

Quick self-help techniques

www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk

These are things you can do now to help yourself feel calmer if you are feeling stressed or anxious.



STOP technique

If you are feeling stressed or on edge this quick technique can help you let go of anxieties and feel calmer.

- Say 'STOP' firmly to yourself.
- Breathe out fully.
- Drop your shoulders and unclench your hands.
- Count slowly from five down to one.
- Take a moment.
- Repeat if needed.
- Carry on with what you were doing, if possible.



Relaxation or Diaphragmatic breathing

Practise this deep breathing technique whenever you feel anxious or feel your breathing getting shallower or heavier. It works by slowing down your breathing to help you relax.

- Sit comfortably in a chair if possible.
- Put your feet flat on the floor.
- Shoulders down and jaw loose.
- Back straight.
- Loosen clothes around your stomach area if convenient.
- Breathe in through your nose rather than your mouth.
- Breathe in to count of two, hold for a second and then breathe out to count of four.
- Breathe out smoothly and steadily.
- Repeat twice and then relax and carry on with whatever you were doing.

Breathing should be more obviously from the stomach, not the chest, as your lungs expand and push your tummy outwards. To check you are doing it right put one hand just above your stomach and one on the chest. Try to keep the top hand fairly still. Only the bottom hand should move a lot as your lungs expand.

Watch a video about Diaphragmatic breathing on the MindWell website at www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/relaxation-breathing



Write things down

Write down all the things that are worrying you. Pick three that you can tackle.

Write a quick action plan for each. Decide if other people can help you and what your next steps will be.



Concentrate on one task

Find one thing that you can do now: put the kettle on, go for a short walk, put on calming music, or do a simple domestic task.

Focus completely on the task, talking yourself through each step.

Be aware of what is happening - such as the sound of the music, people walking past or the noise the iron makes. Try counting the sounds you can hear.