

# Talking about War Resource Pack (Age 13+)



A resource pack for teenagers to  
help manage difficult feelings about  
war





# Please feel free to print out your favourite pages

This pack was created by the Early Intervention team in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in NHS Grampian



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# How can this resource help me?

This resource was designed to support your emotional wellbeing. It will show you ways you can keep your body and mind healthy:



# Everyone is talking about Ukraine

You have probably heard of Ukraine and Russia in the news. In fact, it might feel like it's all everyone is talking about! One reason why we are hearing so much about the war is because people are sharing information about it to try and help us to keep informed about current world events.

We have so many ways to share this information and we have easy access to this information right at our fingertips through our smartphones, tablets and social media. Although this is meant to be helpful for us it can feel overwhelming when we are seeing and hearing it being talked about all of the time.

It is really important to remember that not all sources of information are created equal. Anyone can write what they like on social media and even websites that you think are reliable can get their facts wrong sometimes. If you feel worried about information that you hear make sure that you speak to a trusted adult to ensure the information you are getting is accurate and is in context.

Can you think of a time when you have seen something on social media that you found upsetting or worrying?



## Social Media

If you are feeling upset or worried as a result of the media coverage there are steps you can take to limit your exposure to war coverage:

- Turn off any automatic updates on your phone
- Avoid or limit your use of social media
- Give yourself permission to limit or end conversations with other people that are making you feel more worried. Try politely saying **“I feel like everyone is talking about war at the moment...could we talk about something else?”**
- Change the settings on your social media accounts so that posts about war aren't appearing on your home feeds – the following pages will show you how to do this

facebook

 TikTok

Instagram

twitter 

# Muting unhelpful videos on TikTok

TikTok has an option to mute certain words, phrases or hashtags to stop them from appearing on your news feed.

## Changing your content preferences

If you are scrolling through the 'For You' section on TikTok and you see any videos that you do not want to see. Press and hold on the video and then tap the 'not interested' icon. When you do this you will be shown less of that sort of video in the future.

## How to report a video

If you come across a video that you think is inappropriate or may be upsetting to you or others, it may be against TikTok's community guidelines and you can report this. The content and user will be reviewed by their moderation team and appropriate action taken.

## Restricted Mode

If you would like to limit content more quickly and widely, you can enable 'Restricted Mode'. Restricted Mode is an option at the account settings level that limits content that is not appropriate for everyone.

To enable this setting:

- Select "Digital Wellbeing" under the app settings
- Tap "Turn On"
- Set a passcode
- Toggle "Restricted Mode"

Restricted Mode can always be turned off by the person who enabled it to begin with. So if you find yourself missing videos you'd like to see, you can switch back whenever you'd like.

Note: If you're a parent and your teen uses TikTok, it might make sense to enable this setting to ensure the content they are viewing is age-appropriate.

## Remember:

Long-press videos you don't like and tap the "Not interested" icon to see less of it in the future. If a video violates their [Community Guidelines](#), report it. Use Restricted Mode to quickly change your feed.

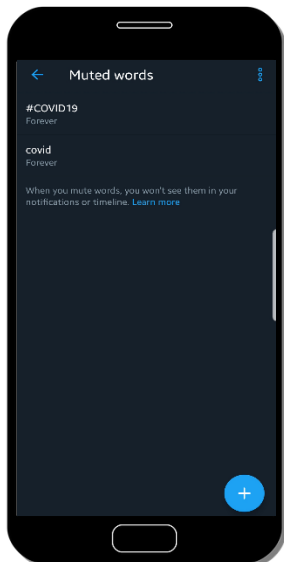
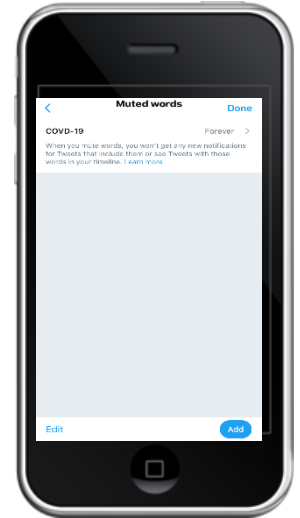


# Muting unhelpful words on

Twitter has an option to mute certain words, phrases or hashtags to stop them from appearing on your news feed.

## IPHONE (APP)

1. Go to your Notifications tab
2. Tap the gear icon
3. Tap "Muted" words
4. Tap "+Add muted or phrase"
5. Type in the word or hashtag you'd like to mute (for example: #war)
6. Alternatively, long press the word as it appears on a tweet and press "Mute"



## ANDROID (APP)

1. Go to your Notifications tab
2. Tap the gear icon
3. Tap "Muted" words
4. Tap "+Add muted or phrase"
5. Type in the word or hashtag you'd like to mute

# Muting unhelpful words on facebook

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## IPHONE AND ANDROID (APP)

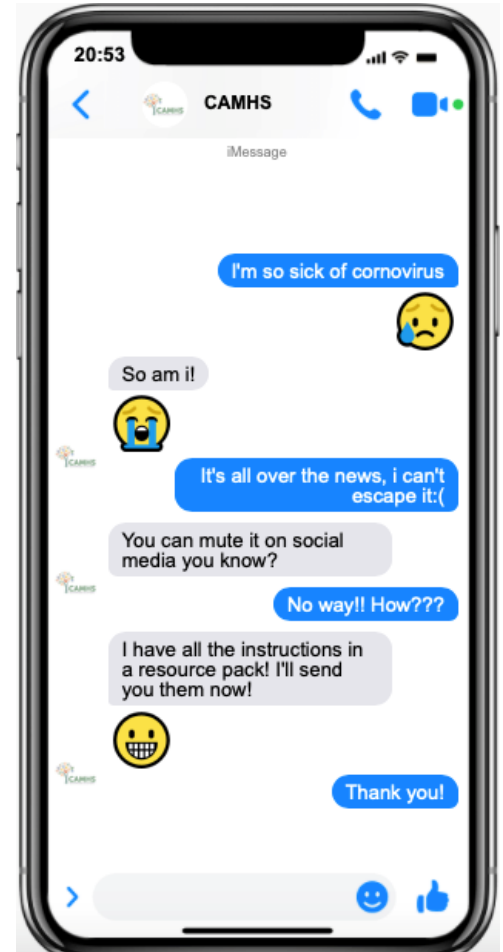
Unfortunately you can't mute certain words, but you can mute pages or people if they are sharing/posting content you don't want to see. To do this:

1. Click on the three dots at the top right of the post you do not wish to see
2. Press "Snooze for 30 days"
3. Alternatively you can "Hide all" or "Unfollow"

## You can also prioritise whose posts you see:

1. Go onto your menu – This is usually the three lines at the top right on the Facebook app
2. Scroll down to "Settings & Privacy"
3. Press "Settings"
4. Scroll down to the heading "News Feed settings" and choose "News Feed preferences"
5. Press "Prioritise Who to See First"
6. Choose who you want to see at the top of your News Feed
7. Press "Done" at the top right

Under your News Feed Settings you can also see who you have hidden posts from, or unfollowed.



# Muting unhelpful words on Instagram

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Unfortunately, Instagram does not allow you to block posts or comments left on other users' posts that contain words, phrases or hashtags that you wish to avoid. If you are experiencing distress as a result of content on Instagram it is advisable that you cut down on the time you spend on Instagram, choose social media sites that do allow you to filter out content you do not wish to see (such as Twitter) and avoid the 'explore' feature that recommends content to you.

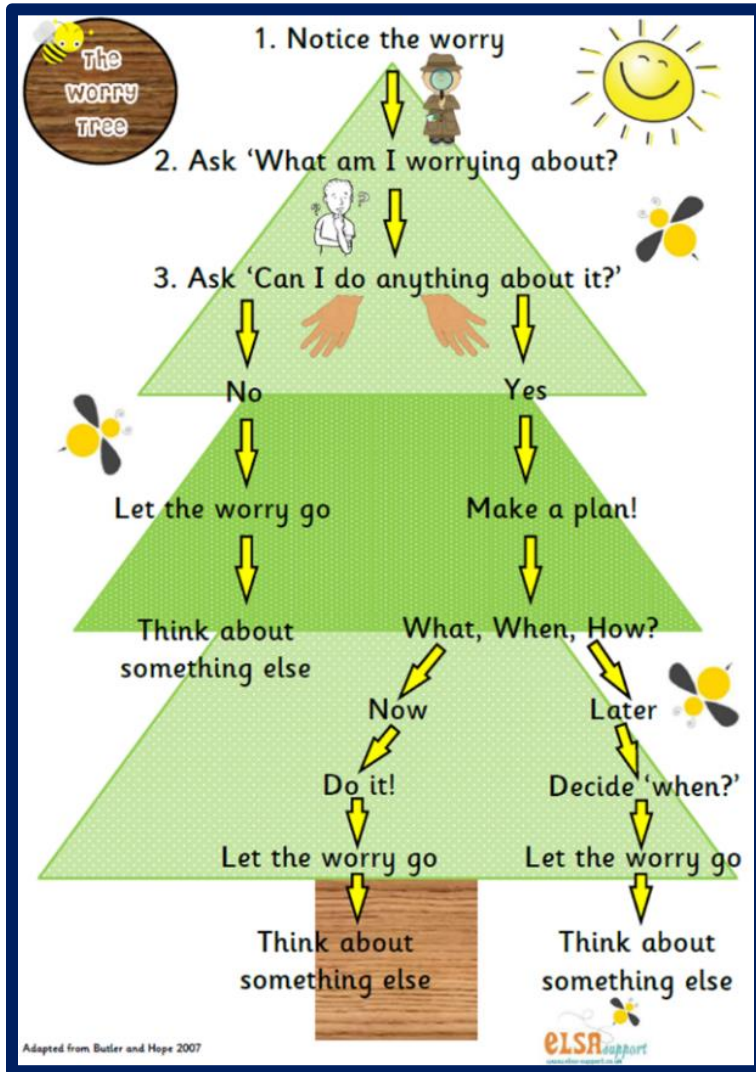
1. Go to your profile
2. Click on the hamburger (the three lines at the top right) of the screen
3. Click on 'Settings'
4. Click on 'Privacy'
5. Click on 'Comments'
6. Click on 'Manual filter'
7. The manual filter bar will turn from grey to blue, then in the space that says 'words separated by commas...' type in words and phrases that you do wish not to see, separating each word or phrase using a comma.



# I'm worried about war...

Lots of people are feeling worried about the war in Ukraine right now. This is a very normal way to feel when a war has broken out in the world. During a war often people find themselves worrying about things that they have little or no control over- no matter how much worrying they do.

## Follow this worry tree when you have a worry



Is there anything I can do about my worries about war?

*Yes, there is*

Ok - what's my plan then?

There are two things that you can do as part of your plan to tackle your worries about the war:

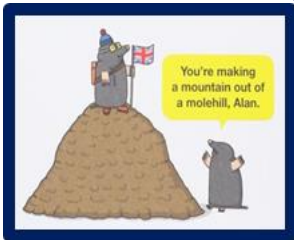
- 1) Make use of the strategies in this booklet to 'let worry go'.
- 2) If you would like to, engage in local and national community projects to support those affected by war.

# Tackling automatic negative thoughts

The way we think affects the way we feel. When we think negatively, we feel bad. When we think positive thoughts, we feel good! No-one wants to think negatively but most of the time it happens automatically. Sometimes simply acknowledging the thought is there, without engaging with it or judging yourself for having it, is enough to help it pass. If not, there are strategies you can use below to try manage it. Try noticing when you have one of the following kinds of unhelpful thoughts:

## Blowing things up

Negative things are sometimes blown out of proportion and seem bigger than they really are. People sometimes call this "making a mountain out of a molehill".



## Fortune telling

Sometimes we guess what will happen in the future. In reality no-one can predict the future.



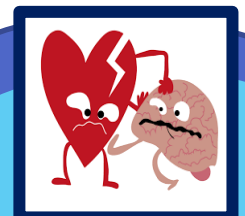
## Seeing things through negative glasses

Negative glasses only let you see the negatives in a situation. Even if things have gone okay, negative glasses will still see the bits that didn't go as well as you would have liked.

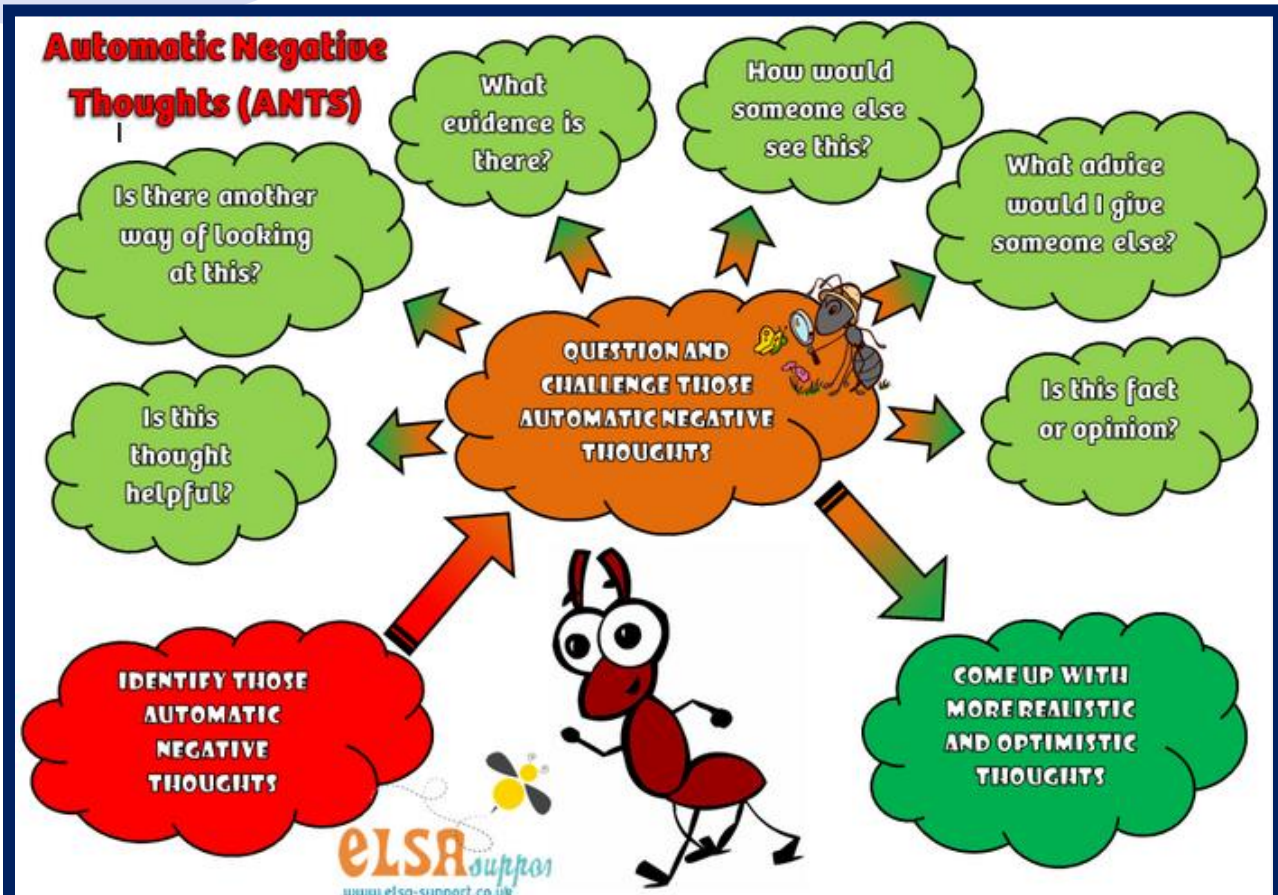


## Feeling thoughts

When we feel a strong negative emotion, it can trick our brains into believing that that must mean that something is wrong- even when that's not true.



When you find yourself having a negative thought you can challenge it using the questions below.



- **Challenge your thoughts:** Imagine you are collecting evidence for a court case to prove that your negative thought isn't true. Think of a time where you were sure something bad was going to happen but it didn't. Ask yourself how you would look at the situation differently if you were feeling happy and calm.
- **Consider other, less scary, outcomes:** What are some other ways the situation could resolve itself?
- **Imagine positive outcomes:** Think of as many ways as you can that the situation could be resolved in a good way.
- **Practice looking for the positives:** Write down three good things every single day. These could be good things that have happened to you, things you did well on or things that you're grateful for. They could even be good things that have happened somewhere else in the world that you've heard about.
- **Take a time out:** Instead of trying to tackle the thought when you're feeling bad, wait until later when your feelings are less intense and see if you feel differently.

# Relaxation

There are lots of different ways you can relax and different people find different things relaxing. Some people like using strategies to calm the mind, some prefer to relax their bodies, and others like to do activities to distract themselves from thinking too much. The following section gives you different ways to relax.

**Give them a try and see what ones work for you!**

## Relaxing the mind using mindfulness

It's natural for our minds to wander. Unfortunately, when we get caught up in thinking too much we miss enjoying the present moment we are in.

Mindfulness can be tricky at first. Our minds are used to wandering, and we will often be tempted to fix on a thought or a feeling. When you first try these exercises, you will probably find that your mind wanders after a minute or two. That's normal — minds do that! Don't give yourself a hard time, remember you are still learning. The more you practice doing that, the better you train your brain to pay attention and the easier it will get.



## Mindfulness exercises for beginners

### Mindful Breathing Meditation

1. Sit up in a comfortable way. Close your eyes.
2. Notice your breathing as you inhale and exhale normally. Just pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out. Can you feel the place where the air tickles your nostrils? What about when your breath comes out over the lips?
3. Pay attention to how the breath gently moves your body. Can you notice your belly or your chest moving as you breathe?
4. Try to take longer, slower breaths that fill your belly up with air. Notice how the belly expands and rises as you inhale, and falls as you exhale.
5. Sit for a few minutes, just paying attention to your gentle breathing. See how relaxed you can feel just sitting, breathing in and out.
6. When your mind starts to wander and think about something else, gently guide your attention back to your breathing. If it helps you focus, think the word 'relax' or quietly hum in time with each exhale, or say to yourself "I'm breathing in" on the inhale and "I'm breathing out" when you exhale.
7. When you're ready, you can open your eyes.



## Lake Visualisation

1. Take a deep breath in and gently close your eyes.
2. Imagine yourself relaxing by a beautiful, calm lake. The breeze softly blows over the lake, watch the thousands of tiny ripples it creates on its surface. Listen to the birds singing happily in the trees. Feel how warm the sun is on your skin. Your surroundings are so calm, let that calm feeling wash over your entire body and mind.
3. Now it's time to release any worries, negative thoughts and emotions, and stress you have been keeping inside. Imagine them floating out of your body, up, out, and away. Watch them float into a cloud and then watch the cloud floating away, carrying them away with it. As you watch them leave your body, imagine the empty space they have left inside you.
4. Now imagine you are surrounded by a beautiful, sparkling light. Take a deep breath in, as you breathe in see yourself inhaling that sparkling light. The light represents love, peace, and calm and enters the empty space you made inside of you. Take a few more deep breaths, filling up your body with good energy. Feel the light travelling around your body, healing you and filling you with positivity.
5. When you are ready, open your eyes and have a big stretch.



## Mindful Showering

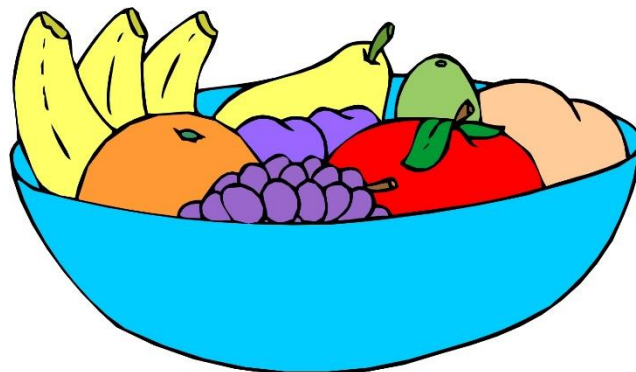
1. Run the shower and step in.
2. Under the shower, focus on how the water feels as falls onto your head and runs down your body. Notice the water warming and relaxing your muscles. Feel the soft, bubbly sensation of your soap as it cleanses and moisturises your skin. As you wash, keep your movements slow, allowing yourself time to feel the different sensations.
3. Listen to the sound of the water as it lands on your body and on the floor. Imagine any negative thoughts, feelings, and stress being washed away by the water, imagine them running off you and down the drain.
4. Now take a deep breath and smell your soap. What does it smell like? Breathe in deeply, and breathe out slowly, allowing your whole body to relax further.
5. When you have finished showering, take a moment to appreciate the soft dry towel as it presses against your wet skin.
6. Take a moment to appreciate the natural feeling of cleanliness and relaxation before you move on with your day.



## Mindful Eating

Get a piece of fruit (e.g. an orange, an apple, or even something as small as a raisin). Your job is to eat the fruit slowly, without rushing while giving your full attention to what you're eating.


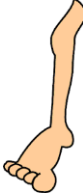

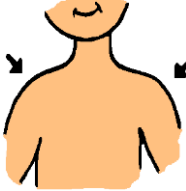

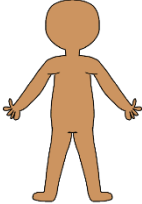
1. Start by holding the fruit. Roll it in your hand. Notice how it feels in your fingers. If you hold it firmly, is it squishy? Is it juicy?
2. Hold the fruit near your nose. What does it smell like?
3. Notice how the fruit looks. Pay attention to whether the skin is smooth or bumpy. Notice the different colours.
4. Now go ahead and taste your fruit. Notice how it feels on your tongue, and against your teeth. Notice the flavour, the texture, and the juiciness as you chew each piece slowly. Take your time as you chew, taste, smell, and feel each bite of the fruit.



# Relaxing the body: muscle relaxation exercise

Muscle relaxation exercises simply involve squeezing each of your muscles in turn for five seconds and then relaxing them for ten seconds before moving on to the next muscle.

The best place to do this is in a quiet room where you won't be disturbed. You can lie down to do this or just sit in a comfortable position.

Take 3 deep breaths	
	Squeeze your foot for 5 seconds. Relax
	Squeeze your leg for 5 seconds. Relax
	Squeeze your stomach for 5 seconds. Relax
	Shrug your shoulders for 5 seconds. Relax
	Squeeze your arm & hand for 5 seconds. Relax
	Squeeze your whole body for 5 seconds. Relax
Take 3 deep breaths	

# Distract yourself from your worries

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Try these exercises when you need to distract yourself from your worries. Turn it into a competition with your friends or family!

- Name all the objects you see
- Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, how to score a goal, prepare your favourite meal or tie a knot
- Count backwards from 100 in 7s
- Pick up an object and describe it in detail. Describe its colour, texture, size, weight, scent and any other qualities you notice
- Spell your full name, and the names of 3 other people, backwards
- Name all your family members, their ages, and one of their favourite activities
- Read something backwards, letter-by-letter. Practice for at least a few minutes
- Think of an object and "draw" it in your mind, or in the air with your finger. Try drawing your home, a vehicle, or an animal.

Using all your 5 sense is a great way to focus on your surroundings and bring yourself into the present moment

5 things you can see

4 things you can feel

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

# Activities you can do at home

Practice Yoga

Listen to music

Spend time with a pet

Clean or re-arrange your room

Try a home workout

Read a book

Phone or text your friends

Paint or draw

Challenge yourself to an hour or day without technology

Watch your favourite TV show or movie

Sing or dance

Cook or bake

Have a bubble bath

Play an instrument

Make a list of things you'd like to do in your life

Play a board game

# Exercising at home

Research has shown that regular physical activity can boost our self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, making us less stressed, anxious and depressed. Workouts don't have to be long or require a lot of space or special equipment. There are lots of exercises you can do at home and ways to make it fun.

## Why not try one of the two simple home workouts below?

If you'd prefer to be guided through your workout there are lots of free instructional videos on YouTube. See the hyperlinks on pages 26 & 27 of this booklet.



**TABATA**

- JUMPING JACKS**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE
- PUSH-UPS**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE
- CRUNCHES**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE
- BURPEES**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE
- HIGH KNEES**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE
- JOG IN PLACE**  
10 SEC REST | 20 SEC MOVE

**1 HIGH INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING**



**Workout for beginners**  
**what's your name?**


SPELL OUT YOUR FULL NAME AND COMPLETE THE EXERCISE LISTED FOR EACH LETTER. FOR A GREATER CHALLENGE INCLUDE YOUR MIDDLE NAME & DO EACH ONE TWICE! FOR VARIETY YOU CAN USE A DIFFERENT HISTORICAL PERSON'S NAME OR A FAMILY MEMBER'S NAME EACH TIME.


<b>A</b> 10 jumping jacks	<b>N</b> 10 second jump rope
<b>B</b> 5 push-ups	<b>O</b> 10 russian twists
<b>C</b> 1 burpee	<b>P</b> 5 plie squats
<b>D</b> 20 high knees	<b>Q</b> 10 arm circles
<b>E</b> 5 crunches	<b>R</b> 10 skaters
<b>F</b> 10 mountain climbers	<b>S</b> 10 second jog in place
<b>G</b> 5 squats	<b>T</b> 10 butt kickers
<b>H</b> 10 front lunges	<b>U</b> 5 inchworms
<b>I</b> 10 side lunges	<b>V</b> 5 tricep dips
<b>J</b> 10 second wall sit	<b>W</b> 3 star jumps
<b>K</b> 5 calf raises	<b>X</b> 5 bird dogs
<b>L</b> 5 second plank	<b>Y</b> 10 leg raises
<b>M</b> 3 squat jumps	<b>Z</b> 5 squat jacks

CONSULT A DOCTOR BEFORE STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM - WWW.THEYSMELL.COM


# Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is such an important part of all of our daily lives. You should think of it as being just as important as food and water for your overall health. The average teenager needs between 8 and 10 hours sleep every night and lots of things can interfere with us getting a good night's sleep. Follow the steps below to ensure that you are keeping yourself healthy and getting enough sleep.


 Although it can be tempting to stay up late and have a lie-in when there's no school, stick to your usual bed time and wake-up time

 Try to use your bed only for sleeping. If you usually sit on it to watch TV or to play on your tablet or games console, get a chair to use instead

 Make sure you get some exercise during the day!

 Try not to use screens (tablets/phones/TVs/games consoles) for the hour before you go to bed. Try one of the relaxing activities in this booklet instead



 Try to avoid sugar and caffeine (sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks, tea and coffee) in the evening

 Try to stick to a schedule throughout the day to avoid napping out of boredom





# Social Support

Talking to friends, family and other trusted professionals can help to reduce our anxiety. Talking to and spending time with others increases our resilience to cope with stress.

- Text a friend or video call to connect with others far away.
- Saying hello to a friend or helping with a task at home can start a conversation.
- Find out if there are any groups or clubs in your area to meet people who share your likes and interests.
- Ask for help from a trusted adult at home or in school and they can support you to connect with local mental health support services.

## How you can help

Sometimes when we are anxious about a situation out with our control it can be helpful to use our time supporting those affected by the conflict. There is lots of evidence that doing something for other people can have a positive impact on our mental health.

If you are able to and would like to support those affected by the war you may want to get involved in local charities and community efforts.



Dr Emma Hepburn

Talk to your peers and teachers about how you can help.

## Further resources

### Online support



CAMHS resources have collated numerous helpful resources to support children and young people's mental health. This includes useful downloads, websites, apps, books and videos.

A useful resource to safely discuss your thoughts and feelings regarding war is Child Line. They offer a message board function to discuss current news with other young people where

you can post your messages to others publically about Ukraine. Alternately you can use the 1-2-1 counsellor chat for a confidential discussion with a professional. There is also the option to 'write to Sam' to ask a specific problem and request advice. Their number is also available to talk to a counsellor 24 hours a day 7 days a week.



<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/message-boards/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/ask-sam/>



Getselfhelp.co.uk have compiled an extensive list of resources based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. You will find information about mental health and usable guides such as 'dealing with negative emotions', 'help for anxiety – now!' and 'if you're feeling distressed right now'.

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<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/>

## Apps



### Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a meditation program to help bring mindfulness into your life.

*Available on iOS and Android*

### Mindshift

Mindshift can be used to help manage and reduce anxiety. It includes a feelings check in, chill zone with audio bodyscan, breathing exercises, coping cards, and a thought journal.



*Available on iOS and Android*



### Breathe2Relax

Breathe2Relax is a stress management tool that provides information on the effects of stress on the body as well as instructions and practice exercises to help users learn the stress management skill called diaphragmatic breathing. It can also help with mood stabilisation, anger control, and anxiety management.

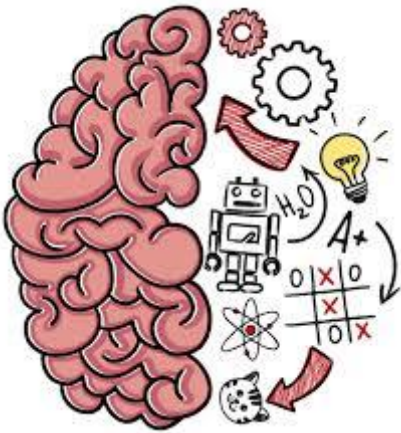
*Available on iOS and Android*



### Three Good Things: A Happiness Journal

This simple tool lets you record three positive things about your day. This helps you to start looking for and focusing on the good things in your life. It records all your entries in one place, allowing you to look back through them whenever you need a positivity boost.

*Available on iOS*



### Brain test

Brain test is full of tricky puzzles and brain teasers. Think of it as 'brain exercise'. It will challenge you to think outside the box and no two puzzles are alike.

*Available on iOS and Android*

## Merge Block: Star Finders

Merge block is a classic puzzle game where your task is to merge matching blocks together to make a bigger number. Sounds simple enough but as you progress the game speeds up and the blocks begin to stick together, you have to beat the clock and clear the rows before they reach the top or you lose.

*Available on iOS and Android*



## Woody Block Puzzle

Woody block puzzle is a relaxing artisan block puzzle to help you emotionally re-charge and reduce stress.

*Available on iOS and Android*

## Wordscapes

Wordscapes provides you with a random assortment of letters, your task is to fill in the crosswords puzzles using only available letters.

*Available on iOS and Android*



## Exercise resources



Kassandra Yoga guides you through a gentle yoga stretching tutorial.

How long? Ten minutes.

Good for: Stretching out stiff muscles, flexibility and introducing you to deep relaxing breathing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pKly2JojMw>

This bodyweight workout (one that uses your own weight to provide resistance opposed to using equipment) by 24strong has been designed for, and is demonstrated by, teenagers. There are ten different exercises, you do 45-seconds of each exercises followed by 15 seconds of rest.



How long? Ten minutes.

Good for: Building strength and cardiovascular fitness.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ECBD6egbI>



Follow dancer Nicole Steen as she leads you through her Latin dance workout. It's fast paced but you can follow background dancer Tara who demonstrates simpler ways of doing each move until you've mastered them.

How long? Thirty minutes

Good for: Cardiovascular fitness, learning a new skill, and having fun!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DZktowZo\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DZktowZo_k)

In this POPSUGAR tutorial, boxing coach Milan Costich shows you how you can do some boxing at home. They use 2-5lb dumbbells in this video, if you have some- great! If not, you can use two bottles of water, two tins (e.g. beans) or forego the weights altogether and just punch with empty hands.



How long? Fifteen minutes

Good for: Cardiovascular fitness, learning a new skill, and having fun!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWLEkO0MIXs>



If you feel your worries are getting bigger, you or a parent can contact:

Samaritans: 116 123  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87  
<https://breathingspace.scot/>

NHS 24: 111  
<https://www.nhs24.scot/>

Your local GP

*Please note this booklet was written in March 2022 during the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, however, the information provided can be useful to explore feelings regarding any war or conflict.*