

RELAXATION

This time of year can often feel stressful. Whether it's because of exams or new projects at work, it's important to make sure we relax as often as we can.

Relaxation will look different to different people. For some, it might look like having a nice long bath. For others, it might be going for a long hike, or going for a run. Relaxation might also look like playing your favourite computer game or watching your favourite TV show.

As we saw in April's activity, stress, whilst perfectly natural, can sometimes negatively impact on our physical health. This is why it's so important to make sure we relax – it helps to bring down the stress hormones running through our body, whilst also ensuring we take care of ourselves.



Try answering the following questions:

What do you like to do to relax?

Why do you like doing these activities?

One simple way to help you relax is writing. Using the prompts below, answer the questions. You can do this every day, or every week.

Before you start, let's do a quick check in. How stressed are you feeling right now?

Why?

How is your overall mood?

Have you done your usual relaxation activities recently?

Prompts:

- What is on your mind right now?
- What's going well in your life right now?
- What are you grateful for?
- What are the things that make you happy?
- What are three things that made today a good day?
- What are five things you like to do for fun?

Another technique you can use to help you relax your body is deep breathing. Deep breathing works by helping to slow down our breathing and by sending signals to our brain that we're ready to chill out. Practicing deep breathing helps our body to respond to this signal better.



There are lots of different ways to practice deep breathing. One of the simpler ways is to:

Breathe in slowly. Count in your head to 5 whilst you're breathing in. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs. How does it feel?

Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds. This should feel longer than a normal breath.

Breathe out very slowly for 5-10 seconds. Pretending to break through a straw can help!

Repeat these steps until you feel calmer.

There are lots of other ways you can relax. Some different techniques include:

- Meditation
- Listening to relaxing music