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Supporting you with your mental health

Mindfulness

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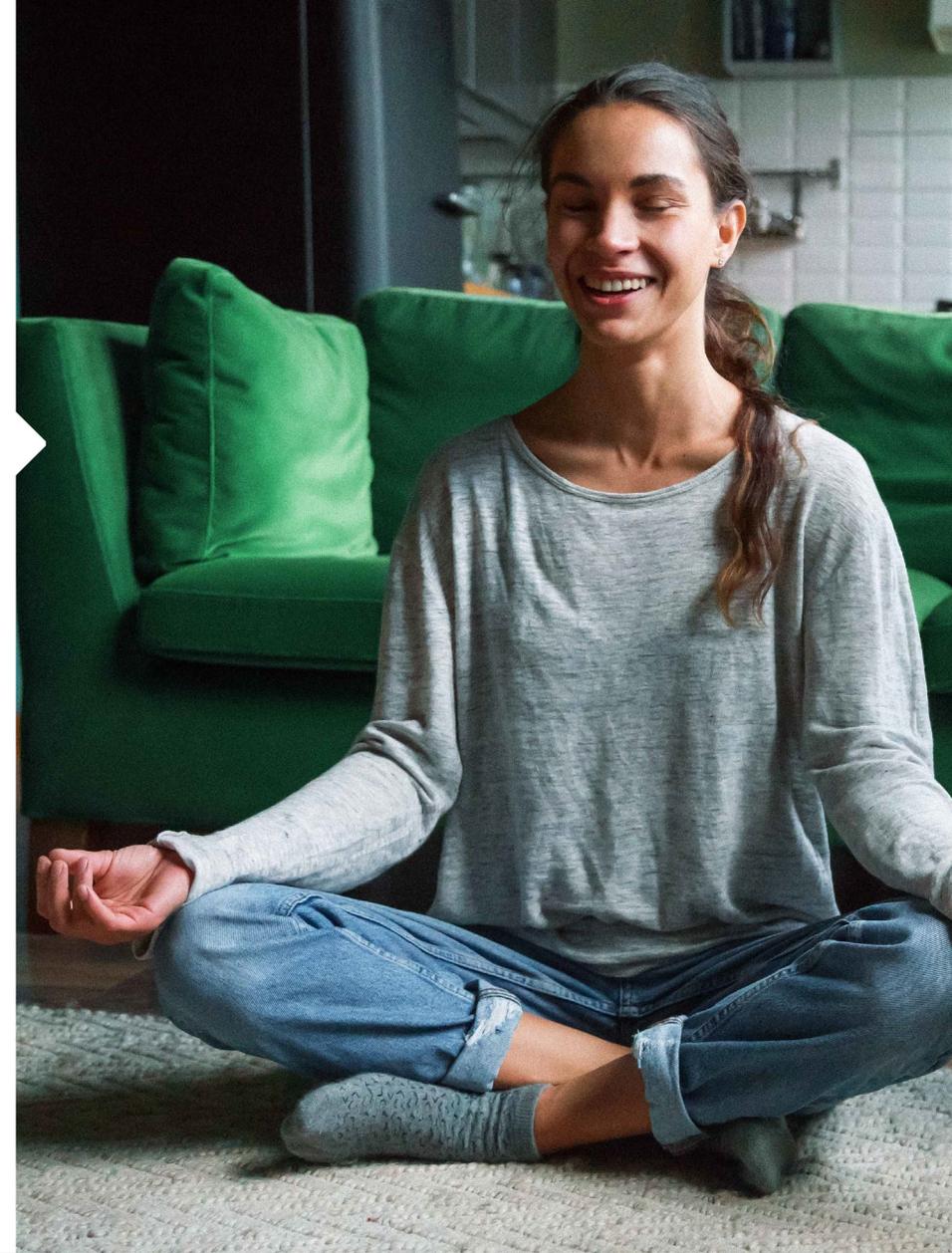


What is mindfulness?

- Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing.
- Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better.
- An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment. That might be something as simple as the feel of a banister as we walk upstairs.
- Another important part of mindfulness is an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment.
- This lets us stand back from our thoughts and start to see their patterns. Gradually, we can train ourselves to notice when our thoughts are taking over and realise that thoughts are simply 'mental events' that do not have to control us.
- Awareness of this kind also helps us notice signs of stress or anxiety earlier and helps us deal with them better.

How can you practice mindfulness?

- Notice the everyday
- Keep it regular – it can be a good start to pick a specific time each day to practising awareness and noticing what is going on around you.
- Watch your thoughts – a common misconception is that mindfulness is about ‘clearing’ your mind, when in actual fact it’s about being conscious of your thoughts.
- Try something new like yoga or meditation to help focus your mind – there are lots of free online sessions and apps to help with this.
- Name thoughts and feelings. To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them.
- Free yourself from the past and future – recognise when you mind wanders so that you can bring yourself back to the present and focus on what is happening now.



Resources

- You can watch a short mindful breathing exercise video [here](#).
- [Be Mindful](#) is an online course for reducing stress, anxiety and depression.
- [Click here](#) for free audio resources to help with mindfulness meditation.
- [Breathworks](#) offers mindfulness courses to manage pain, stress and illness.
- Click here for mindfulness exercises to try from [Mind](#).

Developing resilience
during challenging times

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Self awareness – understanding how you feel

- Reflect. Think back to a time when you know you were not alright. A time when you were feeling an unhelpful emotion.
- Observe and note. Make a note of what you observe about how you knew you weren't alright and what triggered you.
- Spot and pause. Look out for those signs you identified above as you go about your week. When you spot any of them, pause and check in with yourself about how you're feeling.

Self control – knowing you are in control of your emotions and practising control

- Daily reflections. Every day, look out for and note down your triggers and emotions. If you can spot trends, you can understand how to reduce the likelihood of them occurring and create helpful practises to manage them when they do arise.
- Be specific – don't rely on the word 'stressed'. Often we use this as a shortcut in order to dismiss how we really feel and use it as a label for lots of different feelings – including worry, frustration, overwhelm – however each of those specific feelings require a different fix.
- Be mindful to control the feeling:
 - Notice you are not feeling alright
 - Pause what you're doing and take an intentional deep breath
 - Try to specifically name the emotion you feel
 - Focus on the parts of your body that feel tense and soften those parts.
 - Finally, ask yourself – What do I need right now?

Self care – recognising what you need and applying it

- Make a 'what gives me life?' list. Make a list of all the things that restore your energy and make you feel good.
- Structure your time to plan these into your week. Make sure you schedule at least one activity in the next few days, before you plan in anything else.
- Flip your mindset if you think you don't have time. It is never about time, and more often about how important we think something is.

For further info:

- Think about how you are currently practising these skills and which you can start to implement.
- If you want to explore this topic further, we recommend this excellent article:
Mind<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-resilience-2795059>
- Or visit the Personal Effectiveness folder, within the Personal Development Toolkit on Talent Academy
Online: www.marstonsacademyonline.co.uk/learningondemand.aspx

Advice for managing your mental health

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Advice from mental health charity Mind

- **Decide on your routine**
 - Plan how you'll spend your time. It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall.
 - Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible.
- **Connect with people**
 - Make plans to video chat with people or groups you'd normally see in person.
 - Make a plan with someone to watch a show or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.
 - Listen to a chatty radio station or podcast if your home feels too quiet.
- **Try to stay active**
 - Think about exercising at home (see slides 7, 8 and 9 for top tips and resources)
- **Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can**
 - Follow government guidelines and get your daily dose of exercise whilst practising social distancing
 - It is possible to do this while staying indoors: open the windows, arrange a place to sit by a window so you can see the natural world, spend time in your garden if you have one, listen to natural sounds like waves or rainfall.

How to build your emotional immune system (Nuffield Health)

- Don't over-watch or read the news – limit it to twice a day
- Remember to breath – [click here](#) for advice on deep breathing
- Take part in activities that bring you to the present – reading, cooking, DIY
- Try relaxation techniques, meditation and mindfulness – [click here](#) for a beginners guide to relaxing
- Use wellbeing apps to help you stay here – go to slides 15 and 16 for guidance
- Do things that make you laugh – watch a TV show, search for clips on YouTube
- Rest and sleep well

Where to get help?

If you are staying at home more than you usually would, it might feel more difficult than usual to take care of your mental health and wellbeing, but there's a lot of support out there.

- If you're a teammate in a pub, you can access **mental health support** from the [Licensed Trade Charity](#) online, or by calling 0800 801 0550.
- For all other employees, you can access **mental health support** through the AXA Employee Assistance Programme. Further information is available from the HR Information section of [the Exchange](#).
- Visit www.news.marstons.co.uk to access our other guides. Topics include how to stay healthy during isolation, financial guidance and home schooling advice.
- The NHS lists 5 steps to mental wellbeing [here](#).
- The NHS [mood assessment](#) can help you better understand how you've been feeling recently.
- If you're worried about your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak or want to talk to someone, check out the Samaritans website [here](#).





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