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**Grow
Your
Thinking**



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**Invest in Positive
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**Regulate
Negative
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**Achieve
Balance**



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**Feed Positive
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**Foster Self
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e

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Hope**



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4-7-8

BREATHING



Achieve Balance



It's hard to think clearly when you are not getting enough oxygen and when suffering from anxiety or a panic attack it's not uncommon to breath shallowly, hyperventilate or even unconsciously hold your breath. Deeper diaphragmatic breathing is the solution – by giving your brain and muscles more oxygen it calms down the fight or flight response.

Try **4-7-8** breathing in times of high anxiety – or try to practice this for 4 breath cycles twice a day so that it becomes a more natural response for you.

Inhale for a count of 4 - you are making yourself slowly take in more oxygen

Hold your breath for a count of 7 - you are allowing as much oxygen to saturate into your bloodstream as possible, cleansing & energising all your cells, tissues & organs)

Exhale to a count of 8 - you make sure you have expelled as much carbon dioxide from your lungs as possible)

Source:

From yoga practice and a popular effective anxiety management exercise

You might also be interested in:

The YouTube tutorial by Andrew Weil MD



Picture source: Kenyatta University, Kenya



3 GOOD THINGS



Feed Positive Emotions



We can overcome our brain's natural negativity bias and train it instead to notice more of the positives around us. It takes approximately 3 positive things to offset the emotion you feel from 1 negative thought or event.

On a given day, think back to the last 24 hours. Identify & make a list of 3 things that were positive, made you smile or laugh, including how and why each thing was positive.

Repeat this exercise every day for at least a week – ideally 21 days. Try to do it at the same time every day e.g. at dinner time or before bed.

Aim for 3, but if you find more, all the better!

The more the exercise is repeated, the more your brain will naturally start to carve a new thinking pathway, seeking out these positives. The more automatic this thinking becomes, the more you will catch yourself noticing things for your 'list' throughout the day with little effort. The power of this exercise can be amplified by doing it with a friend or family member, sharing lists and benefitting from each other's celebration of the positives in their life.

This exercise will build the positive emotions of gratitude, amusement, hope & joy.

Source:

Barbara Fredrickson. Martin Seligman. Shawn Achor

Feed Positive Emotions





SLEEP WELL

Foster Self Compassion



Sleep is the most dramatic cognitive enhancer that we know of. Studies show that sleep deficiency alters activity in some parts of the brain and you may have trouble making decisions, solving problems, controlling your emotions and behaviour or coping with change. It can also lead to major health problems such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Top Tips:

- Get the right amount of sleep (adults = 7-8hrs; teens 9-10hrs; children 10+hrs)
- Have a sleep routine – go to bed and wake up at the same time each day & avoid day time naps
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, stimulating movies, video games & gadgets for at least 1 hour before bed
- Have a bath, a warm drink, read a book, dim the lights & listen to relaxing music
- Mindfulness has been proven to help sleep when practiced on a regular basis
- Taking a fibre pre biotic has also been shown to have a positive effect on sleep

To tell if you are getting enough sleep, go to bed in the middle of the day & check the time. Hold a spoon in one hand over a metal tray. If you fall asleep after 15 mins you are OK, after 10 mins you are sleep deprived & less than 10 mins you are severely sleep deprived!

Source:

National Heart Lung & Blood institute (NIH). Barbara Sahakian Uni of Cambridge

You might also be interested in:

'The Truth about Sleep' : 2017 BBC documentary presented by Michael Moseley

Foster Self Compassion



SAFE HAVEN VISUALISATION



Foster Self Compassion



When we are feeling threatened or anxious, having a safe place to go in our minds can be very useful and a calming experience. This exercise builds on our natural ability to self soothe in moments of difficulty.

Before you start you may like to think about the types of places where you do feel safe. The place does not have to actually exist - we can create whatever we want to in our minds.

Begin by getting yourself comfortable somewhere you will not be disturbed for at least 10 minutes. When you are ready start to create the space in your mind that creates a sense of calm and safety. Ask your self some questions:

- Are you inside or outside?
- What colours are around you that make you feel safe?
- What can you feel that makes you feel safe?
- What can you hear?

Remember this is YOUR safe place - be creative, there is no right or wrong here. Use all your senses to create your safe place, the more you can add to your safe place the more beneficial it will be for you.

This place is now available to you whenever you need it, it is YOUR safe place to retreat to in times of stress and anxiety.

Source:

Deborah Lee – Compassion Focused Therapy

