



Five ways to wellbeing

WEDNESDAY – TAKE NOTICE



Take notice for mental wellbeing

It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much.

Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing.

Some people call this awareness 'mindfulness'. Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. You can take steps to develop it in your own life.

An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means being aware of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment. That might be something as simple as the feel of a banister as we walk upstairs.

Another important part of mindfulness is an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment.

It's about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives.

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves. We begin to experience afresh those things we have been taking for granted.

When news of death, illness and pain are all around us in the media this is challenging to practise. Here are a few ideas that may help.

Ideas for Be Mindful

- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Tidy your room
- Take notice of how those around you are feeling or acting
 - Check out [Headspace](#) which has some good mindfulness resources (however there is a cost attached)
 - Keep a gratitude diary or add to one regularly to highlight what's going well during a challenging time.
 - If you have houseplants nourish them and watch them grow, blossom and change.
 - Action for Happiness have a great [Coping Calendar](#) you can download for free with daily activities to keep you grounded.

Check out some of the [guided mindfulness](#) exercises.

Click here for a [square breathing exercise](#)

When afraid, anxious or angry, people tend to breathe shallowly or even hold their breath. Box breathing, also known as four-square breathing or square-box breathing, is a technique that can help calm your thoughts and release pent-up tension. Proper breathing also boosts lung function and overall health, but best of all, it's a simple technique that's easy to learn and one you can do anywhere.

How It Works

When your body is stressed, it creates the 'fight, flight or freeze' response, causing your heart and breath rates to rise and your blood vessels to narrow, restricting blood flow.

Breathing and meditation affect your parasympathetic nervous system, slowing your heart and breathing and improving blood flow and digestion.

Breathing and meditation also affect the brain and help improve your mood, your ability to pay attention and how you perform everyday tasks.