

# MENTAL HEALTH LIFEHACKS

for looking after your mental health

Written by young people for young people



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We believe that mental health is something we do not something we have. It's about doing things that help keep us well and happy, or that help us feel better when things are tough. We've come up with some tried and tested LifeHacks to help us to help ourselves and other young people. Now we want to share them with you too.

**To see some more information and even more LifeHacks please visit:**  
[cypsomersethealth.org/lifehacks](https://cypsomersethealth.org/lifehacks)

# 1 Be kind to yourself



It's so important not to be too hard on yourself and to be your own best friend. Remember, if you wouldn't say it to or about your best friend then don't say it about yourself. Having a negative internal voice can really bring you down.

## *True Story*

*“After feeling bad for a while it started to feel like negativity had become a part of me. I had become accepting of my own inner critic and I saw what it said as the truth. Whilst the negativity felt uncomfortable I knew it was hurting me. I realised that I couldn't recover if I kept on putting myself down. As cringey as it sounds, you need to try and be your own best friend; be there for yourself when you need it the most.”*

*Young person age 18*

## TIPS AND TRICKS

You could try to put a face to your inner critic, draw or sketch them and give them a voice. By doing that, you externalise the thoughts: they're no longer coming from you but an annoying little gremlin who is probably wrong.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

## 2 Do activities you enjoy



Finding time to do activities that you enjoy such as art, poetry or sport, can really help you get more out of life and think less about your problems. Doing these activities is NOT time-wasting as they are an important part of keeping your life in balance.

### *True Story*

*When I feel a bit upset, I sometimes start drawing to get my mind off things and to draw whatever I want. This helps me channel my emotions to something on paper and so it won't pressure my mind".*

*Young person age 15*

### TIPS AND TRICKS

Look out for new things to try in your local area such as sport or youth clubs, theatre groups or enjoying the outdoors.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.



# 3 Find someone to talk to about how you feel

There's no right or wrong way to talk about our mental health. Sometimes different words, rather than no words can express mental health, but it is important that we all try and talk much more freely about it. Young people who have experienced mental health problems themselves say the most important thing they did in their recovery was talking to other people and sharing how they felt. It helped them to realise they weren't alone, and that there are lots of sources of help out there.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Talking about how you are feeling can help make things feel more manageable. You could talk to a friend or a trusted adult. Your GP can also help, and can refer you to a person who is qualified to deal with Mental Health issues.

The **'Find out more'** page will give you some examples if you need to talk to someone now.

### *True Story*

*I spoke to my form tutor as I could not see a way forward or how to change things in order to look after my own well-being. They helped me find the right track and now I feel able to handle things even on the most difficult days. And if I wobble, I know I have people around me who want to help.*

*Young person*

# 4 Do E.A.S.Y. things that make you feel good

Take the E.A.S.Y. route to improving your mental health: Eat healthily, be Active - exercise boosts your mood, get plenty of Sleep, and try Yoga or mindfulness for relaxation.

## True Story

*When I was 11 I had no friends at school so I felt upset and depressed. Someone at school told me about majorettes so I went there with them and I have been going ever since. This makes me feel happy as I now have lots of friends and we have fun together”.*

*Young person aged 14*

## TIPS AND TRICKS

To help you sleep better think about using a regular bed time routine maybe a shower or bath, reading and take time away from anything that distracts you from sleeping - yes, that means your phone!

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

# 5 Spend time with your friends



Being face-to-face with the right people that genuinely care about you can really help you feel good. Just being with trusted supportive friends and spending time hanging out, talking and laughing can make a huge difference to how you feel. Avoid people that make you feel bad about yourself and make sure you spend time offline when you need it.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Pick up the phone and speak to a friend to arrange to do something fun together. Phoning is usually better than texting. Your friend will hear how you're feeling and you'll feel more connected. Much better than trying to fit it into a short text.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

### *True Story*

*The best thing my friend did for me was that they just accepted me as I was. They kept coming to see me even though I didn't seem to want them and they made me laugh."*

*Young person*

# 6 Keep a journal or blog



Keeping track of how you're feeling can be really helpful. Having a notebook, diary, journal or mood book can help you understand how you're feeling as time passes. Maybe there's a pattern to how you feel? Is it certain times of the week or month? Is it to do with people that you're spending time with? Is it caused by something that's happening at school or college?

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Keep a memory or an achievement jar, you could also write down things that make you feel bad and shred them.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

### *True Story*



*I usually keep to myself a lot and found it quite hard to communicate how I was feeling, my thoughts and what was going on for me. A teacher suggested that I should start writing things down so I started journalising. I wrote down my thoughts and what was going on for me at the time, positive quotes, memories etc. Keeping a journal or blog helps me to record my journey and see how far I have come.”*

*Young person*



# 7 Look at the bigger picture



Don't be defined by the mental health struggle that you're experiencing now. Be defined by the person you are, not how you feel. If it won't matter in a year, it's not worth worrying about so much now.

## *True Story*



*It is really difficult to see the bigger picture when you feel so trapped. I used to be very goal-focused and whilst that helped me stay on track before, it had recently started to trap me even more. Having a goal can seem to put a lot more pressure on you but, ultimately if you take small steps towards your future you can start to feel more yourself."*

*Young person*

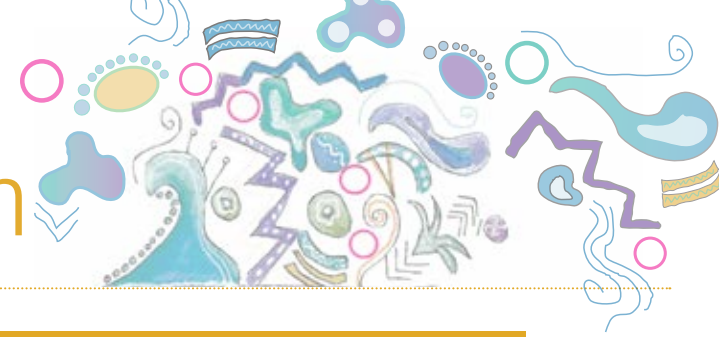
## TIPS AND TRICKS

Make yourself feel happier by focusing on positive future plans, whether they are for tomorrow, next month or even next year.

Putting plans in place to meet up with friends, take part in activities or having a holiday will lift your mood.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

# 8 Learn more about mental health



Be informed: there's lots of really useful information out there. Avoid trying to diagnose yourself, but you could look up tips to help you manage specific issues you might be experiencing.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Make a self-help list for yourself around the specific issue you might be experiencing eg. tips that help if I feel anxious.

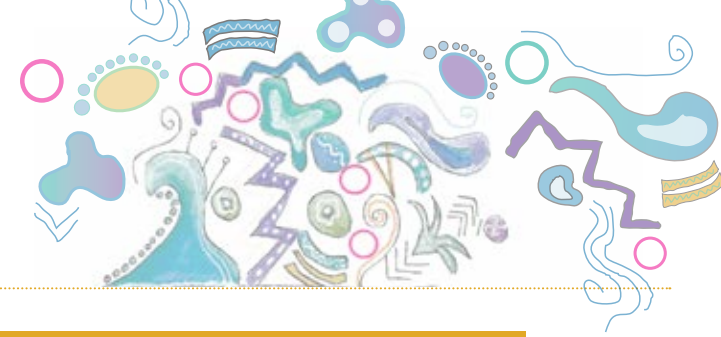
Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

### *True Story*

*“Researching more about my experiences helped validate what I was going through. It expanded my knowledge and made me feel more empowered”*

*Young person*

# 9 Stick to a daily routine



Eat a healthy meal at regular intervals. Going for a short walk in the fresh air can really help. If there's a routine you find harder to stick to, give yourself a reward when you do it. Maybe a bubble bath at the end of the day is your way of being kind to yourself.

## *True Story*

*“I was getting so little sleep during the night that during the day I couldn't enjoy the activities I was doing. When I started to go to bed earlier and get more sleep, I began to enjoy them again”.*

*Young person age 15*

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Write a simple routine for yourself and stick to it for a few weeks, see if it helps. Don't be afraid to change it until you find the right balance for you. Does a bath before bed help you sleep? What time is the best bedtime for you? How many hours of sleep do you need? You could try using reminder lists or calendars on your phone.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

# 10 Ask for help



Asking for help is always a good idea. There are lots of well-trained, trusted adults that can help and advise you. Getting things off of your chest can improve how you are feeling. If you don't ask for help you could worry all the time and it will keep going round in your head.

## *True Story*

*I really needed some help because I couldn't confide in my parents. I asked my friends to help me out. They encouraged me to see a doctor and came along with me to the appointment”.*

*Young person*

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Did you know that your GP can help? Talk to them and share your concerns. They will be able to tell you what help is available locally. Your school or college may provide counsellors or group activities which could be helpful.

Go to the [find out more](#) page for website links and useful apps.

# Find out more

YOU CAN CONTACT ANY OF THE ORGANISATIONS BELOW FOR MORE ADVICE OR SUPPORT.

## CHILDLINE

Childline offers free and confidential help for young people in the UK 24/7. You can call free on 0800 1111, speak to a counsellor online or visit the explore section on their website for information and advice on a range of topics.  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## SAMARITANS

Samaritans offers free and confidential help in the UK 24/7, you don't have to be suicidal to get in touch. You can call free on 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or visit a local Somerset Samaritans Branch.  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## THE MIX

The Mix offers free and confidential support to the under 25s. They offer a free helpline 08088 084994 available 11am-11pm every day. Email and webchat support are available at their website. They can also offer a free telephone counselling service.  
[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## YOUTH WELBEING DIRECTORY

The Youth Wellbeing Directory provides a list of local and national organisations for anyone up to the age of 25 to find support, along with important information you may find helpful.  
[www.annafreud.org/children-young-people/youth-wellbeing/](http://www.annafreud.org/children-young-people/youth-wellbeing/)

This worksheet from **Moodjuice** is really helpful for challenging negative thoughts. [moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk) Locally there is Creative Somerset events page for activities that you might be interested in getting involved in.  
[www.creativesomerset.com](http://www.creativesomerset.com)

This link has more information on finding the right work-life balance for you, which could be especially helpful if you have exams coming up.  
[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/highschool/balance.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/highschool/balance.php)

Download the free **Headspace Take 10** app which teaches you mindfulness and meditation.  
[www.headspace.com/how-it-works](http://www.headspace.com/how-it-works)

**The Young Minds** website has more useful information about talking to your friends about your mental health.  
[youngminds.org.uk/take-time-out](http://youngminds.org.uk/take-time-out)

**Mood Cafe** provides a range of podcasts to listen to about mental health and nutrition, sleep, exercise and relaxation.  
[www.moodcafe.co.uk/mental-health-info/mental-health-foundation-podcasts.aspx](http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/mental-health-info/mental-health-foundation-podcasts.aspx)

The **Rethink Young People's Toolkit** Has an activity on 'Preparing to Talk'.  
[www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/young-peoples-toolkit-to-support-your-mental-health](http://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/young-peoples-toolkit-to-support-your-mental-health)



IN AN EMERGENCY YOU SHOULD ALWAYS RING 999 OR 111