

wee changes can make a big difference

Tips to feel more relaxed



Why relaxation matters

Relaxation is good for us as it helps us manage the natural stressors of life as well as when we are faced with life challenges. It is also good for us physically, which can help our immune system to be as healthy as possible. There are many reasons why we may feel tense or anxious, so making time to relax while it may not solve all our problems, may help give us space to recharge our batteries, giving us more energy and confidence to manage the problems we face.



Keep stimulants to a minimum

Watch the volume of coffee and even tea you drink as they both have caffeine, also energy drinks, can produce the opposite feeling to relaxation. Smoking, fizzy drinks, alcohol, drugs, too much sugar can all cause us issues as stimulants can make it hard to relax.

Eat a balanced diet

If we don't eat a balanced diet, we can be more likely to become unwell, suffer infections, feel tired even fatigued and everything can become an effort. When money is tight fresh fruit and veg maybe a challenge, but we can use tinned and frozen. This site offers further advice on the benefits of what constitutes a healthy diet www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition



Stay hydrated

Our bodies are pretty much made up of water and we need water for them to function well. When the weather is warm, drinking water helps regulate our body temperature, also we need water to keep our joints lubricated, help prevent infection, get nutrients around our body, help our organs function. Being hydrated can even improve sleep quality.

Making time to relax

There are different ways to relax and its finding one that works for you. Some people may have more time for self-care than others who may have, a demanding work schedule, excess hours, no breaks, cancelled holidays. They may be caring for someone else, they may be trying to juggle a family, work, caring for a relative the list goes on. Finding time can be hard, but finding time is even more important when you are busy, even if only a few minutes every day, can make a difference.

Relaxation in minutes

If you find it hard to find time to practice relaxation these tools may be helpful. www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/videos/video/relaxation-in-just-3-minutes There is also a video on the COPE Scotland website, "using the senses to relax". Co designed with colleagues who have experience of sense challenges www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/videos/video/using-the-senses-to-relax



Relaxation ideas if you have a wee bit more time

Learning to be calm when things are challenging, helps us to feel less tense. Have a look online for reputable Mindfulness sites and explore if learning Mindfulness may be of interest to you. Sometimes we have been tense for so long we feel quite anxious, maybe even have panic attacks. This piece may also be helpful for learning more about and how to self-manage panic attacks www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/wellness-tips/listen-and-relax

Be active

Being active and relaxation may sound like a contradiction, however, sometimes we have pent up energy which makes it harder to relax. Releasing this in a constructive way can help. This can be going for a walk, taking up a new hobby e.g. Yoga, you may find this piece interesting www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/yoga-is-it-for-me Even really putting some effort into a spring clean any season of the year! or polishing brass if you have some, or making bread, are all ways to put our energy into something which leaves us feeling fulfilled and relaxed.

Dealing with issues

If there is something, we need to deal with, but we keep putting it off then this can cause us tension and make it harder to relax. While Mindfulness is around being in the moment, learning to practice mindfulness can help us when we begin to feel overwhelmed by helping us focus on our breathing and bringing us back to the moment. There are many examples of Mindfulness practice on www.freemindfulness.org/download. Feeling calmer and more relaxed enables us to face challenges and be more optimistic of finding a solution or at least suffering less.

Learn to let go

Sometimes we get overwhelmed by what we see as injustice. The actions of others, which cause us stress, which we replay over, and over, which only leads to a spiral of tension. Learning to let go is not easy! But worth the effort. Instead become aware of our inner voice and find ways to reprogramme it to find things we appreciate and that is good in the world, as there is also good if we look for it. This piece may be useful www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/switching-what-we-focus-on-and-lighting-the-candles-of-hope-for-ourselves-and-each-other



Find your happy

Laughter can be good for helping us relax. You may find this wee video on laughter yoga interesting www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/videos/video/you-re-having-a-laugh There are also our funny go to programmes, which again can make us laugh. Maybe there is a reason there were so many seasons of 'Only Fools and Horses'!



Cuddles to help relax

A cuddle can also help ease tension. This wee video about the butterfly hug maybe of interest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGGJrqsctU> There are also items called weighted blankets which can give the feeling of being cuddled. However, do some research before investing in one.

Reading for relaxation or listening to music

Reading is another way to help us relax and unwind or listening to music or a talking book. Some research suggests even 6minutes a day reading can be good for our wellbeing.



Make new habits lead to new routines

Build some relaxation into everyday routines can lead to healthier habits around making time to relax. This piece may be of interest www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/healthy-routines-lead-to-healthier-habits