



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CARDS REPLIES

Relaxation Techniques

01| Our nerves cells reorganise while we are asleep which promotes healthy brain function. When we sleep, important cytokines are also produced, which help us fight infection and inflammation. When we are unwell or stressed it is therefore particularly important that we have enough sleep.

02| We often live our lives on auto pilot and becoming mindful by awakening our senses and focusing ‘on the moment’ can bring about a sense of calm in our busy lives.

03| Biofeedback allows you to see your response to stress and/or relaxation. You can practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, guided imagery or controlled breathing and see your response on the monitor. Such control over your body utilising the power of the mind promotes relaxation. There is some evidence that controlling physiological effects of stress or anxiety in this way can support good health and even improve performance.

04| Cortisol is released in situations where you are stressed, and your fight or flight response is activated. If this happens frequently it can result in physiological damage to the body in the form of developing illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

05| There is considerable evidence that music may be effective in improving the quality of sleep in adults who experience insomnia. Consider what type of music you find relaxing and might help you sleep. There are many free resources available online to download; soothing sleep music, sleep meditation recordings. If you have a smart phone there are sleep and calm apps that might work for you. Remember you don’t want to be searching just before bed-time as this won’t help you settle, take time during the day to download any online resources so that you can just play them at bed time. Many of us experience periods of insomnia and some employers are considering the benefits of providing relaxation techniques for ‘power naps’ in the workplace. However, this does not replace a good night’s sleep.

06| Things that you can do to help yourself to develop good habits to promote sleep might include:

- avoiding having a big meal late at night
- avoiding caffeine in the afternoon or evening- try decaffeinated substitutes
- creating a routine with a regular time to go to bed and get up
- avoiding alcohol as it can disturb sleep; alcohol is a stimulant; having a nightcap to sleep is a myth!
- thinking about your bedroom, use thick curtains or even consider an eye mask to create darkness
- avoiding using a computer, watching TV or using mobile phones in the bedroom
- taking a warm bath an hour before you plan to go to bed
- trying earplugs if noises disturbing you in your bedroom#
- reading a book
- listening to calming music
- being more active during the day but avoid exercising too much late at night before you go to bed
- writing down the things that worry you or things that you want to remember before try to sleep

07| It’s that simple, 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 is even recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in the UK to prevent depression in people who have had 3 or more bouts of depression in the past.

08| Meditation is usually associated with stillness, however moving meditation is a meditative state, a shift of consciousness, while doing simple movements. It can calm the mind and create awareness.

09| A lack of **vitamin B6** has been linked to symptoms of insomnia and depression. **Vitamin B6** aids in the production of the hormones serotonin and melatonin, both of which are important to sound, restful **sleep**, and also to mood. There’s a strong correlation between depression and **sleep** problems.





10| Both physical inactivity and sedentary activity appear to be significantly related to symptoms of depression and anxiety. The importance of distinguishing these two behaviours has relevance for research as well as policies targeting physical activity and mental health in youth.

11| Chronic stress increases allostatic load on the systems of the human body resulting in increased inflammation and disease to organs.

12| 10 Tips to Beat Insomnia

- **Keep regular sleep hours:** Going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time every day will programme your body to sleep better. Choose a time when you're likely to feel tired and sleepy.
- **Create a restful sleeping environment:** Your bedroom should be a peaceful place for rest and sleep. Temperature, lighting and noise should be controlled so that your bedroom environment helps you to fall (and stay) asleep. If you have a pet that sleeps in the room with you, consider moving it somewhere else if it often disturbs you in the night.
- **Make sure your bed is comfortable:** It's difficult to get restful sleep on a mattress that's too soft or too hard, or a bed that's too small or old.
- **Exercise regularly:** Moderate exercise on a regular basis, such as [swimming](#) or [walking](#), can help relieve some of the tension built up over the day. But make sure you do not do vigorous exercise, such as running or the gym, too close to bedtime, as it may keep you awake. Find out more about [how to get active your way](#).
- **Cut down on caffeine:** Cut down on caffeine in tea, coffee, energy drinks or colas, especially in the evening. Caffeine interferes with the process of falling asleep, and also prevents deep sleep. Instead, have a warm, milky drink or herbal tea.
- **Do not over-indulge:** Too much food or alcohol, especially late at night, can interrupt your sleep patterns. Alcohol may help you to fall asleep initially, but it will disrupt your sleep later on in the night.
- **Do not smoke:** Nicotine is a stimulant. People who smoke take longer to fall asleep, wake up more frequently, and often have more disrupted sleep.
- **Try to relax before going to bed:** Have a warm bath, listen to quiet music or do some gentle [yoga](#) to relax your mind and body. Your GP may be able to recommend a helpful relaxation CD.
- **Write away your worries:** If you tend to lie in bed thinking about everything you have to do tomorrow, set aside time before bedtime to make plans for the next day. The aim is to avoid doing these things when you're in bed, trying to sleep.

13| Relaxation techniques which reduce stress can include

- Deep breathing
- Massage
- Meditation
- Tai chi
- Yoga
- Biofeedback
- Music and art therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Hydrotherapy

14| If you are experiencing serious levels of distress it is important to ask for help from your Doctor, who can suggest treatments to mitigate distress and improve your overall health.

15| Tai chi, also called tai chi chuan, combines deep breathing and relaxation with flowing movements. Originally developed as a martial art in 13th-century China, tai chi is now practised around the world as a health-promoting exercise. While there's scope for more rigorous research on tai chi's health benefits, studies have shown that it can help people reduce stress, improve posture, balance and general mobility, and increase muscle strength in the legs.





16| Developing strategies to reduce stress can improve health 7 tips are:

- **Eat healthily**
 - Eating healthily can reduce the risks of diet-related diseases
 - There is a growing amount of evidence showing how food affects our mood⁴⁰ and how eating healthily can improve this
 - You can protect your feelings of wellbeing by ensuring that your diet provides adequate amounts of brain nutrients such as essential vitamins and minerals, as well as water
- **Be aware of smoking and drinking alcohol**
 - Try not to, or reduce the amount you smoke and drink alcohol
 - Even though they may seem to reduce tension initially, this is misleading as they often make problems worse
- **Exercise**
 - Try and integrate physical exercise into your lifestyle as it can be very effective in relieving stress
 - Even just going out and getting some fresh air, and taking some light physical exercise, like going for a walk to the shops can really help
- **Take time out**
 - Take time to relax
 - Strike the balance between responsibility to others and responsibility to yourself, this can really reduce stress levels
 - Tell yourself that it is okay to prioritise self-care · Are you needing time out but saying 'I just can't take the time off', if so read more about how taking a break is important for good mental health
- **Be mindful**
 - Mindfulness is a mind-body approach to life that helps us to relate differently to experiences. It involves paying attention to our thoughts and feelings in a way that increases our ability to manage difficult situations and make wise choices
 - Try to practice mindfulness regularly
 - Mindfulness meditation can be practiced anywhere at any time
 - Research has suggested that it can reduce the effects of stress, anxiety and related problems such as insomnia, poor concentration and low moods, in some people
 - Our [Be Mindful](#) website features a specially developed online course in mindfulness, as well as details of local courses in your area
- **Get some restful sleep**
 - Are you finding you are struggling to sleep? This is a common problem when you're stressed
 - Could your physical or mental health be impacting your ability to sleep?
 - Could you amend your environment to help improve your sleep?
 - Could you get up instead of staying in bed when your mind is worrying at night?
 - Could you make small changes to your lifestyle to help your get a restful sleep?

For full details on tips on getting a good night's sleep read our guide [How to sleep better](#) and [ten top tips for good sleep](#)

- **Don't be too hard on yourself**
 - Try to keep things in perspective.
 - Remember that having a bad day is a universal human experience
 - When your inner critic or an outer critic finds faults, try and find truth and exception to what is being said
 - If you stumble or feel you have failed, don't beat yourself up
 - Act as if you were your own best friend: be kind and supportive
 - Take a few minutes each day to appreciate yourself

17| Developing strategies to help friends in distress can: A) Help them reflect on whether they are stressed. B. Listen to how they are feeling C. Reassure them that stressful situations can pass and D. Help them [identify their triggers](#). Helping others also releases oxytocin in our brains which increases our own feelings of wellbeing.





18| Hobbies affect the reward system in the brain. When we take part in a hobby that we enjoy, chemical messengers in the brain (known as neurotransmitters) are released - such as dopamine, a chemical which helps us feel pleasure. These feel-good chemicals can then make us want to do the hobby again, and feel more motivated to do so.

19| Building a routine you can stick to in daily life may not sound important, but for some people routine is what helps to keep them grounded and helps develop spiritual emotional and physical wellbeing.

20| 792 million people world-wide live with a mental health disorder. This is slightly more than one in ten people globally (10.7%)

21| Progressive muscle relaxation is a mind-body technique that involves slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group in the body. It is sometimes called Jacobson's or deep muscle relaxation procedure. Typically used to tame stress, progressive muscle relaxation is said to increase your awareness of the sensations associated with tension (and, in turn, help you identify and deal with the physical effects of everyday stress).

22| Behavioural activation normally provides evidence for the person to notice positive change and acknowledge it through cognitive and emotional processing which increases their sense of coping and overall feeling of wellbeing.

23| Indeed, a number of studies show that regular practice of sport may help keep your stress in check and release endorphins (as well as treat stress-related health problems like insomnia and anxiety).

24| Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted. Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful.

25| This link <https://www.verywellmind.com/best-stress-management-books-4779315> takes you to page highlighting one experts view of 11 best stress management books of 2021. Similarly this link <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/best-of-2014-goodtherapyorgs-top-10-websites-for-help-with-stress-1224147> takes you 10 top websites for Help with Stress.

26| Sometimes, saying “Keep calm” can make the person even more nervous. The tone of voice is very important when addressing a delicate situation. Here is some advices that you could give to this person:

- Realise when it is causing you a problem
 - Try to make the connection between feeling tired or ill and the pressures you are faced with
 - Look out for physical warnings such as tense muscles, over-tiredness, headaches or migraines
- Identify the causes
 - Try to identify the underlying causes
 - Sort the possible reasons for your stress into three categories A) those with a practical solution B) Those that will get better given time and C) those you can't do anything about
 - Try to release the worry of those in the second and third groups and let them go
- Review your lifestyle
 - Could you be taking on too much?
 - Are there things you are doing which could be handed over to someone else?
 - Can you do things in a more leisurely way?
 - To act on the answer to these questions, you may need to prioritise things you are trying to achieve and re-organise your life
 - This will help to release pressure that can come from trying to do everything at once





27| According to headspace Guided imagery is about utilising all of your senses – vision, taste, sound, smell, and touch – to build images in the mind that your body feels are as real as external events. This doesn't mean that during the practice in your “real time” physical body you will be smelling, hearing and tasting objects, but your mind will be visualizing the makings of each sense, versus more traditional [guided meditation](#) that is focused purely on the mental state without the addition of whole-body senses. Guided imagery can actually stimulate changes in heart rate, blood pressure and respiratory patterns, because of the deep, physical mind-body connection.

28| Strategies which are helpful to manage stress include: eating healthy, cutting down on the use of alcohol and smoking, exercising, taking time out, being mindful and improving sleep.

29| According to familydoctor.org Emotional health is an important part of overall health. People who are emotionally healthy are in control of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. They're able to cope with life's challenges. They can keep problems in perspective and bounce back from setbacks. They feel good about themselves and have good relationships. Being emotionally healthy doesn't mean you're happy all the time. It means you're aware of your emotions. You can deal with them, whether they're positive or negative. Emotionally healthy people still feel stress, anger, and sadness. But they know how to manage their negative feelings. They can tell when a problem is more than they can handle on their own. They also know when to seek help from their doctor.

30| According to the Sleep Foundation lack of sleep effects emotional wellbeing because Brain activity fluctuates during sleep, increasing and decreasing during different [sleep stages](#) that make up the sleep cycle. In NREM (non-rapid eye movement) sleep, overall brain activity slows, but there are quick bursts of energy. In REM sleep, brain activity picks up rapidly, which is why this stage is associated with more intense dreaming. Each stage plays a role in brain health, allowing activity in different parts of the brain to ramp up or down and [enabling better thinking, learning, and memory](#)¹. Research has also uncovered that brain activity during sleep has profound effects on [emotional and mental health](#)².

