpful we encourage you to revisit them when you feel you need to relax.

# GRATITUDE

A daily practice of gratitude can be a great way to lower stress and anxiety levels. Although you can do this at any time of the day, the evening time is a particularly good time to help to lower your stress levels, helping you to switch off from your day and fall into a deep sleep.

By practising gratitude it can help to trigger many positive emotions including love, joy, gratitude, contentment and hope, in addition to reducing the activity of the emotional brain.

More importantly it can help you feel happier and give you a more positive outlook on life, whilst also reducing your stress levels.





## Activity - Keep a Gratitude Journal or Diary

Try to set aside some time each day, maybe before you go to sleep, to write a list of all things that have gone well for you that day, and all the things you are grateful for.

You may find it helpful to use a journal or diary and keep it by your bed. Make a note of three things each day that you are grateful for. This doesn't need to be complicated it can be something such as; a fun experience, an act of kindness, something to be proud of, a valuable lesson learned, listening to a favourite song, or spending time with a friend.

My three things to be grateful for today:-

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....



## REFRAMING

There are many benefits from changing the way we view the everyday stress that we may encounter. If we can change the way in which we think about a difficult or stressful situation we can improve both our physical and mental wellbeing.

By reframing a stressful experience it can help us feel good and we benefit from the positive physiological changes in our body.

### Activity - Reframe The Day

Practice being kind to yourself by reframing something from your day.

Think about something you did during the day that you might have done differently, reframe it positively and let go of any unwanted feelings, guilt or self-blame.

Write down three things that went well for you today. Then after each thing write a sentence to say why the positive event happened and what you can learn from the experience.



1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

3 .....

.....

Try to practice this exercise daily, don't worry if it feels a little strange to start with. Keep practising and you will become more confident with the process of pausing and reflecting on positive events.

# COPING SKILLS - ANXIETY

## Deep breathing

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises.

Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: **Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.**



## Progressive muscle relaxation

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed on the next pages, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain.

Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

See the next page.



## Feet

Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them.

## Calves

Point or flex your feet, then let them relax.

## Thighs

Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax.

## Torso

Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall.

## Back

Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them.



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## Shoulders

Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.

## Arms

Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.

## Hands

Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers.

## Face

Scrunch your facial features to the centre of your face, then relax.

## Full Body

Squeeze all muscles together, then release all tension.

## Imagery

Your thoughts have the power to change how you feel. If you think of something sad, it's likely you'll start to feel sad.

The opposite is also true: When you think of something positive and calming, you feel relaxed. The imagery technique harnesses this power to reduce anxiety.

Think of a place that you find comforting. It could be a secluded beach, your bedroom, a quiet mountaintop, or even a loud concert.

For 5 to 10 minutes, use all your senses to imagine this setting in great detail. Don't just think fleetingly about this place...really imagine it.

See the next page for more ideas.





What do you **see** around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.



What sounds can you **hear**? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.



Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? What is the flavour like? How does it **taste**? Savour all the tastes of the food or drink.



What can you **feel**? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.



What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air **smell** like? Take some time to appreciate the scents.

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

After a trauma, it's normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms.

**Grounding techniques** help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

## 5-4-3-2-1 technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses.

Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

See the next page for more details.



### **What are 5 things you can see?**

Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.



### **What are 4 things you can feel?**

Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.



### **What are 3 things you can hear?**

Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.



### **What are 2 things you can smell?**

Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.



## What is 1 thing you can taste?

Carry chewing gum, sweets, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavours.

### Categories

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.

Movies  
Sport Teams  
Animals  
Countries  
Colours  
Cities

Books  
Cars  
TV Shows  
Cereals  
Fruit and Vegetables  
Famous People

*For a variation on this activity, try naming items in a category alphabetically. For example, for the fruits and vegetables category, say “apple, banana, carrot,” and so on.*

## Body awareness

The body awareness technique will bring you into the here-and-now by directing your focus to sensations in the body. Pay special attention to the physical sensations created by each step.

**1**

Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.

**2**

Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.

**3**

Stamp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.

**4**

Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.

5

Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.

6

Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.

7

Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.

8

Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.



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## Mental exercises

Use mental exercises to take your mind off uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. They are discreet and easy to use at nearly any time or place. Experiment to see which work best for you.

Name all the objects you see.

Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, how to shoot a basketball, prepare your favourite meal, or tie a knot.

Count backwards from 100 by 7.

Pick up an object and describe it in detail. Describe its colour, texture, size, weight, scent, and any other qualities you notice.

Spell your full name, and the names of three other people, backwards.

Name all your family members, their ages, and one of their favourite activities.

Read something backwards, letter-by-letter.  
Practice for at least a few minutes.

Think of an object and “draw” it in your mind,  
or in the air with your finger. Try drawing your  
home, a vehicle, or an animal.

## MINDFULNESS

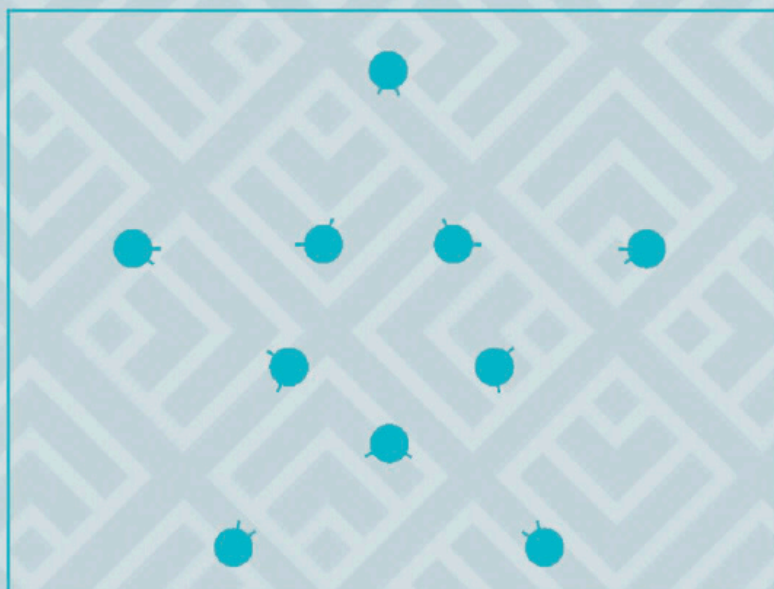
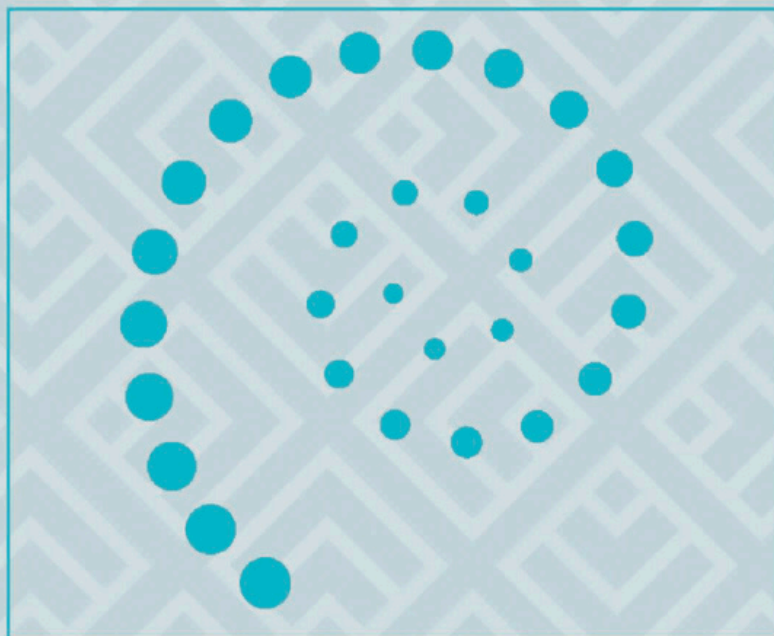
### Mindfulness breathing dot-to-dot

There are many ways you can experiment with focusing on your breath. One fun way is to play the dot-to-dot breathing game. This is a very simple game that can help you feel settled and calm.

#### **Instructions - see diagrams on next page**

- Find a quiet place to sit down.
- Rest your pen on the first dot of the diagram.
  - Breathe in and out for a few moments.
- Make a start by drawing the first line. Do this very slowly. Make sure it takes a whole breath to get from one dot to the next.

- Breathe in, draw a line from one dot to the next.
- Breathe out, draw a line from one dot to the next.
- Keep doing this very slowly until the dot-to-dot picture is completed.





For further information and mental health & wellbeing support contact Sarah at

[www.yourbestmind.co.uk](http://www.yourbestmind.co.uk)



SCAN ME