

Your toolbox for difficult times

Mindfulness - When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future and worrying unnecessarily.



Above is the '5 things' exercise. Practice it when you are having a feeling of rising panic or anxiety.

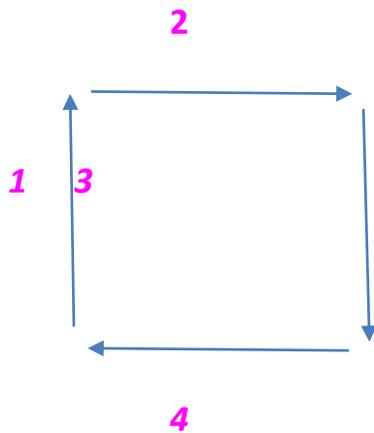
Breathing techniques....

A Starter

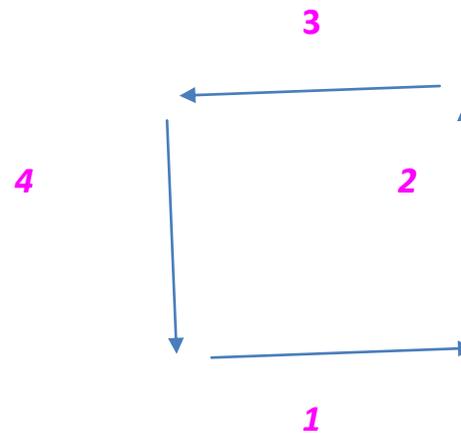
Slowly breathe in through the nose to a count of 5; slowly breathe out, through the mouth, to a count of 5. Repeat the cycle 5 times. You can check out this link <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>

Breathe and visualise

Slowly breathe in through the mouth to a count of 4. Draw in your mind with each single count, a side of a square in clockwise direction. Visualise the complete square. Slowly breathe out, to a count of four and with each single count, erase in your mind, one side of the square at a time, in the reverse order. Complete 5 repeat cycles.



Draw 1-2-3-4



Erase 1-2-3-4

'Out out' breathing method.

Very good but vigorous. Based on exhaling that is more calming than inhaling. Use the same postural advice as in basic starter method link above.

Breathe out through your mouth evenly to a slow count of 10 (towards the end there may be nothing to breath out unless you have practiced this a few times). Breathe in to a slow count of 5, through the nose if possible. Hold for a slow count of 5. Breathe out to a slow count of 10 through the mouth. Repeat 3-5 times.

Guided meditation – takes stress out of trying to meditate. Guided meditation can alleviate anxiety by interrupting patterns of thinking that perpetuate stress.

You can check out he 'Headspace' link below. It is a free option. There is no need to subscribe. You can select your appropriate guided meditation.

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/guided-meditation>. Go to the link, sign in with Facebook (for example) or register, there are a few choices about when you would like to do this (morning or evening), and select your level (not done it before, done a little meditation, or done quite a bit) and select what area you would like to focus on from the list given.

Visualised guided meditation presented by 'The Honest Guys' can be accessed via You Tube. It is a free resource:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jyy0ra2WcQQ>. This link takes you to images of the seashore, with accompanying meditation. Just press play and relax.

The above two links are suggestions only. Feel free to make your own choice.

Physical exercise – address the stress from physical/visible and mental/inner restlessness. Create a sense of well-being. Helps with sleep.

You can check out the following link for The Body Coach TV (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2wp8lpxn9s>). This one is for the seniors but perhaps apply to some of us who are on the sedentary side, regardless of age and you can do it in your living room. You can choose an activity at your level of fitness and build up slowly.

The above link is a suggestion only. Feel free to make your own choice.

Circadian Rhythm – our biological clock needs to be in tune with day and night cycle with exposure to sunlight during the day and darkness at night. This activates our adrenocortical system, release melatonin and optimises alertness, energy, mood and sleep.

Make sure that you don't lose track of days during the lock down periods, as one day merges into another. Structure your day with regular time to get up from bed, have regular meals, plan some activity, exercise and be mindful of temptation of too much caffeine, nicotine and alcohol through boredom. Expose yourself to sunlight within the current government guidelines. Retire to a dark, quiet room for sleep at night and maintain sleep hygiene.

Remember that you are a very resourceful and an amazing person. You will find that out for yourself!