



# **Top tips on how to stay healthy at this stressful time**



## **Sleep: The NHS recommends 9 hours sleep per night for 15/16 year olds.**

- Avoid back lit technology for at least one hour before going to sleep. Backlit technology is any device you can see in the dark, i.e. phones, television, tablets, some kindles. The blue light in the screen reduces the production of melatonin which is the chemical that helps us sleep so we feel less sleepy and find it more difficult to get a good night's sleep. The blue light tricks our brains that it is daytime and can alter our internal body clock, negatively affecting our sleep patterns. If for some reason you can't avoid backlit devices, switch them onto night mode which helps reduce the blue light emitted.
- When milk is heated, it produces a chemical that can help us feel sleepy and relaxed so if you like hot milk, give it a try!
- When we are tired, stress chemicals increase in our body and long term this isn't good for our health.



# Food and Drink



- Our brains use up energy, especially when we are concentrating and studying. Eating a healthy diet helps keep our brain functioning as efficiently as it can.
- 85% of the brain is made up of water so we need to drink lots of water regularly throughout the day to keep it working well.
- If we don't eat/drink enough, our body produces stress chemicals which aren't good for our health on a long-term basis.
- If you struggle to fall sleep, check that you are avoiding caffeine in your food/drink 4-6 hours before your bedtime. Caffeine is known to be in products like tea and coffee but did you know it's also found in chocolate, energy drinks, some fizzy drinks, some types of ice cream, some sweets and even some medications? Check the ingredients before you eat/drink it if you're not sure.



## Exercise



- Physically moving helps burn up the stress chemicals as well as producing endorphins which are chemicals that help us feel good. It doesn't have to be an hour in the gym, a quick walk to raise your heart rate can be beneficial. Physical activity helps us concentrate better and feel more alert when we then return to sitting still and studying.
  - Research that shows we can problem solve and process information better when we are physically moving so consider being active in your breaks from studying.
  - Being active outside where you get the fresh air and daylight is helpful for our systems as it helps regulate our internal body clock which helps us sleep better, but if being outside isn't possible, moving around indoors is still beneficial. You can walk/run on the spot or go up and down the stairs a few times.
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# Mindfulness

Feeling Stressed? If so... try some mindfulness. This is a really useful approach with a lot of research showing how effective it can be in helping to manage stress. This can take the form as:

- Meditation
- Painting/drawing
- Yoga
- Crosswords
- Jigsaws



If you look online, there are lots of useful websites, videos and even courses that will teach you how to do it. It doesn't take long to learn some quick Mindfulness techniques that you will then have for the rest of your life.



# Useful Apps for Mindfulness

- Conscious
- Smiling Mind
- Headspace
- Mindshift (anxiety focus)
- Calm.com
- Stop, Breathe and Think
- Breathr Useful Apps for Sleep
- Relax Melodies
- Relax & Sleep by Glenn Harrold
- Pzizz Sleep
- Sleepmaker Rain
- Nature Sounds Relax and Sleep
- aSleep
- Long Deep Breathing
- Proactive Sleep Alarm Clock (monitors sleep quality)
- Sleep Pillow
- Digipill



# **If you need support....ask!**

**It isn't a failure or weakness to seek support – it takes courage to acknowledge you're not coping and tell someone.**

- Look out for your friends and talk to them. Notice if they appear to be struggling and encourage them to seek help if they need it.
- Talk to relatives or family that you can trust about how you're doing. People can't help you if they don't know there is anything wrong.
- If you have any concerns about yourself or a friend, please speak to your form tutor, your learning manager, a member of the safeguarding team or any adult you feel you can talk to.



## Have fun!

It is important that you keep doing some of what you enjoy and have some time to enjoy yourself too. While you are studying you might have less time to yourself or doing what you enjoy but remember it's only temporary and don't stop all the fun stuff completely.

**Remember that you can't do any better than your best so your best is good enough!**

