

The Healthy Mind Platter



The Healthy Mind Platter, for Optimal Brain Matter

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“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes...Including you.” –Anne Lamott

Why is Down Time so important for our mental wellbeing?

Why do we need Down Time

- Life is busy, whether you're at school, college or work. Sometimes, the pressures can seem all a bit too much. Taking some time off for relaxation is vital to help your mind and body switch off from those pressures.
- Some mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression can be caused by “too much work and not enough play”. Not taking time out for relaxation may make any existing mental health issue worse.
- Relaxation is an important part of maintaining positive mental wellbeing.
- Turn off the screens and relax!

Down Time



- Down Time (relaxation) is a state where you feel calm and able to manage day-to-day life.
- If you have a busy life, this can be difficult. Relaxation has many mental and physical health benefits, and the techniques can be practised almost anywhere.

How can relaxation improve your mental health?

Relaxation reduces stress and the symptoms of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.

Relaxation also has other related health benefits, including:

- lowering your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate
- reducing muscle tension and chronic pain
- improving concentration and mood
- reducing tiredness
- reducing anger and frustration
- boosting confidence to handle problems



How can we relax?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyEdZ23Cp1E>

Other stress-busting relaxation techniques

- **Pause** - make time during the day to take breaks or pauses. Pausing throughout the day can prevent stress from building up.
- stop what you are doing
- let your shoulders drop
- stretch
- allow your mind to calm down
- If you find yourself in a stressful situation such as a difficult phone call, a crowded train journey home or a looming essay deadline, give yourself time afterwards to pause and calm down.

Take a breather – go to your happy place

- Deep breathing - Taking deep breaths after a stressful situation and concentrating on your breathing can have a calming effect and help you relax.
- close your eyes
- take deep breaths in and out
- Think of your favourite place, maybe somewhere that you go on holiday
- Focus on the place and picture yourself there
- What can you see? What can you smell? What can you feel?
- Imagining being in your favourite place can take you away from your current stressful situation and help you relax and calm down. It can also help prevent stress levels gradually rising throughout the day.

Reflection time.

- Down time is one of the most valuable ways to keep a healthy mind.
- It is healthy to relax.
- If you are going through a stressful time – remember to relax after you are through it.
- Your mind needs down time.