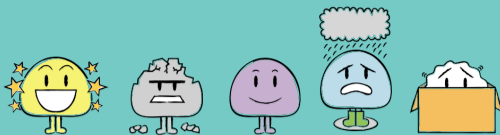


# MOVEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH

7

## Ways to Improve your emotional wellbeing



[www.thesource.me.uk/wellbeing](http://www.thesource.me.uk/wellbeing)

The Source – information, advice and support for young people in Suffolk.



### 1 MOVE YOUR BODY FOR BETTER SLEEP

Physical activity can help you sleep for longer and get to sleep faster... and you won't need to go to the gym every day!

Physical activity includes things like walking, skating, biking, dancing, playing with animals and playing ball games.

What really helps is to include movement into as much of your day as possible – take stairs rather than lifts, walk/bike where possible and regularly get up and get active!



### 2 MOVE TO HAVE HAPPIER MOODS?

#### Choose movement for a natural high

Sounds good, but how do you change the 'toxic stress cocktail' into happy hormones?

Moving your body increases your heart rate and circulation and helps burn off the stress hormones - adrenaline and cortisol - so you feel more relaxed and freer from worry.

After around 20–30 minutes of physical activity that makes you slightly breathless, like walking or biking, **endorphins are released and result in a mood and energy boost for two to three hours and a mild buzz for up to 24 hours.**

20-30



#### Something to try No.1

### STAND LIKE A STARFISH

This move will soothe and calm anxiety and tension



- Stand up with your feet about 2 foot apart.
- Close your eyes (if you feel OK to do so).
- Open your arms wide at shoulder height so your chest opens.
- Breathe deeply in and out through your nose.
- Say to yourself "all is well".
- Keep doing this until you begin to feel calm and relaxed.

### 3 MOVE TO CALM STRESS, ANXIETY AND RACING OR UPSETTING THOUGHTS

Being physically active gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.

When your body is busy, your mind isn't.

Your body can't be in the past going over things that have gone wrong, and it can't be in the future worrying about what might be. Your body can only be in the here and now.

So **put your attention into your body, your breath, your movements, your sensations, count your steps, notice the nature around you.** Help your mind become free from worry.



### 4 MOVE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DEPRESSION

Moving your body regularly can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of low mood or depression and also help you recover if you are feeling low or depressed.

Walking for thirty minutes 5 times per week can have the same effect as a mild/moderate antidepressant... but with no side effects.

**TIP:** You can even do it in 10-minute chunks and it will still be as effective.



## Something to try No.2

# ENGAGE YOUR SENSES



As you walk, try this technique to bring your focus back into the moment (try this alone or with friends)

- Name and describe **5** things you can see right now
- Name and describe **4** things you can touch/feel
- Name and describe **3** things you can hear
- Name and describe **2** things you can smell
- Name and describe **1** thing you can taste

## 5 MOVE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE, SELF-BELIEF AND SELF-ESTEEM

Developing a regular routine of any kind of movement will increase your belief in yourself, your self-esteem and your overall confidence. It builds in 3 different ways:

- **BE YOUR WORD** - by doing what you say you are going to do you build a belief and trust in yourself and feel more in control.
- **FEEL PROUD** - during and after you complete the movement you can bask in the pleasure of your achievement.
- **RIDE THE WAVE** – the sense of achievement you feel will help you face challenges and meet other goals, giving your life more meaning and purpose.

## Something to try No.3

# ATTENTION SWITCHING



Help each other feel better with this game to switch attention.

Ask yourself, or each other, a random question that gets your brain or body engaged into something new and unexpected.

This will break the cycle of anxiety or worry and put your attention onto something completely different. It can also make you laugh – be as silly as you want. For example, name three cities beginning with the letter B, say your name and mobile number backwards. Get creative!

## 6 MOVE TO CREATE TIME TO RELAX, REFLECT AND DAYDREAM

For our brains to be well – relaxed, focused and able to make good decisions - we need some privacy each day where we can step back from people and technology to be able to relax, reflect and daydream.

This enables you to make sense of all the information you have recently taken on board, to problem solve any challenges and to have the chance to think for yourself.

Ideally, you would do this a few times a day and **movement can be a great way to help you relax and think.**



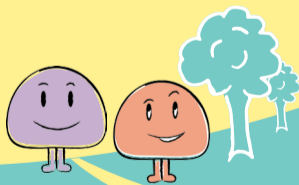
## 7 MOVE AS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

We are social creatures and to create a life that works, we each need to feel connected to friends and family.

We're all different, so some people will need more connection than others, but we all need an emotional connection with at least one other person (or pet) to be mentally well.

### Why not join a group?

Joining a group of people who gather to exercise, or move can be a great place to make and build connections with others. Having an activity to do together is also a great way to ease social anxiety.  
[www.thesource.me.uk/clubs](http://www.thesource.me.uk/clubs)



### Local contacts

**TheSource** – information and advice for young people in Suffolk.  
[www.thesource.me.uk/move](http://www.thesource.me.uk/move)

**Kooth** – free, safe and anonymous online support for young people 365 days a year.  
[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**ChatHealth** - speak to a school nurse. Text: 07507 333356

**Suffolk Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Hub** – confidential information, advice and support for 0-25 year olds across Suffolk.  
Helpline: 0345 600 2090  
[www.thesource.me.uk/hub](http://www.thesource.me.uk/hub)

**Point-1 Service** – for children and young people in Lowestoft and Waveney.  
Helpline: 800 977 4077  
[www.point-1.org.uk](http://www.point-1.org.uk)

Apps **ACTIVE 10** [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active-10](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active-10)

**COUCH TO 5K** [www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/)