

**Mind tips for better  
mental health**  
sleep



# mind tips



sleep

Sleep problems – even quite mild ones – can damage your wellbeing and quality of life. Trying some of these tips may help you to get the sleep you need.

### **Make your bedroom a calm space**

Make sure the light, temperature and sound level suits you. Cool, dark and quiet usually works.

### **Turn off electrical screens**

TVs, computers and phones all stimulate your brain, making it hard to relax.

### **Try a breathing technique**

In a comfortable position, breathe in deeply; then breathe out slowly – making your out-breath longer than your in-breath. Repeat until you feel relaxed.

### **Notice what you eat and drink**

Caffeine, alcohol and sugary foods may give short-term help, but they can all disturb your sleep patterns.

### **Check for a physical cause**

Pain, illness or other unknown physical problems can disturb your sleep. Visit your GP to investigate potential causes and get help with treating them.

### **Try to do some exercise**

This will improve your sleep, as long as it's not late in the evening.

### **Talk to your partner**

Snoring, preferred side of the bed and other common issues can often be easily resolved.

### **Plan your day**

Try to do more worrying tasks early in the day and relaxing ones later. Before bed, write down troubling thoughts to 'get rid of them'.

### **Keep a sleep diary**

This may help you spot patterns to your everyday habits and your sleep, and what might be causing you problems. You can find diaries to fill in, on the internet.

### **Change your medication**

Many drugs, particularly common ones for mental health problems, can affect your sleep. If this is the case, talk to your GP to discuss alternatives.

**Mind tips for better  
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stress



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stress

Most of us feel stressed at times. If you experience stress, why not try out some of these tips to see how they work for you. They may help you feel calmer and better able to cope.

### **Find out what triggers your stress**

You can then think about what you can stop doing or change to be able to manage the triggers better.

### **Sort out your worries**

Divide them into those that you can do something about (either now or soon) and those that you can't.

### **Get organised**

Make a list of jobs; tackle one task at a time; alternate dull tasks with interesting ones.

### **Take control**

Get started by doing one task you feel you can manage; for example, making an appointment or doing the dishes.

### **Take a regular break**

Give yourself a brief break when you feel things are getting on top of you – get a hot drink or a glass of water or take a short stroll.

### **List your achievements**

When you have done something you feel proud of, write it down. Remember to include the everyday tasks, like shopping, or preparing a meal. When you feel stressed, read the list to give yourself a boost.

### **Be active**

Physical activity can help you feel calmer, stronger, and better able to deal with emotional stresses. Try something you enjoy e.g. walking the dog, dancing, playing a sport or gardening.

### **Get a different perspective**

Discussing your problems with someone else can help you get ideas about new ways of dealing with your problem or stress. Sharing your thoughts can also help you feel calmer and listened to.

Mind tips for better  
mental health  
relaxation



# mind tips



relaxation

Relaxation can help to reduce stress and anxiety and improve your mental wellbeing, helping you to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Try out these tips and see if they work for you.

### **Pause for thought**

Introduce small moments of relaxation into your day. Take a moment to stop and look around, or close your eyes and listen to the sounds you can hear. Mindfulness techniques like this can help you to feel calmer and more in the moment.

### **Breathe**

Gently breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, keeping the pace slow and regular. Slowly tense then relax all the muscles in your body, starting at your toes and working up to your head. Afterwards just take some time to be still and focus on how your body feels.

### **Listen to some music**

Your favourite tunes can help you to switch off. Tracks with a slower tempo, or designed with relaxation in mind, might be a good choice.

### **Try active relaxation**

Gentle exercise like yoga, tai-chi or Pilates, or a stroll in the fresh air can give you time to unwind your body and mind. Exercise also releases 'feel-good' hormones, which can help reduce depression and anxiety.

### **Where are you happiest?**

A tropical beach? The park on a sunny day? Imagine you're there. Think of the sounds and smells around you, and how you feel. This can bring back nice memories and help you to unwind.

### **Keep practising**

Don't worry if relaxing doesn't come naturally. Set aside some time every day, or as often as you can, to try relaxing. Find a quiet, warm space where you won't be interrupted, to help keep your mind focused and away from everyday distractions.

**Mind tips for better  
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physical activity



# mind tips



physical activity

Physical activity can reduce depression and anxiety, and increase self-confidence. It also releases 'feel-good' hormones that make you want to be even more active. See if any of these ideas appeal to you.

### **Short of time?**

Try a brisk 10-minute walk twice a day to the office or school gates. Small increases in activity are easier to maintain and will give you a regular sense of success.

### **Do something you enjoy**

It could be dancing round the kitchen, a ball game or dog walking – anything. If you find it fun, you are more likely to want to keep doing it.

### **Explore the outdoors**

Being active outside, e.g. gardening or cycling, improves your wellbeing and can give you a sense of grounding and perspective.

### **Can't get going?**

Try joining a club or class. Other people can help you get motivated and it's a great way to increase your social contact. Or, if you want to, take a friend with you for support.

### **Racing thoughts?**

Lone sports, like running or swimming, can help you get some time to yourself and head space to think things over, away from everyday stresses.

### **Want to clear your head?**

Concentrating on playing a team sport or competitive game, e.g. football or tennis, can help turn your focus away from your worries. And you won't even realise you're exercising.

### **Pace yourself**

Build up gradually. Too much exercise can make stress worse or cause injury.

### **Think positive**

Celebrate any progress you make, however small. If it motivates you, set challenging but achievable goals, or keep an exercise diary.

**Mind tips for better  
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panic attacks



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panic attacks

If you experience panic attacks, try the tips below. They can reduce stresses in your life and help prevent panic. See which ones work for you.

### **Try a breathing exercise**

Breathe deeply into your stomach; then breathe out slowly – making your out-breath longer than your in-breath. Repeat until you feel calm.

### **Face your fear**

Tell yourself that all the symptoms you experience are caused by anxiety, it is not dangerous and it will pass. This can help you feel calmer and less fearful of future attacks.

### **Shift your focus**

Look at a flower, a picture or something that you find interesting or comforting. Really notice the details, the colours and any smells or sounds.

### **Listen to music**

Listening to peaceful music can help you to be calm.

### **Confide in someone**

Talking to someone you trust about how you feel, can also give you someone to contact when you start to feel anxious.

### **Join a support group**

This allows you to share feelings and discuss strategies and can be a useful way of meeting people who understand what you are experiencing.

### **Keep a diary**

Make a note of what happens each time you get anxious. This can help you spot patterns and what triggers your panic attacks.

### **Create your own coping card**

When you feel anxious, it can be hard to remember coping strategies that you have learned. It can be useful to list what you know will help (e.g. phone mum, do my breathing exercise) on a small card, and keep this in your bag or wallet.