

# Top Tips to improve your mental health.

Just as we all have physical health,  
we all have mental health too.

Just as our bodies can become  
unwell, so can our minds, and the  
two can be linked to each other.

So a health body equals a health mind  
and vice versa.

Please follow these top tips during  
those tough times, we come across.

Get the basics right.

- Eat
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Avoid stimulants and  
Depressants
- Assertiveness
- Relax
- Mindfulness
- Breathe

## Eat.

Having a balance diet is necessary for both our physical and mental health.

Avoiding processed foods and eating fresh foods allows our bodies to process them better and have the correct type of fuel in us to power our bodies and fuel our brain.



Sweet treats are good in small doses, but not all the time. Sugar is addictive and has a huge effect on how we sleep and how we feel.

## Sleep.

We generally need at least 8 hours sleep per night, however everyone is different.



Sleeping allows our brains to recharge and process the day's events.

**Brain**  
**Recharge**  
**100 %**



## Exercise.

Even the smallest amount of exercise is good for our mental wellbeing.

Everything from a 30 minute walk to your favourite sport helps keep us fit and well.



Getting back into nature is also a great healer.



## Avoid stimulants and Depressant.

Tea and coffee, while okay in small doses, contain caffeine. Which is good for picking us up in the morning but too much can cause us anxiety especially before bedtime and will keep us awake and disrupt our sleep.



Energy drinks are full of sugars our bodies can't handle well, they are also higher in caffeine than tea and coffee.

Screen time, mobile phones, tablets, and other IT devices create blue light. This tricks the brain into think it daylight. Also the content we watch can stimulate out brain preventing them from switching off.

Smoking Cigarettes is also bad for us as nicotine upsets the chemicals in our brain, not to mention the damage to our bodies. Mix this with Cannabis, a Depressant, will lead to depression and other clinical mental health illnesses.



Alcohol is also a depressant, which like Cannabis causes long term health conditions, both physical and mental

## Be Assertive.

sure **decisive** confident **firm** **insistent** **positive**  
certain  
**assertive**

- Say "no". It's easy to become overwhelmed by what other expect of us. Sometime we have to put ourselves first and say no.
- Talk about what you want or need. Don't bottle up or leave it to others to figure out.
- Respect others. We just don't know what going on in someone else's life. Showing others empathy and respect not only helps them but helps you. What goes around comes around.
- Have self-belief. Believing you can do something tends to have the effect of you actually being able to do it.



## Relax

- Breathe deeply. Filling our lungs from the diaphragm up help oxygenate our blood and calms anxiety allowing our brain to work better and solve problems easier.
- Learn something new. Doing the same old thing over and over again affects our mental health. Learning new skills or a new subject keeps our brain active and well.
- Visualise. Have a plan of what you want to do and how you are going to do it. Going into to a situation blind cause a lot of anxiety and having a plan gives you control over it.
- Have fun. Always make sure you enjoy yourself. Make time for hobbies, friends, family and anything else you enjoy doing that recharges you.



## Mindfulness

The fundamentals of mindfulness.

- Pay attention – focus on the task at hand and give it your full attention.
- Be in the moment – experience the moment you are in right now.
- Don't react, respond – don't automatically react to a situation. Think about it and then respond.
- Don't judge – don't label something or someone as good or bad. Allow yourself to experience how things are in that moment.
- Be open hearted – be less critical of yourself, others and the situation. Always try and bring warm, compassion and friendliness to every situation.
- Positive affirmations- be kind to yourself and regularly give yourself praise.

## Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is about being aware of the present moment and experiencing your sensations, thoughts and emotions without judgment. It gives your brain a chance to rest and recharge.

Mindfulness can be best described like walking a dog...



Mind Full, or Mindful?

## Breathe

A little known fact about humans is that we don't really breathe properly. Most of us shallow breathe, which means we only don't fill our lungs from the diaphragm up.

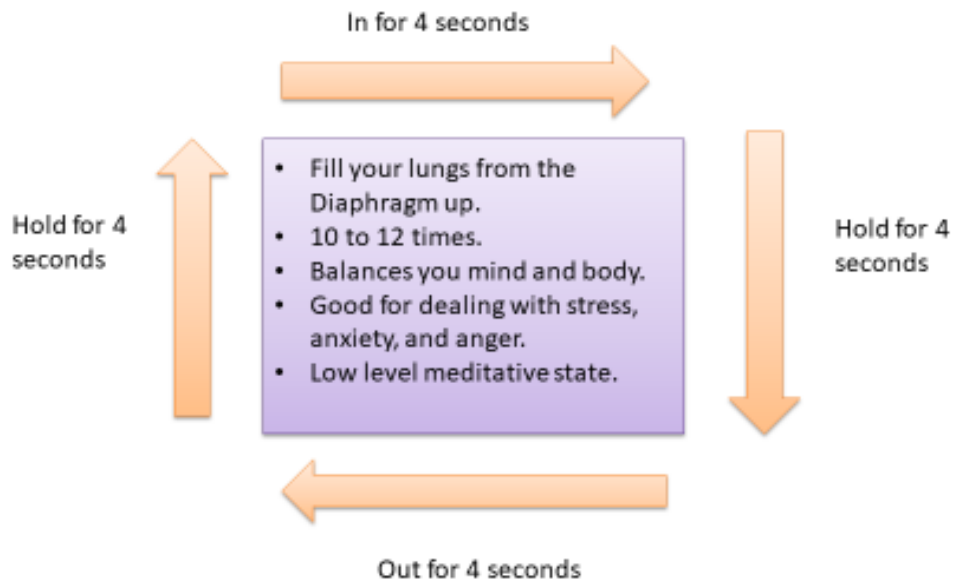
This causes us to be in an almost constant state of anxiety as it makes our body and brain think we are getting ready to fight or flight.

There are many deep breathing exercises to be found. Two good ones are Box Breathing and Calm Breathing.

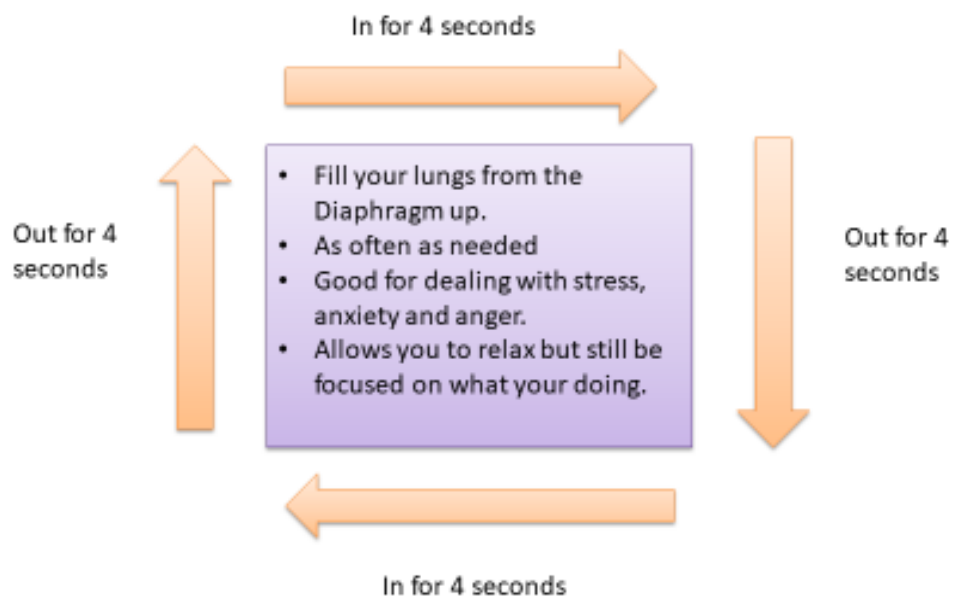
Box breathing is really good if you were about to go into a stressful situation such as an exam.

Allowing ourselves time beforehand, we can use this to calm ourselves and allow our brain to work better doing the complex thinking.

## Box Breathing



## Calm Breathing



## Other Support Agencies

### Kooth

Free online counselling service for emotional wellbeing platform for young people 11-18 years old. [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

### Darlington Mind

Free counselling service and awareness workshops for young people 11-18 years old.

Tel – 01325 283169 or [Darlingtonmind.com](http://Darlingtonmind.com)

### The Mix

### Compass Buzz

Buzz us is a text service for young people aged 11-18 years old who live in North Yorkshire.

Tel – 07520631168

 mind Darlington

 mind in Hambleton and Richmondshire