

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The 4 Key Steps to Self Care



DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME



STEP 1

SLEEP

Sleep is important. We all know this but how many of us actually get our recommended 7-8 hours every night?! You need to prioritise sleep. A lack of sleep can affect us both mentally and physically, impacting on our mood and our ability to function in our daily activities.

REST

Just do nothing. Take time to relax your body and quieten your mind. Your mind won't be completely empty of thoughts but that's okay. They'll come and go. Just don't give them too much attention.

BREATHE

Don't forget to breathe! Try this breathing exercise to calm your mind and body down:

'In for 4 out for 4'

Get yourself comfortable

Take a slow deep breathe in as you count to 4.

1, 2, 3, 4

Slowly release your breath to the count of four

1, 2, 3, 4

Repeat this a few times and you will soon start to feel more relaxed!



STEP 2

MOVEMENT

Moving your body is a good way to feel more 'YOU'.

You can move your body whilst sitting at your desk or on your bed by shaking out your hands and feet.

Get on your feet and bounce about a bit. Maybe put on a great song!

Do a star jump or 3! A handstand or a cartwheel.

Take yourself outside for a walk.

Go for a bike ride.

Do anything that gets your body moving even if it's only for a couple of minutes. It's a fantastic way to shake out your muscles which may be tensed without you even realising it.

Why not try something new? Maybe try some yoga to stretch out your body, play with your balance and calm your mind.



Top tip

Move your body mindfully. That means as you move, notice how your body feels



STEP 3

JOURNALING

Journaling may conjure up images of essay-writing but don't panic. There is no judging or marking to be done.

This is solely for you.

There are tens of thousands of thoughts swirling around your mind all day every day, they often collide and break off into 10 additional thoughts. Our mind is a marvellous breeding for ideas although sometimes our thoughts can be harmful to ourselves but also consume a really large chunk of our time as we try to make sense of them all.

I urge you to pick up an pen and find some paper.

What is on your mind right now?

Write down a word that comes up. Maybe it's a feeling, a name, a place. Perhaps you wrote down a sentence rather than just a word. What else is swirling around in there?

This may not come easily to you however slowly words will start to form on the page in front of you. Don't worry about what you are writing or even the way your handwriting looks. No one needs to read this.

What you are doing is giving all those thoughts in your mind some space to breathe. Just like you need. Putting pen to paper is the best way to release these thoughts and let your feel a whole lot lighter.



STEP 4

'YOU'TIME

Planning in time to just be YOU. This is time set aside for doing something you are really looking forward to doing, something which involves minimal exertion of energy.

You are not working to a deadline. This is time purely for you.

What is your non-doing activity?

Some suggestions may be; reading a book, colouring or drawing, listening to a podcast or a playlist of your favourite music.

How about lying on your back allowing the music to take you on an imaginary journey...

Maybe you wish to take a bath while doing one of your 'self care' non-doing activities. This way you can create yourself a safe sanctuary and pamper yourself.



Top tip

Turn your phone off, or to silent if that's too much. You could switch to 'do not disturb' mode if you need your phone for music or podcasts. It's best to keep your phone out of arms reach as it allows you to fully focus on being present in your body, mind and world for a while.

No outside distractions.

