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Extra Resources

Useful Apps for Wellbeing There are apps that are suitable for all users to engage in mindfulness, guided meditations, breathing exercises, body scans, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to challenge negative thinking and to tackle anxiety and stress, improve mood, focus and attention and overall wellbeing.

1. Headspace

This app uses mindfulness and meditation to help you perform at your best each day. Whether you need to find a place of calm, keep your mind fit or reduce stress, headspace has hundreds of themed mindfulness and meditation sessions to support you. It is free on Android and iPhone.

2. Calm

This App is designed to reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and help you feel happier. It focuses on meditation, breathing, sleep and relaxation. The app delivers meditations that can help you distress, relax your body and mind and promote better sleep. It is the ideal app if you are new to meditation, but it also has meditations for regular practitioners of meditation. Meditation sessions vary from 3-25 minutes. It is free on Android and iPhone.

3. Moodnotes

Moodnotes is a thought journal and mood diary. The app can be used to capture your feelings and improve your thinking habits through the implementation of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and positive psychology. It helps you to track your mood and increase your self-awareness. Learn to identify “traps” in your thinking and gives you ways to rethink the situation. If you happen to enter a “thinking trap”, Moodnotes will provide suggestions and useful perspectives to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing.

4. Pacifica

Pacifica is an app that helps the user with anxiety and stress. It provides a toolbox to deal with daily anxiety and stress. It helps you to break cycles of unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours through mindfulness meditation, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, mood tracking and relaxation. The app has audio lessons and activities that help you cope with stress and depression. It sets daily challenges to help you tackle anxiety each day and reach your long-term goals. It is free on Android and iPhone.

5. Happify

This app helps you to overcome negative thoughts and stress and helps to build resilience. Whether you are feeling stressed, anxious or sad it helps you to regain control of your thoughts and feelings. It uses evidenced based interventions including mindfulness, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and positive psychology to break unhelpful thought patterns and fight negativity and form new healthy habits. It is free on Android and iPhone.

6. Mind Shift

This app is designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It encourages you to take charge of your life, deal with intense emotions and face challenging situations. It is free on IOS and android

Using a Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

Progressive Deep Muscle Relaxation Exercises can be extremely beneficial to help with anxiety and stress management.

Here is just an example (**There are many others available online**).

Note: Take a deep breath and tense each muscle group (hard but not to the point of cramping) for five to 10 seconds, then exhale suddenly and completely relax the muscle group (do not relax it gradually). Give yourself 10 to 20 seconds to relax before moving to the next muscle group.

Breathe

Before you begin, take a deep breath through the nose – filling lungs completely and holding for a moment. Release through your mouth until you are out of breath. Do this three times.

Hands

Clench them – 5-10 seconds – relax. Do this twice.

Wrists and Forearms

Extend them and bend your hands back at the wrist – hold 5 – 10 seconds – relax.

Biceps and Upper Arms

Clench your hands into fists, bend your arms at the elbows, and flex your biceps. Hold 5-10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice. Extend your arms up towards the ceiling – push as if there were an imaginary wall there. — hold 5-10 seconds and relax. Do this twice.

Shoulders

Shrug them up towards your ears. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and relax. Do this three times.

Forehead

Wrinkle it into a deep frown. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax.

Around the Eyes and Bridge of the Nose

Close your eyes as tightly as possible. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. (Make sure you remove contact lenses before beginning the exercise)

Cheeks and Jaw

Smile as widely as you can – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Around the Mouth

Press your lips together tightly – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. (Check your facial area for tension).

Back of the Neck

Gently stretch your head back – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Front of the Neck

Touch your chin to your chest – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice. (Check your neck and head for tension).

Chest

Take a deep breath through your nose and hold it for 3 seconds, then exhale through your mouth. Do this twice.

Back

Arch your back backwards – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Stomach

Suck it into a tight knot – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice. (Check your chest and stomach for tension).

Hips and Buttocks

Press the buttocks together tightly – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Lower Legs

Raise each foot and point and curl it down – hold 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Tense your right calf for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Tense your left calf for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Feet

Squeeze (tighten) your right foot for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Squeeze (tighten) your left foot for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax. Do this twice.

Breathe

Finish this relaxation exercise by taking a deep breath through the nose – filling lungs completely and holding for a moment. Release through your mouth until you are out of breath. Do this three times.

Keep Pressing Forward

Doing this progressive muscle relaxation exercise once can be a start of helping you to relax. To experience long-term benefits, it is best to engage in this activity several times a week. May I even suggest making this a daily self-care practice? It does not take a lot of time and can even be done prior to going to sleep. You might even experience sleep that is more restful.