



Year 11 Mindfulness and Wellbeing Booklet

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

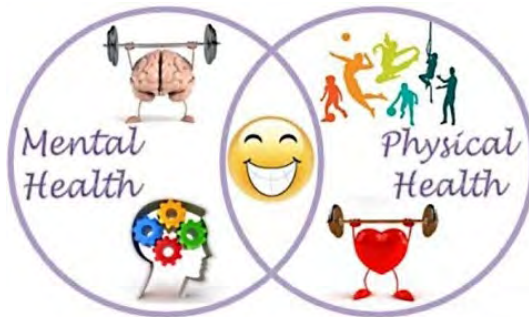


While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful.



It is just as important to be mentally healthy as it is to be physically healthy.



The term "fight or flight" is also known as the stress response. It's what the body does as it prepares to confront or avoid danger. When appropriately invoked, the stress response helps us rise to many challenges. But trouble starts when this response is constantly provoked by less momentous, day-to-day events, such as money woes, exam pressures, friendship or relationship problems.



Stress has mental, emotional and physical symptoms



Headaches / backpain / heartburn



Sometimes we don't realise our physical discomfort is connected to our emotional state



Mindfulness allows us to check in with our minds and bodies



What is important is to know how you can deal with these pressures when they arise.

So, how can you destress when feeling under pressure?

There are lots of ways you can destress, but what you need to remember is EVERYONE is DIFFERENT. What you find relaxing, someone else may not and vice versa. This is why we have lots of different mindful techniques that we have been trying in class. Don't give up on mindfulness if you don't like one of the activities or it doesn't work for you – you need to find out which technique you like best and what works for you.

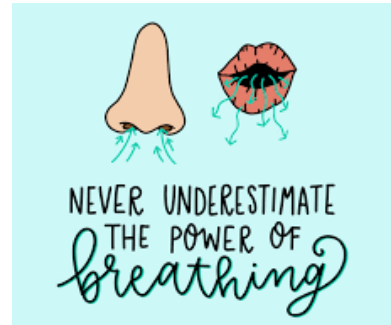
Take a look over the next few pages and see if any of these techniques can work for you...





Deep Breathing

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a **deep breath** in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. ...
4. **Breathe** out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. ...
5. Do this **breathing** 3 to 10 times.



Belly breathing

Automatically slows the heart rate, helping to relax & calm

The most efficient and relaxed way of getting enough air into your lungs.

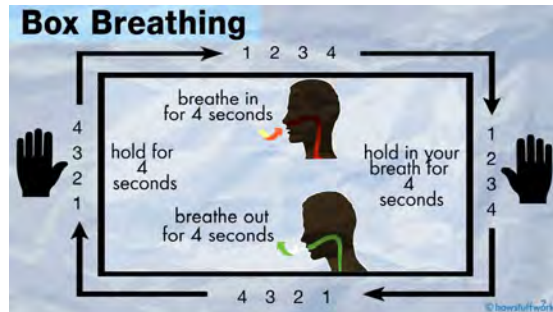
Supports the life skill of relaxation

Can boost energy levels with a few minutes of relaxation throughout the day

Emulates breathing during the regenerating processes (sleep, digesting food or resting)

Increased awareness of the breath & its effect on the body





Box breathing is a simple technique that a person can do anywhere, including an exam room, desk or even on a bus. You should sit with their back supported in a comfortable chair and their feet on the floor.

1. Close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose while counting to four slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.
2. Hold your breath inside while counting slowly to four. Try not to clamp your mouth or nose shut. Simply avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.
3. Begin to slowly exhale for 4 seconds.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 at least three times. Ideally, repeat the three steps for 4 minutes, or until calm returns.

If someone finds the technique challenging to begin with, they can try counting to three instead of four.



Guided Imagery



A stress management technique that allows you to imagine a person, place, or time that makes you feel relaxed, peaceful and happy.

- Imagery relies on the use of all of your senses.
- The mind is a very powerful tool that can have a tremendous effect on the body. Our bodies react the same whether we are actually experiencing something or just imagining something. For instance, if you think about lying on the beach in Hawaii, your body responds as if you are actually lying on the beach in Hawaii!

The Benefits Of

Guided Meditation

- Slow your heart rate
- Reduce fatigue
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce activity of stress hormones
- Slow your breathing
- Improve concentration & mood
- Increase blood flow
- Reduce muscle tension & pain

Remember that when you first begin to use imagery, it might feel strange, and you may have difficulty immersing yourself fully in your imagined scene. Don't give up, it will get easier!



How to practise:

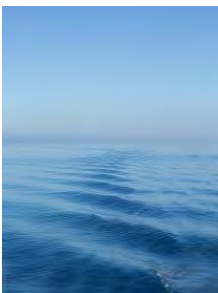
Find a private calm space and make yourself comfortable.

Take a few slow and deep breaths to centre your attention and calm yourself.

Close your eyes.

Imagine yourself in a beautiful location, where everything is as you would ideally have it. Some people visualize a beach, a mountain, a forest, or a being in a favourite room sitting on a favourite chair.

Imagine yourself becoming calm and relaxed. Alternatively, imagine yourself smiling, feeling happy and having a good time.



Focus on the different sensory attributes present in your scene so as to make it more vivid in your mind. If you are imagining the beach, spend some time vividly imagining the warmth of the sun on your skin, the smell of the ocean, seaweed and salt spray, and the sound of the waves, wind and seagulls.

Remain within your scene for five to ten minutes or until you feel relaxed. Open your eyes again and then re-join your world.

There are Ten Visualization Skills





Meditation



Meditation is the habitual process of training your mind to focus and redirect your thoughts.

The popularity of **meditation** is increasing as more people discover its many health benefits.

You can use it to increase awareness of yourself and your surroundings.

Benefits:

- Reduces stress
- Controls anxiety
- Promotes emotional health
- Enhances self-awareness
- Lengthens attention span
- Can generate kindness
- Improves sleep
- Helps control pain





How to practise:

- Sit comfortably. ...
- Notice what your legs are doing. ...
- Straighten your upper body—but don't stiffen. ...
- Notice what your arms are doing. ...
- Soften your gaze. ...
- Feel your breath. ...
- Notice when your mind wanders from your breath. ...
- Be kind about your wandering mind.



How do I know if I'm meditating correctly?

The following are some of the **signs** that your **meditation** is on track. Don't worry **if** you **can't** hit them all...just close your eyes and relax. You'll get better and better over time.

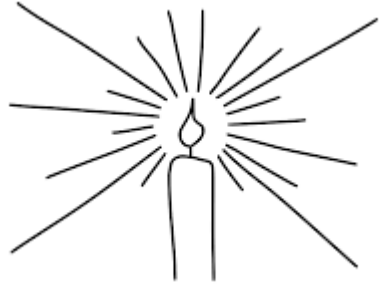
You'll get better and better over time!

1. Being still.
2. Just 'Being'
3. No reactions
4. Total awareness
5. Time flies

Other forms of meditation include: Body Scan Meditation; Sound Bell Meditation and Observational meditation. See the back of the booklet for links.



Trataka



Trataka is an ancient Hindu method of **meditation** that involves staring at a single point such as a small object, black dot or candle flame.

The practitioner may fix attention on a symbol a black dot, a flame, a mirror or any point, and stare at it.

A candle should be 1 metre plus away, the flame level with the eyes.

Relax but keep the spine erect and remain wakeful and vigilant. The eyes will begin to water.

At this point close the eyes and concentrate on the after image.

Trataka - Candle Gazing

sparkly results

Benefits:

- Improves vision and eye sight
- Improves memory & intelligence
- Facilitates deeper mantra meditations
- Enhances self confidence & strength
- Deeper connection to the oneness
- Increases productivity & energy
- Provides stress relief
- Third eye opening
- Connects you to the fire element: the element of creativity, will, & passion



Studies have found that people who practice Trataka meditation show a decrease in scores on anxiety, depression and tension surveys. They also showed a decrease in blood pressure. All indicators of decreased stress--after a single session of about 30 minutes.

Precaution:

- As this practice involves constant staring without blinking, students who are new to this may overdo it.
- Don't over strain your eyes.





Yoga

Yoga is an ancient form of exercise that focuses on strength, flexibility and breathing to boost physical and mental wellbeing.



Yoga lets you tune in, chill out, shape up - all at the same time!



The main components of yoga are postures (a series of movements designed to increase strength and flexibility) and breathing.

The practice originated in India about 5,000 years ago and has been adapted in other countries in a variety of ways.



Want to give it go? Try these basic moves...



If you enjoyed this, take a look at the links on the last page for more information.



Tai Chi

What is tai chi?

Tai chi, also called tai chi chuan, combines deep breathing and relaxation with flowing movements. Originally developed as a martial art in 13th-century China, tai chi is now practised around the world as a health-promoting exercise.



Where did tai chi originate?

Tai chi is a slow moving, meditative exercise that began in ancient China a few thousand years ago. It is one of the major branches of the traditional Chinese martial arts and involves a series of slow, meditative body movements that were originally designed for self-defence and to promote inner peace and calm.

What are the health benefits of tai chi?



While there's scope for more rigorous research on tai chi's health benefits, studies have shown that it can help people reduce stress, improve posture, balance and general mobility, and increase muscle strength in the legs.



Give it a try...



棚 Ward-off



捋 Roll back



挤 press



按 Push



採 Pluck



捋 Lay



肘 Elbow



靠 Lean sideways

Enjoying this? Take a look at the links on the last page.



Positive Distractions



When we hear the word “distraction”, we often associate it with something that gets in the way of us reaching our goals.

Positive distraction can be defined as, “an environment feature that elicits positive feelings and holds attention without taxing or stressing the individual, thereby blocking worrisome thoughts.” With that definition, of course there are some exceptions.

However, how often do we focus on the benefits of distraction? Distractions can be healthy if used in a positive way. Indeed, this is the art that makes you feel happy, positive and optimistic for the future. It has a presence in the healing space without dominating the senses.





Some examples:

POSITIVE DISTRACTIONS

1. MAKE A CUP OF TEA
2. DRAW SOMETHING
3. WRITE AIMLESSLY UNTIL YOU FEEL BETTER
4. WRITE A HAIKU
5. WRITE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU SMILE
6. READ A BOOK
7. LOOK UP DIY.
8. MAKE A LIST OF DREAMS AND GOALS
9. MAKE A TO-DO LIST
10. HAVE COFFEE WITH A FRIEND
11. SPEND TIME IN NATURE
12. PICK FLOWERS
13. SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS
14. BROWSE 'RECOVERY', 'POSITIVE' AND 'HEALTH' TAGS
15. TALK TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T OFTEN SPEAK TO



Feeling the 'Exam Stress'? Here are some top tips to deal with it.

Remember... everyone is going through this, you can only do your best. Try to be as organised as you can be, this will be a huge help to you... revision plans do work!

- Remember to breathe (take a moment to gather your thoughts)
- Eat, sleep and exercise well
- Set realistic goals and plans for revision
- Don't go it alone, ask your peers for advice, remember they are going through this as well
- Pace yourself through panic
- Believe in yourself, you can do this!
- If you feel like you are struggling, talk to someone that you can trust





How can I look after my mental health?

See rest as valuable for revision

Aminah says: Guilt is a common feeling shared by many throughout the exam season, and a feeling I know all too well. Many people feel guilty when they are doing activities other than revising. As hard as it can feel to do, letting go and relaxing is an important part of the process. After all, having a clear and rejuvenated mind is important.

Get outside

Fatima says: I am a great supporter of cosy pyjama days-in, but I am also a great supporter of getting fresh air and sunlight. Nature is surprisingly reviving on those days when you're feeling a bit urch. Trust me with this one, it's a game changer. Zombifying in your room may feel comfortable at the time but it can actually sink you into a really negative headspace without you realising it. Whether you're into sport or not, endorphins are great things and really do work; get yourself moving whenever you feel you can.

Plan in your breaks

Alishba says: Plan your revision around activities, meeting up with friends, and relaxing - not the other way around. When making a revision timetable, firstly begin by filling in fun things which YOU want to do. You can then work your revision schedule around that. Having things to look forward to acts as a motivator to revise, with the knowledge that something enjoyable is coming up.

Stay realistic

Aminah says: We all have those days where revision just feels impossible and that is totally okay - listen to your body/mind and look after yourself first and foremost. Doing something small is better than doing nothing. All the little bits add up in the end.



Short bursts, not long hours

Aminah says: No matter how much of a superhero you feel, you cannot work all day. Divide your day up into productive blocks of revision so that you can comfortably allow yourself the time in-between to do what makes you feel good. Don't feel guilty for not working dusk till dawn; you are human and should treat yourself like one.

Believe in your ability

Fatima says: You'll never feel you've done enough to satisfy yourself. You could go through every textbook once, twice, three times and still feel you don't know enough. There comes a point where you need to trust yourself; you won't know everything, but that's okay! Examiners are not seeking the perfection you may expect of yourself - you will always be your worst critic. Know that you WILL pull it off on the day, even if it doesn't go exactly to plan. Trust the process and remember you're not alone!

Grades don't define you

Alishba says: It is so important to remember that your grades don't define your worth as a person, whether they are what you wanted or not. You are unique and special for so many reasons other than the results you collect at the end of August. Work hard, but only as hard as your mental health will let you comfortably!

- **Quality over quantity**
- **Make posters**
- **Get enough sleep**
- **Find a space that works for you**
- **Write your worries down**
- **Try new methods**
- **The exams will be over soon!**
- **Be proud of yourself!**



Further links:

Deep breathing:

4-7-8 technique –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxbdx-SeOOo>

5 finger breathing –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSgOW879jjA>

Guided imagery:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar_W4jSzOIM

Hot Air Balloon Ride –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWoXsMYG-iA>

A Walk in the Forest –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-JZe2wwyms>

A Secret Treehouse-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWOHcGF1Tmc>

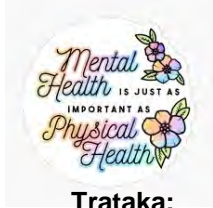
The Beach –

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar_W4jSzOIM

Progressive muscle relaxation:

How to guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClqPtWzoxSs>



Trataka:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfpLea9OurA>

Body Scan Meditation:

10 minute body scan –

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

8 minute body scan –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS2yDmWk0vs>

3 minute body scan –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiVvCZo2Exk>

Observation Meditation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhqzwbiky2w>

Yoga:

Mind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK2XBduF84I&list=PLui6Eyny-Uzx8YZ3Pw0r6jq6UuwYW61Rj&index=1>

Body: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47Se2HWSv9k&list=PLui6Eyny-Uzx8YZ3Pw0r6jq6UuwYW61Rj&index=2>

Heart: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0ZqRJWd_sg&list=PLui6Eyny-Uzx8YZ3Pw0r6jq6UuwYW61Rj&index=3

Tai Chi:

Information:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4bW7dcH7WpKYVGprPSjJWWx/the-taste-of-tai-chi-challenge-makeyourmove>

A routine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DeihMgXLDk>



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



KOOTH (Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people)



SAMARITANS 24/7 116 123)



BEAT (www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk) youthline
3pm–10pm 0808 801 0711



Papyrus (Prevention of young suicide)



CHAT HEALTH 07507 330 205 (Confidential and anonymous text messaging service for young people)

ChildLine

0800 1111



Childline (www.childline.org.uk)



Young minds (www.youngminds.org) Parental helpline



42nd Street (www.42ndstreet.org.uk) Parental helpline



Manchester Mind (www.manchestermind.org.uk) help for mental health in Manchester)



LGBT Foundation (<http://lgbtfoundation/>)