

Wellbeing tip – number 3

Keep busy

Keeping busy is so important for our mental wellbeing because it can help to distract us from negative thoughts that may whizz constantly through our brain...the ones that are hard to switch off, especially without the distraction of school or being able to go out as frequently. Keeping negative thoughts under control can be very hard work. Keeping busy with things where you have to concentrate and focus your attention on something very specific can help to do some of this work for you. At its best, **keeping busy can make time pass much quicker and can help you forget difficult thoughts for a while.**

One thing that can sabotage (prevent) putting this into practice is a lack of motivation. You have every good intention of getting that job done, finishing your homework, tidying up but somehow you just can't seem to get round to doing it. Sound familiar? For me, **motivation** is having the mental energy and strength to be able to do the things you need and want to do. Even doing nice things can be an effort if we lack motivation. Any athlete will know that you have to train to achieve your sporting goals. It's the same with motivation – you can gradually train yourself to start and continue with tasks you need and want to get done, instead of putting them off, enabling you to keep busy.

Gradually increase your ability to tackle tasks which require you to concentrate

5 mins

If you find it hard to get started, aim to do something from your task list (see next slide) for 5 minutes. The chances are that once you start it, you will be able to do it for longer.

If you're struggling to get started say to yourself "I can cope with doing this for 5 mins" or "I will feel so much better if I can make a start on this" or "This probably isn't as hard as I think it is going to be – I'll give it a go".

If you did 5 x 5min of tasks in a day, this would be 25 mins in a day and 175 mins over a week which is just 5 mins short of 3 hours of focused activity!!

10 mins

As your motivation gets stronger, you will find that you can go straight to concentrating on something for 10 minutes. If you did 5 x 10 min of tasks a day this would be nearly 6 hours of focused activity in a week. Imagine what you can achieve in that time!!

Make sure you keep a record somewhere of how many minutes of 'keeping busy' you manage each day so that you can track your progress over time.

Create some charts for yourself. Tick off your tasks as you go along. You will surprise yourself.

20 mins

Before you know it, you'll be able to skip straight to concentrating on a task for 20 minutes if you want to but remember that a 5-min task is no less valuable than a 20-min one. They all add up.

As your motivation gets stronger and getting started is easier you will become more skilled at keeping busy in ways that make your brain work hard, leaving less space for negative thoughts.

Check out the next slide for some suggestions for your task list.

Strategies for keeping busy

Create lists

- ✓ Do some washing up
- ✓ Find all of your exercise books and put them in one place
- ✓ Sharpen your pencils
- ✓ Fold up some washing
- ✓ Wash your trainers by hand
- ✓ Read 10 pages of a book
- ✓ Delete any unwanted photos
- ✓ Sort photos into folders
- ✓ Do one of the virtual tours in the Spring Holiday notices
- ✓ Take an online exercise class
- ✓ Plan a meal using the ingredients you already have in the cupboard
- ✓ Prepare a meal
- ✓ Review a film
- ✓ If you have a sewing kit at home, mend any items of clothing

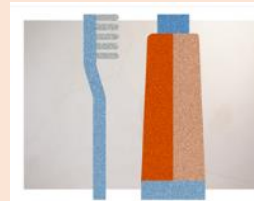
Using a stop watch is likely to increase your focus. Most phones have one. If you don't have a phone, let me know and I will do my best to get you a stop-watch.



Remember that there are lots of suggestions in the Spring Holiday Notices for how you can keep busy which you can add to your list of tasks. Why not try something you wouldn't usually do? See next slides for some examples.

Click here for ideas from yesterday's infographic (the link is now working) for ideas of things you can add to your list of possible tasks.

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/?sort=az>



Personal care & hygiene



Photography



Positive thinking



Problem solving

Visit museums and galleries!

https://theculturetrip.com/asia/china/hong-kong/articles/culture-trips-guide-to-the-experiencing-art-virtually/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_level=newsletter&utm_campaign=20200325_STORIES&optimove_cid=80199&utm_slot=1

The world might be on lockdown, but that doesn't have to mean you can't get your art fix. As exhibitions, events and galleries close temporarily because of coronavirus, many are putting their shows online. Good news for art buffs.

- **British Museum, London:** [virtual tour](#).
- **Guggenheim Museum, New York:** [Street View](#)
- **National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.:** [two online exhibits](#)
- **Musée d'Orsay, Paris:** [virtual tour](#)
- **National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul:** [virtual tour](#)
- **Pergamon Museum, Berlin:** [visit online](#).
- **Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam** [virtual tour](#)
- **Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam:** [virtual tour](#)
- **The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles:** [virtual tour](#)
- **Uffizi Gallery, Florence:** [virtual tour](#).
- **MASP, São Paulo:** [virtual tour](#)
- **V&A:** <https://www.vam.ac.uk/>



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Category 1: Ages 4-7



Category 2: Ages 7-11



Category 3: Ages 11-19