

Meditation and Mindfulness

Meditation or mindfulness can be a great tool to improve your resilience to stress, support your wellbeing and can be a great form of self-care.

It can also be daunting if it's something you've never tried, but luckily there are some really great resources out there whether it be step by step instructions or simply listening to a guided meditation. We've included some simple tips to help you get started.

1. Once you're in a comfortable, quiet place, begin to relax your body. You can close your eyes or leave them open or half-open.
2. Start to pay attention to your breathing. Notice the air moving in through your nose and out through your mouth. Don't over-breathe. Allow your breath to move naturally as you observe it.
3. Breathe in and out as you connect with each inhalation and exhalation, noticing how it feels as you begin the inhalation, how it feels as you are between the inhalation and the exhalation and the sensations of your breath on the exhalation.
4. Follow your breath through to a full cycle from the beginning of an inhalation, where your lungs are full, back to where they're empty.
5. Notice the rise and fall of your belly; the air moving in and out of your nostrils.
6. As thoughts and feelings arise in the form of judgments—wondering if you're doing this right, thinking about what you have to do later or questioning if it's worth your time to be doing this—simply observe the thoughts without added judgment and let them go.
7. Once you realize your thoughts have hijacked your attention, don't struggle with them. Gently bring your attention back and focus on your breath.
8. Every time you notice your attention leaving your breath, bring your awareness back to concentrating on your breathing.



Routine

For many of us at this time, our normal routine has changed considerably and it can be tempting whilst spending so much time at home to forget to keep ourselves busy but many studies have shown that keeping to a routine can really help to bolster your mental health. Also keeping to a routine will make it easier to return to your normal routine once the lockdown has been lifted.

Some of the types of things to consider could be:

- A set bedtime and wake-up time.
- A healthy breakfast. Time to blow off steam.
- Exercise.
- Taking medications at the same time daily.
- Prioritize your to-do list.
- Appreciate what's good in your life.
- Adequate sleep.
- Fun and simple pleasures.
- Build and enjoy your relationships.



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