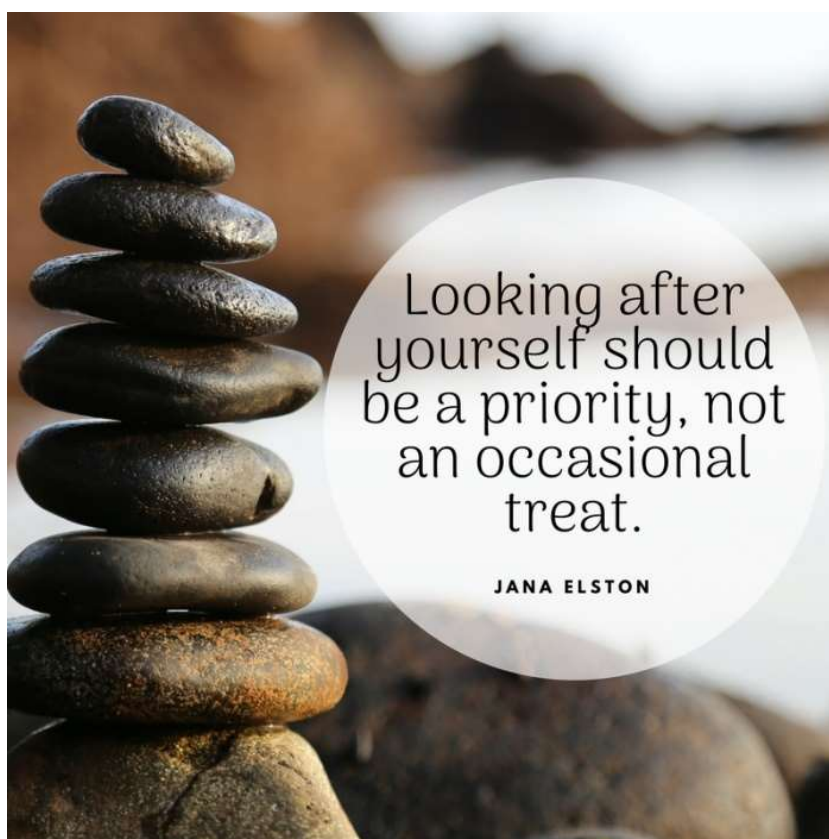


# COVID-19 RESOURCE PACK

## MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

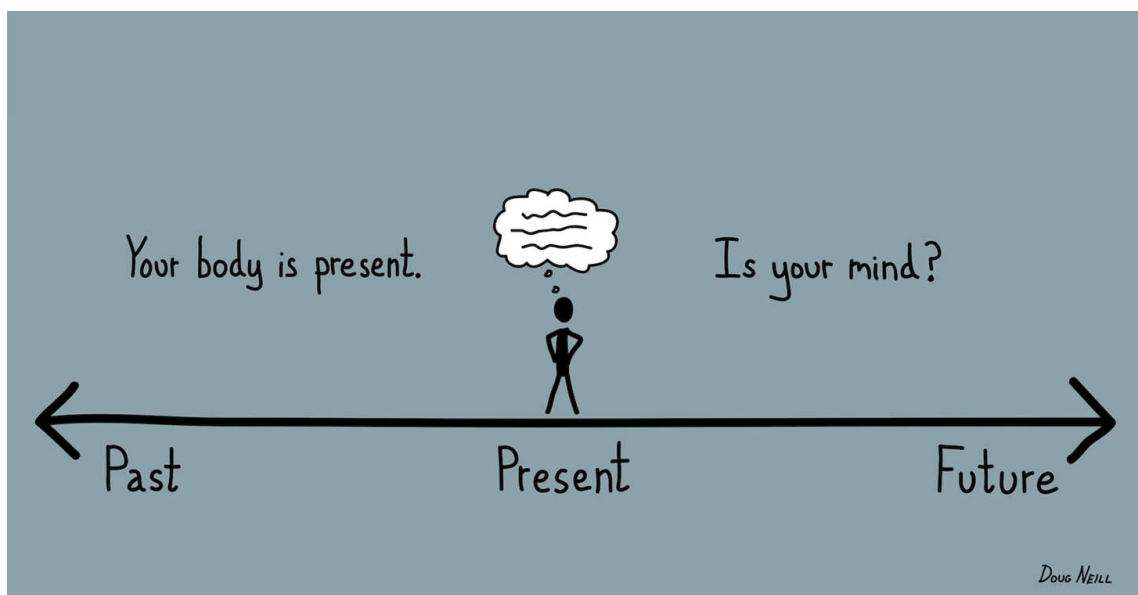


Looking after  
yourself should  
be a priority, not  
an occasional  
treat.

JANA ELSTON

# Overview

- This document contains a number of Mindfulness exercises for you to try.
- Mindfulness is a useful tool to help us focus on what we are experiencing in the present moment, rather than repeating the past or imagining the future.
- There are a number to choose from and you may find that some work better than others.
- Benefits include helping to relieve stress, improving sleep, lowering blood pressure and reducing anxiety.
- If you have difficulty accessing any of the audios provided, a number of alternative versions can be found online via websites such as YouTube.



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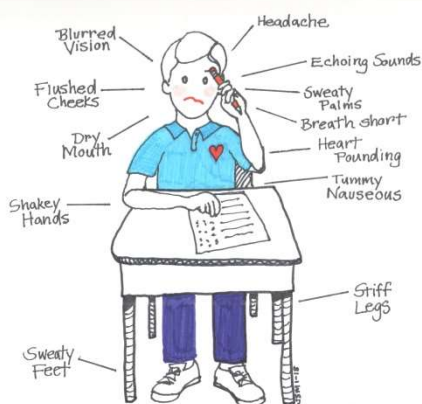
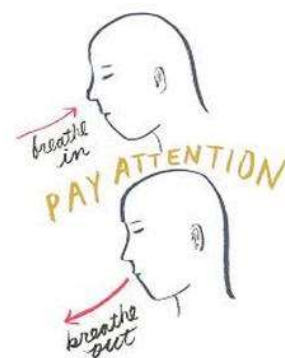
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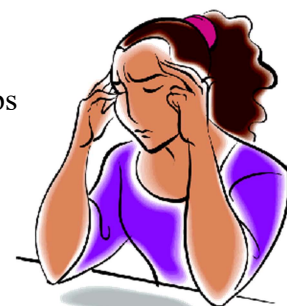
## Breathing and Mindfulness Exercises To Try



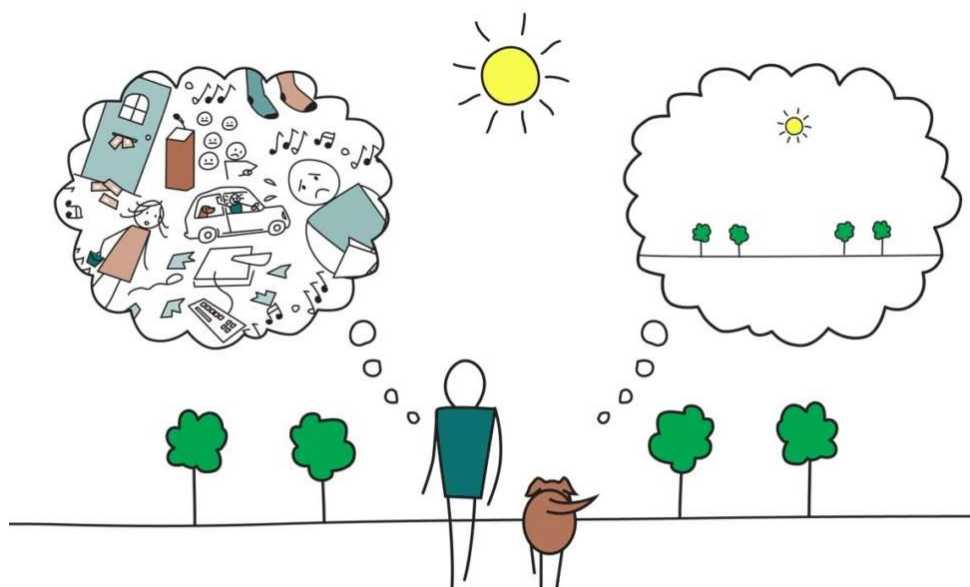
Anxiety is very tiring for the mind and body. It can build up tension without our awareness. The trick is to remain aware of our thoughts and feelings and how they are affecting us.

Watch out for changes in your body that indicate tension- tight muscles, rapid heartbeat or breathing rates, tension headaches, sweaty palms or that churning feeling in your stomach. Thoughts may race through your mind or you might get 'stuck' on a particular thought that's bothering you.

Be aware of your own indicators of tension as these can prompt you to take steps to reduce tension or anxiety.



We can make small changes to keep ourselves from becoming too affected. As well as the ideas for an emotional first aid kit, we can also use breathing and mindfulness exercises. Mindfulness is about drawing your attention to the present moment, and allows you to notice the thoughts, feelings and sensations that you are experiencing: for you to focus on the here and now.



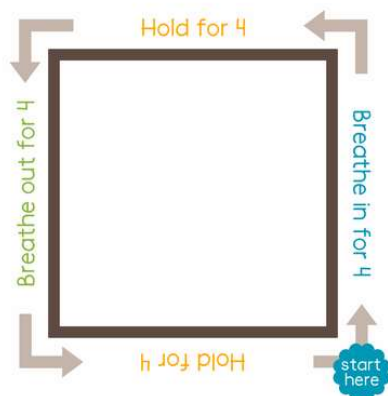
## Mind Full, or Mindful?

Some examples are listed below. There are many more that can be found online (e.g. Youtube). These are simply suggestions and you may find that some work better than others.

## Square breathing

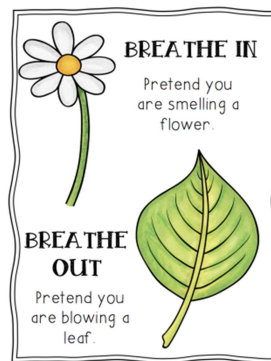
### Square Breathing

Start at the bottom right of the square, and follow the arrows around the whole square to complete one deep breath.



## Mindfulness of the breath

Audio is provided but if you are unable to access- Sit in a comfortable position and begin paying attention to your breathing. Notice the physical sensation of air filling your lungs, and then slowly leaving. When your mind wanders- which it will- simply notice your thoughts and turn your attention back to breathing.

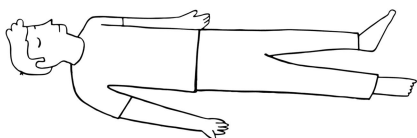


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk>

## Body scan

Starting with your toes and working your way up to the top of your head, notice the sensations in each part of your body. For example, notice the feeling of clothing resting on your legs, tension in your muscles, or cool air on your face. This exercise can help bring you back to the present moment if you feel overwhelmed with thoughts.

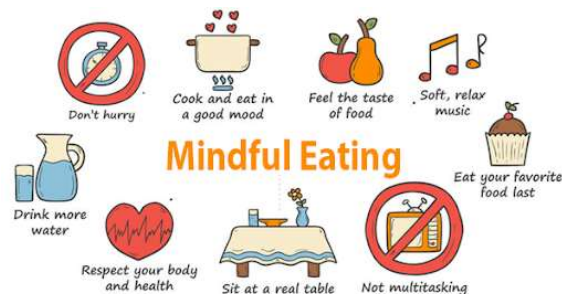
### BODY SCAN MEDITATION



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

## Mindful eating

Rather than rushing through a meal, eat slowly and mindfully. Notice how the food looks, and how it smells. What does it taste like? What does the food feel like on your tongue? Take turns sharing the different things you notice about the food, no matter how minor the observations might seem.





## Five Senses

Make a conscious effort to notice the present moment through each of your senses.



## Mindfulness walk

While walking, make a point to practice mindfulness. Start by noticing how your body moves and feels with each step. Then expand your awareness to your surroundings. What do you see? Hear? Feel? This technique can also be expanded to other daily activities e.g. showering, washing up or brushing your teeth.



## Progressive muscle relaxation

This activity will help you to become aware of the sensations throughout your body, and it's a great way to begin relaxing the body for sleep.

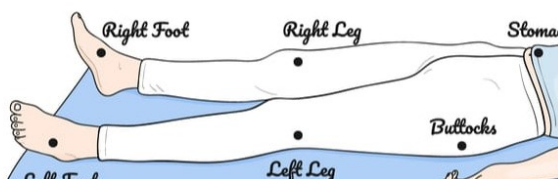


“Close your eyes, and pretend that you are holding two juicy oranges- one in each hand. Start to squeeze the oranges by making fists. Squeeze hard to get all the juice out. Notice what your fists feel like when you squeeze hard. Now let go of the oranges and let your hands rest. Notice how good it feels to relax your hands.

Next pretend like you're sitting on a beach. Squeeze your toes as if you are trying to pick up sand between them. Hold onto the sand by squeezing even tighter. Now let go of the sand and relax your feet. Notice how your feet feel different when you let them rest.

Finally pretend like a fly landed on your nose. You want to get it off, without it touching your hands. Scrunch up your face, wiggle your nose. Keep moving your face so the bug will fly away. Now stop and let your whole face relax. Pay attention to how it feels.”

This is a very simplified version but the principles can be applied to all muscles within your body. Practice clenching and then releasing, paying particular attention to the difference in how it feels when you are squeezing and when you are relaxed. Audios can be found online, via YouTube, to help guide this practice.



## Audios to help guide mindfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1C8hwj5LXw>

- **Leaves on a stream** can help us to notice all the thoughts that we experience. It allows us to be aware of them, but then let them simply float by. If you do not like leaves on a stream, you could try using:

Passing cars/passing trains  
Clouds drifting across the sky  
People walking by on the other side of the street  
Suitcases on a conveyor belt  
Bubbles rising to the surface of a pond  
Waves washing gently on to the beach  
Birds flying across the sky



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sINfs3JHLA>

- **Colour breathing** is a simple stress reducing activity that focuses on the breath. It involves mentally picturing a colour that represents how you want to feel and/or what you want to let go in your life.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-s7BgdbEHM>

- **Mindfulness of the hand** can help us to draw our attention away from our busy mind and bring our attention back to the here and now.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZiXPBGxKSE>

- **Visualisation** can be an empowering tool to help enhance self-awareness and focus the mind. It is a healthy way of bringing positive energy into your mind and body.



If you have difficulty accessing any of these audios, please email Laura Walker at [shropcom.cnrt@nhs.net](mailto:shropcom.cnrt@nhs.net) to request them via email