

Healthy Minds Lincolnshire

Staying Emotionally Healthy

An information and education pack for young people

A Guide to Looking after Yourself

There are lots of components to being as healthy as you can, physically and mentally. Eating well, exercising, getting as much sleep as you need and taking time for yourself all positively impact our physical and mental health. When our bodies are fit and healthy and we are in a good mood, we are able to be more productive, concentrate more and fully enjoy the things and the people who make us happy, which in turn boosts our mood even more. Below are some ways that will help you keep your body and mind healthy, feel good and live a longer and happier life.



Superfoods



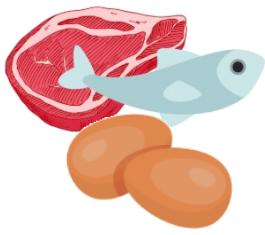
A healthy and balanced diet is important to keep your body healthy and your mind active. Eating a range of healthy foods will help you to concentrate, be more productive, have more energy and improve your mood.

5 Fruit and Vegetables: Eating at least 5 portions of different fruits or vegetables a day ensures that you get all the vitamins and nutrients your body needs to keep healthy and to keep your immune system strong.

Eat a Rainbow: A helpful phrase to remember when trying to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables is 'eat the rainbow'. Every day, try and eat fruit and vegetables that cover all the colours of the rainbow spectrum.



Bread, Pasta, Rice and Potatoes: Eating starchy foods and carbohydrates allows your body to produce the energy you need to study, concentrate and exercise.



Meat, Fish, Egg, Beans: These foods all contain protein, which is important for muscle growth, strength and repair, and to keep your skin, hair and nails healthy. If you decide you do not want to eat meat or fish and instead go vegetarian, you can find the protein you need in other foods, such as beans, lentils, pulses, eggs and dairy products.

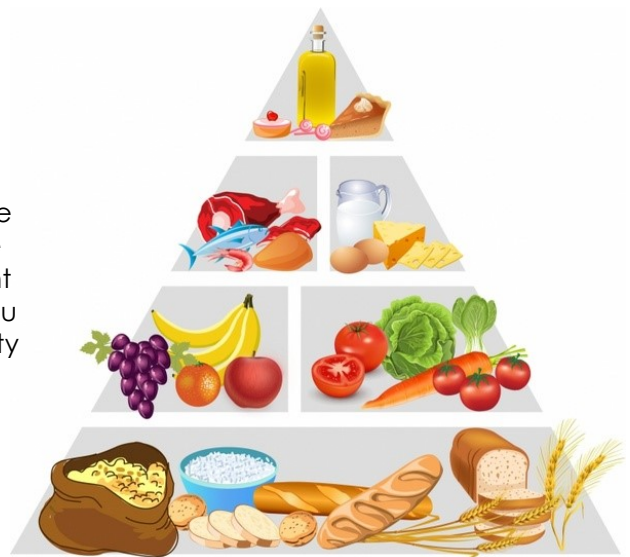
Milk, Cheese and Yoghurt: Dairy products all contain calcium which is used by your body for bone and teeth strength.



Fats and Sugar: Eating fats and sugar in moderation also forms part of a healthy diet as they help with energy and keeping you warm. Eating too much fat or sugar will make you tired and unhealthy, which will impact your ability to study and be productive.

The Food Pyramid

Foods that contain the same type of nutrients are grouped together on each of the shelves of the Food Pyramid. This gives you a choice of different foods from which to choose a healthy diet. As you move up the Food Pyramid the portion size/quality you should eat reduces. Following the Food Pyramid as a guide will help you get the right balance of nutritious foods.



Top Tip: Why not try keeping a food diary to make sure that you are getting a balanced and healthy diet. Each day also try to rate your mood, sleep and energy levels on a scale of 0-10 (0= Not very good and 10=Excellent), to help you see how different foods impact you.



Water

Keeping hydrated is a fundamental part of keeping healthy; it is always a good idea to keep a water bottle with you when you are studying and exercising. Avoid drinking too many sugary drinks as they will damage your teeth and lead to your energy levels spiking and then dropping.

Your body needs water to help you concentrate, to replace the water lost through sweating, to help keep your skin clear and healthy and to flush out waste from your body when you go to the toilet.

Exercise



Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle in two ways: it helps keep your body healthy by building muscle and by keeping your cardiovascular system and immune system strong and it is good for your mental health. Exercising can help you to sleep better and to make you feel happier during and after sport due to the endorphins that are released. The NHS recommends that young people up to the age of 18 should exercise for **60 minutes a day**.

We all choose to be active in different ways, whether that be playing a team sport with friends, or by going for a jog or practising yoga on our own. Remember that whilst there are plenty of ways to be active and raise your heart rate inside the house, exercising outside in the fresh air is a good and often a free way to maintain good mental health.



Have a think about all the ways you enjoy exercising...



Personal Hygiene

Keeping yourself clean is important to prevent yourself from getting ill and is also a good way to maintain a positive mood and high self-esteem.

Wash your hands: Washing your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds (around the same amount of time it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice through) is the best way to kill any germs, especially if you have been out and touched surfaces that many people also will have touched, or are going to be touching food.





Wash your Body and Hair: Take regular baths or showers to keep yourself clean and put clothes that are dirty out to wash.

Brush your teeth: Brushing your teeth twice a day and not eating too much sugar is a crucial to prevent you from getting cavities or from damaging the enamel on your teeth. Remember to use mouthwash, to floss and to visit the dentist twice a year too.



Illness: We all get ill but eating a balanced diet and exercising will help your immune system be strong enough to fight off coughs and colds you might get. Drink lots of fluids and get lots of sleep and make sure to wash your hands and cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow so that others around you don't get ill.



Sleep Hygiene

Why is sleep important?: Sleep is an essential part of your physical and mental wellbeing. It allows you to concentrate better and to store things you have learnt that day, improving the efficacy of your studying and revision for exams. Being well-rested also improves your mood, keeps your immune system strong and means you have the energy you need to exercise and enjoy your extra-curricular activities.

How to get the best night's sleep possible:

Going to bed at the same time and waking up at the same time every day, even at the weekend; is a good way to ensure you get a good night's sleep as it allows your body to create a routine. Having a bath



or a shower before bed, practising some mindfulness or relaxation, avoiding screens/social media for at least two hours before bed and not exercising right before are all good ways to help you sleep better.

Don't work in your bed, try and keep it only for sleeping in it as this will help your brain associate that getting into bed means that it is time to sleep. Make your bedroom as calming a place as possible with no bright lights and a comfortable temperature.



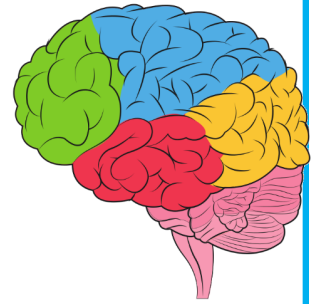
You might find hiding your clock or scenting your room with lavender help you relax and drift off to sleep faster.



Caffeinated drinks (e.g. coffee, tea or Coca-Cola), nicotine (from cigarettes) and alcohol can all stop you from getting to sleep or can mean your sleep pattern is interrupted and you do not wake up well rested the following day. You might find drinking something like coffee helps you to wake up in the morning but try to avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after noon as studies show they can stay in your body for six hours.

Rest and Relax

Just like your body gets tired after exercising, your brain gets tired too. Your brain is always processing information and life experiences even when you are asleep. It is important to find time to rest and relax, finding activities that are fun and enjoyable. Taking time to rest and relax every day can



prevent you feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of daily life. You may find keeping a notebook by your bed helpful so that you can jot down any ideas or thoughts you might have during the night and look back at them in the morning, so your mind can have a chance to rest.



It is always important to take time for yourself to do activities that help you to relax and de-stress. Some stress can be good and motivating for us, but stressing too much is unhealthy, will actually decrease your productivity and will also negatively impact your mood. We all have different ways to relax whether that is going for a walk, playing sport, being part of a drama club or simply having a bath.



What activities do you do to help you de-stress?



What activities do you think you could try?



Mindfulness and Grounding



Looking after your mental health; the state your brain is in, how it is feeling, thinking and how it makes you behave, is as important as looking after your physical health. Life becomes more intense, pressured and challenging as you progress through secondary school. Friendships, social media and family relationships can impact and overwhelm your mental health. Looking after your mental health consists of recognising and responding to the variety and intensity of emotions in a positive and constructive way, by finding and practising strategies that enable you to influence the amount of stress your brain is coping with.



Mindfulness focuses on smaller things that are happening right now; what can you see, feel, hear, smell and taste right now? By staying focused on the physical surroundings around you for a short time, you distract yourself from bigger thoughts and worries. You may have seen mindfulness colouring books, these are a great way to redirect your attention from daily stress, calming your mind and body.

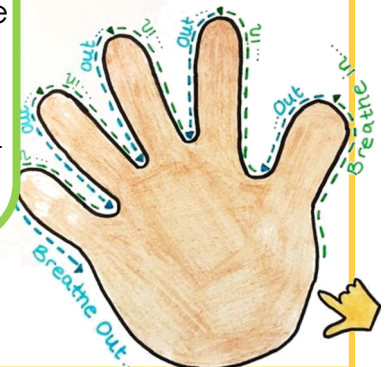


Grounding, like mindfulness, is a simple set of strategies that can help distract from difficult emotions you may be experiencing. It is a temporary way of gaining control over your emotions. Grounding can be done anywhere, anytime and no one knows has to know you are doing it.



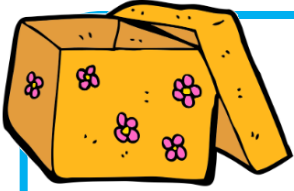
Over the next page you will find various mindfulness and grounding strategies to try. It is important to find strategies that work for you and practise as much as possible, then when you actually need to use the skills, you will have knowledge of how to use them, benefiting from their effectiveness.

Finger Breathing: Outstretch one of your hands like a star. Have the index finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your index finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your index finger down the inside of your thumb. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand. This is a great way to discreetly calm your mind whether in school or at home.





Refocusing your mind: When your mind wanders to worry, it is important to bring yourself back to the present moment. One way you can do this is by focusing on your 5 senses. e.g. naming five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can feel, two things you can smell



Self-Soothe Box: A self-soothe box is a useful tool to use when you are feeling a variety of emotions including sadness and worry. It is personal to each individual and can be kept throughout their life and continuously updated.

We recommend sourcing a shoe box and taking time to decorate this how you like, to ensure it's personal to you. It is important to decorate this with things that will improve your mood. Collect together items that are meaningful to you, or you know will be helpful (e.g. Apps, websites and important numbers). Make sure to keep it somewhere you can easily access it.

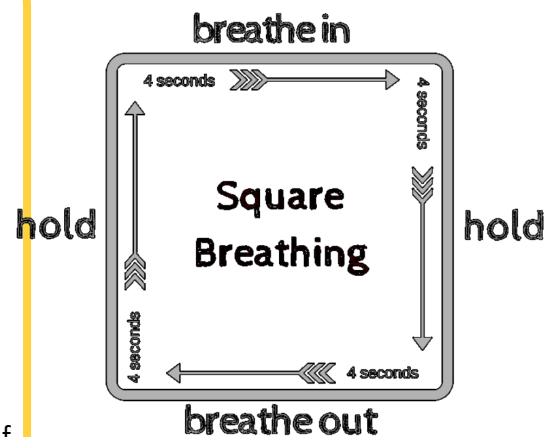
It can include things such as: stress balls, fidget toys, glitter jars, photos, headphones, scented candles, cuddly toys, books, colouring pencils and treats such as chocolate.

Square Breathing: Starting at the top left hand corner of the square, sit upright and slowly inhale through your nose for a slow count of four. Pay attention to the feeling of air filling your lungs.

Step 2: Hold your breath for another slow count of four.

Step 3: Exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth to the count of four. Feel the air leave your lungs.

Step 4: Hold your breath for the same slow count of four before repeating this process.



Gratitude Jar: Getting into the habit of noticing what we are grateful for in our lives is an excellent way that we can become more mindful of the little things and the big things in our lives that we might miss. A really good way to do this is to start slowly and at the end of each day think of three things that you are grateful for, you can even place these in a jar to create a gratitude jar. Some ideas of things you might feel grateful for are: nature, pets, friends, family, fun activities, a kind thought/message/gift, spending quality time with someone or having achieved something new.

Useful Websites & Numbers

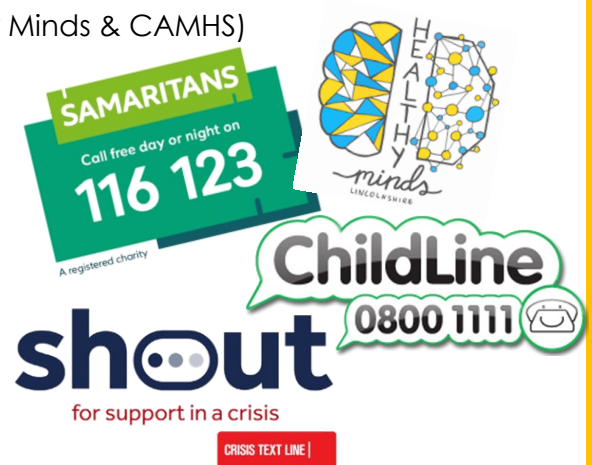
Websites:

- **Get self-help**—www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- **Young Minds**—www.youngminds.org.uk
- **KOOTH** - www.kooth.com
- **LCC Emotional Wellbeing Pathway**— www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing
- **Mood Juice**—<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Numbers:

- **Here4You Advice Line:** 0800 234 6342 (Healthy Minds & CAMHS)
- **ChildLine:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger**
(Shout);

SHOUT to 85258



Don't forget to check out our website, for lots of other useful information; such as our relaxation videos and our useful apps booklet!

<https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people>

