



## Self Help for Children and Young People

### Looking after yourself ...

Sometimes it seems like we have little or no control over what we think and how we feel. But, there are things that you can do that will help you to feel better.

#### Diet

Food can affect your mood! There is a link between what we eat and how we feel so it's important to have a healthy, balanced diet for both your body and mind.

Eating well doesn't have to be expensive. Try these sites for brain food on a budget:

[Change4Life](#): easy tips and recipes

[NHS Choices](#): healthy eating for teens

[Royal College of Psychiatrists](#): linking eating well and mental health

#### Exercise

Everyone knows that exercise is good for your body – but it's also important for your emotional wellbeing. Scientists have discovered that exercise causes your brain to release chemicals that make you feel good. There is evidence to show that exercise can help raise self-esteem, help sleep problems, improve memory and concentration, takes your mind off negative thoughts, as well as reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.

[Young Minds](#): exercise and mental health

#### Sleep

It is important to make sure you are getting enough sleep and you have a good routine before bed which means reducing the use of electronic devices such as phones, laptops and tablets before bed. Getting enough exercise will help you sleep and not having drinks containing caffeine. Make sure you are not hungry and that you haven't eaten too much just before bed. Make your bedroom a comfortable place to go to sleep.

**Try these sites for more ideas:**

[NHS UK](#): sleep tips for teenagers

[Young Minds](#): Sleep difficulties

## **Taking time to relax**

Regular relaxation is beneficial for your mental health. If you make a regular time each day to practice some of the techniques below you will get better and better at relaxation and notice your day-to-day stress levels are lower. You will also become able to use relaxation at the times you need them most.

### **[Young Minds](#): Taking time out**

Another great way to relax is to practice mindfulness. This is the focusing of attention and awareness on the here and now, and is often used to reduce anxiety, stress and depression. It has its roots in Buddhism, though is used widely by people of all ages from all different backgrounds with all sorts of problems.

**[Mindfulness with Young Minds](#)**: How I practice mindfulness to improve my mental health

**[The MIX](#)**: Mindfulness

## **Share what is bothering you with someone you can trust**

Sharing what is bothering you can help to make it feel more manageable. If you feel that the problems you're having are too big for you to deal with by yourself you may want to get in contact with your GP, someone from school/college or someone else you trust.

If you're finding it hard to talk to people you know about how you feel, contact one of the helplines shown at the bottom of the page.

**These links might also be helpful:**

**[Childline](#)**: Chat online or use their useful [Toolbox](#)