

Mindfulness

Explanation: Anxiety and stress tend to focus on the past or the future – what's happened already or what we want or don't want to happen. Mindfulness is about bringing our thoughts into the moment, to right now. By bringing our attention to our thoughts, feelings and observations about right now we can calm the inner voice and reset ourselves.

How to do it: There are lots of different things you can try for this. Being creative is often a really good way of being in the moment – whether that's drawing, baking, colouring or crafting. The point is just to be in the moment, so you can do it with any activity. Bring your attention to every detail of what your body is experiencing. For example, when you clean your teeth notice every tooth and the feel of the brush on your gums, pay attention to the taste of the toothpaste and imagine the shape of your mouth and the toothbrush. You can even eat a snack mindfully. Look at the snack first and smell it, notice the texture and colour. Then take a tiny bite and think about how it feels on your tongue and how it changes as you chew and prepare to swallow. Then try with a larger mouthful. Really take your time.

With any of these activities it's really important that you don't judge – it's not about doing anything 'right' – it's just about noticing what you are doing right now, being curious and interested and letting the past and the future just drift away for the moment.

When it's useful: Mindfulness helps us step away from stress and anxiety. The more we practise, the easier it gets, and it can be a really calm place to be. It's great to do at the end of the day as part of a wind-down; or as you get up to prepare yourself for the day ahead. It's also really useful if you just need a bit of time out during the day and it helps you focus your mind on something else.

