Welcome to Week 2

What changes would you like to make?

We all get stressed from time to time but if you feel very out of sorts then here is a quick checklist of dos and don’ts. This is a useful list, but I don’t want you to look at it and get even more stressed! So can I give you a little bit of guidance about how to use it?

Gradual is good, so if you see ways you can change on this list, then start with just one thing a week and enjoy making the change.

Some things on the list might need some outside help to achieve. So if you are still smoking, or drinking too much then think about visiting a hypnotherapist for help. You can contact me and I will either arrange to see you myself or give you some recommendations about finding a good hypnotherapist.

Some things are about your attitude and how you see the world. Again, you might find it helpful to see a hypnotherapist or another complementary therapist to help.

Finally, some things are long-term, like getting a job which enables you to live a calm and happy life. Just because they feel difficult don’t write off doing anything about them. Talk to friends and family, take some outside advice, ask if, for example, you would be happier with a lower paid but less onerous job.

Work on being happy, you are worth it

**Do these things to live a healthy calm life**

* Eat at least one hot meal a day
* Sleep for at least 7 hours a night, at least 4 nights a week
* Take gentle exercise at least 4 days a week

**Don’t do these things, they will add to stress and damage your wellbeing**

* Smoke
* Drink more than 14 units a week or on more than 4 days a week
* Drink more than 4 cups of coffee a say

**Try to create things which help your happiness**

* Friendships, one person near to you who you can ask a favour or see for a chat can make all the difference.
* A healthy weight
* An attitude of openness, try to say what you think
* A time when you just have FUN at least once a week
* Quiet time for yourself at least once a day

**Plan to get these in the long-term**

* A job where your commute is less than an hour a day
* An income and a lifestyle which match



Get breathing

**Breathing badly makes us stressed**

Out of breath, running about, panting, shallow breathing. Just those terms make me feel stressed. And you may have noticed that if you are feeling stressed you breathing becomes faster and more shallow.

In certain circumstances, if you were under a real physical threat for example, this sort of breathing would be useful. It pumps air quickly into your lungs so you can get ready to run away or to fight off the threat.

But for most of us of course there is rarely a physical threat. Yet, if we are feeling stressed our body behaves as if there is.

**Send you body the right signals for calm**

The good news is that we can change this by simple breathing exercises. And it works both ways. If you are breathing deeply, slowly and regularly then your body will receive the signal “not stressed” and your mind will feel calmer.

**Counting breathing**

There are many forms of slow deep breathing I can teach you and I will show you quite a few in the next couple of months. But let’s start with one of my favourites, known as counting breathing or 7/11 breathing.

Let’s get you working in a comfortable way first. So try breathing in while you count to seven, then breathe out while you count to 11. If that feels comfortable to you then good. If it feels a bit of an effort then try breathing in for 6 and out for 10, still finding it difficult in for 5 and out for 9, still too hard then in for 4 then out for 8. Experiment until you get a rhythm you feel comfortable with. The numbers do not matter, what is important is that your outbreath is significantly longer than your in breath.

Once you are happy with your rhythm then you can really use this technique. Take yourself somewhere quiet and practise breathing in your rhythm for five minutes. As you breathe, push your tummy out. That will ensure that the breath is going right into your body and that you are breathing using your whole core.

**Use your breathing technique anywhere and anytime**

Do this every day and you will find yourself calmer. Also, as you become more practised at this technique you will find you can do it anywhere at any time. So, if you are stressed at work, stuck in traffic, waiting to deliver a public speech just breathe in your rhythm. It’s your new secret weapon.

I’ll see you next week when I’ll show you another breathing technique and give you some tips on looking confident even when you don’t feel it. You may find that this technique works well in conjunction with the self hypnosis technique I showed you last week.

Happy breathing