

The relaxation.

When you're prepared and ready, focus your mind on your right foot (you can start with your left side if you're a leftie and it feels more normal). Breathe in, and tense your foot muscles as hard as you can. Count to ten, with your muscles still tense. Suddenly and quickly release your foot muscles so that they're completely relaxed. Count to twenty. Now repeat the process from the start and do it again, using the same foot. You should notice more sensations the second time. When you've tensed and relaxed the same muscle twice its time to move onto another group of muscles. Do exactly the same thing – tense muscles for ten seconds, relax for twenty, repeat. The idea is to relax and tense all the muscles in your body, starting with your feet and working your way up.

Recommended order of muscle tensing

Right foot, right lower leg and foot, entire right leg
Left foot, left lower leg and foot, entire left leg
Right hand, right forearm and hand, entire right arm
Left hand, left forearm and hand, entire left arm,
abdomen (tummy), chest, neck and shoulders, face

Don't forget, if you're a leftie, you can start with your left side if it feels more comfortable. When you've completed this process, your muscles should be much more relaxed. The more you practice it, the more relaxed your muscles will be able to become over time.

Finishing a session. When you've finished your last tensing pattern:

Relax with your eyes closed.
Count slowly backwards from five to one.
Get up slowly. If you get up too quickly the drop in blood pressure could cause you to fall down again or feel dizzy.

Build your gratitude. Take some of your focus away from the negative things, and take 5 minutes each day to identify 3 things which you are thankful about.

IF YOU NEED SOMETHING STRONGER

You don't have to work this stuff out on your own. At The Haven we have lots of professionals, working with children and young people, who are great at helping to build and develop coping skills. They can also be good to talk to, if you prefer not to talk to friends or family, or if your problems are making it hard to carry on with day to day stuff:-

Anti-Bullying Counsellor
BeMe Counsellor, 16+ years
Brook Advisory Service
Brook Advisory Self Esteem Adviser
Careers Adviser
Child and Adolescent Mental Health service
Cornwall Share Mentor
Cornwall Share Personal Adviser
Haven Coordinator
Intercom Trust Counsellor, self-identity support
Kooth Counsellor
Penhaligons Friends, bereavement support
Safeguarding Officer
School Nurse
Stop Smoking Nurse
North Devon STEP, Psychology Counsellors
WRSAC Counsellor
Y7 and Y8 Counsellor
Young Carers Counsellor
Youth workers
YzUP, Drug and Alcohol Counsellor

Online counselling services offered by:

Kooth.com and Childline.com

Recommended websites:

Reachout.org and Teenagehealthfreak.com

For more information call Lizzie Brock,
Coordinator of The Haven Tel: 01288 350864 or
Check out our website for more information:
<http://www.budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk/the-haven-ihc>

Huge thanks to Reachout.org for kindly allowing us to reproduce their Mega List of Coping Techniques.

A Mega List of Coping Techniques



by Chloe Barnes

The Haven
Integrated Health Centre
- Health, Wellbeing, Support

A MEGA LIST OF COPING STRATEGIES

Turn to someone you trust. It can be a relief to share your thoughts with someone else, and it can be good to work through problems with the help of another person.

Write it all down. Keeping a notebook handy for you to scribble your thoughts in whenever you feel like it can be a great way of expressing yourself. You may find it helpful to write about what is worrying you, or express yourself in a more creative way.

Set aside regular time for yourself. Even if it's just ten minutes of 'you' time, taking some space for yourself, where you turn off your phone, spend time alone, exercise, meditate, or listen to music, it can really prepare you for tackling stress or challenges.

Walk away. Work out which situations you are likely to get most stressed out by. If you feel like you're getting too angry, end the conversation, take some space, and don't resume talking until you are calm and ready.

Overcome negative patterns of thinking through self-talk. Self-talk can help you see things from a more positive perspective and give a huge boost to your confidence.

Positive self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel good about yourself and the things that are going on in your life. It is like having an optimistic voice in your head that always looks on the bright side.

Negative self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel pretty low about yourself and things that are going on. It can put a downer on anything.

Reduce your load. Sometimes you just have to accept that you can't do everything. Keep track of your schedule and how you feel each day, and working out your optimal level of activity. You should be busy,

entertained, and challenged, without feeling overwhelmed.

Consider the big picture. When you're going through a stressful situation, ask yourself these two questions. 'How important is this?' and 'Will it matter in the long run?' If you realise it doesn't, it's probably not worth getting too stressed out about.

Learn to forgive. Move on from hurt, regret and anger. Whether you are angry at yourself or someone else, it doesn't help you to hold on to negative feelings like resentment.

Develop your communication skills. If you know how to communicate a problem well, it will help prevent conflict from escalating, and could help solve the cause of the stress in the first place.

Build your optimism. Optimism involves learning to think positively about the future - even when things go wrong. That's not to say you pretend that everything is fine when it isn't. Instead, it's about looking objectively at a situation, making a conscious decision to focus on the good. It can be hard to do, but if you practice, you're likely to get better.

Learn how to set goals. Having goals is really to give yourself direction, focus and motivation. Work out what goals to set, and learn how to plan them so that you maximise your chances of achieving what you want most in the world.

Goal setting can help when: You feel overwhelmed by how much is going on, you're lacking direction, you have a big project to tackle.

Define your goal.

There are two important parts to defining a goal: Make your goal specific. Goals should be measurable and have an end point. Make your goals realistic. Taking on challenges can be really motivating, but don't set yourself up to fail. If you're not sure if your goal is realistic, talk to someone you trust about it.

Set sub-goals. Break up your goal. Breaking up your goal into sub-goals is really important to staying motivated, particularly for larger goals that take a long time to achieve. Sub-goals help you recognise and celebrate when you've made progress.

Work through a plan of action. Having a tangible plan of action helps you to stay focused. Write down your sub-goals. Once you've worked out your sub-goals, make sure you write them down and keep them in a place that you can see. Having them close by will help keep you motivated. Include a time frame. Deadlines are important. They keep you on the go and help you stay motivated. For each written sub-goal, write down a deadline to prevent you from putting things off or forgetting your goal.

Relax Man! Relaxation is a great way to refocus your thoughts, particularly when things are becoming a bit overwhelming. When people are stressed out, anxious or have an anxiety disorder, they often have really tense or tight muscles. This means that you can actually reduce the stress and anxiety you feel, if you learn to relax your muscles properly. Progressive muscle relaxation can help you with this - it's the most common type of relaxation training, and it's used by a lot of people. It involves tensing and relaxing different groups of muscles through your body.

Preparation Make sure before trying out progressive muscle relaxation training, that you do these things: Find a comfortable quiet space. Make sure you're in a place free of distractions. Switch off your phone, go into a quiet room, and avoid being around other people if you think they're likely to be a distraction. Make sure you're comfortable. Wear comfy clothes, take off your shoes, and if you've eaten recently, give your food some time to digest.

Sit on a chair in a comfortable position. You can also lie down if you prefer, but you're more likely to fall asleep.