

MINDFULNESS

When many of us feel stressed it can be very difficult to calm down - but there's a lot to be said for simple solutions, and breathing is one of the best.

We breathe automatically all the time, but how often do you breathe deliberately?

That's effectively what mindfulness is.

It's about becoming aware of what you're doing and then focusing on it. The key is to focus on one thing. Mindfulness is now recommended for people who suffer with poor mental health. It's also a great tool for maintaining good mental health.

You can be mindful when you're doing absolutely anything - washing the dishes, writing emails, talking to your partner, exercising, eating, you name it.

All you've got to do is be aware of what you're doing, instead of going into autopilot. By becoming aware of what you're doing, and keeping that awareness, you can stop your mind from darting off in a million different directions or worrying about a million different things. It's a great way to relax yourself without having to stop what you're doing and without drawing attention to yourself.

So to start off, simply become aware of your breathing, and then breathe deliberately.

You may find it useful to count in your head as you breathe in and out, it can help you focus.

Let's try it now.

- If you can, roll your shoulders back
- and place one of your hands on your stomach just above your belly button.
- Then slowly breathe in through your nose.
- And fill your belly with air so it expands and pushes against your hand;
- Then start to breathe out through your mouth, slowly. All the way out. And relax your shoulders.
- You can do this no matter what the time, no matter where you are.
- You can do it as many times as you need to.

If you ever find yourself upset, stressed, anxious or confused - whether you're at work, at home, or in public - even doing three deep belly-breaths will focus your mind and calm you down.

Some people do this as part of their daily routine. If you do - the more time you spend belly-breathing, the more you'll benefit from it.

Support Networks and useful websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/mindfulness/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>

Right Box includes beathing tool

