



Northern Health
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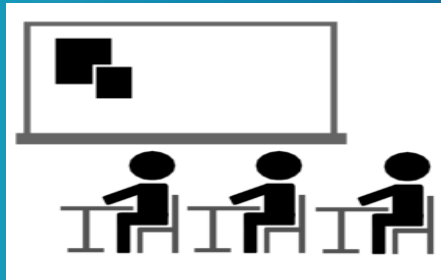


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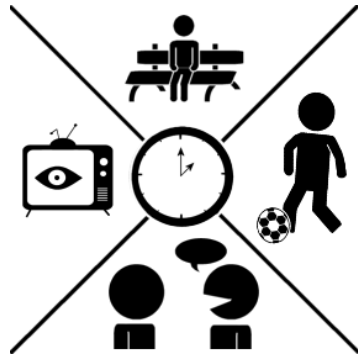
Going Back To School

TOP TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



1. Getting back into a routine

While you have been off school, your routine has probably changed a lot. You might have still been doing some school work each day but not the same as when you were in school. You might have been staying up later at night, and sleeping in longer in the morning.



This was OK while you had to stay at home as your routine was different. When you go back to school your routine will change again.

It might be hard to remember what it was like before. It isn't easy to change your routine and you might be worried about this.

You are in control of your routine and can help yourself by not waiting until the last minute to try to change it.



When you find out when school is going back, it would be helpful to start adjusting your routine gradually. **This could look like starting to make sure you get up at the same time each day.** It would be best to pick the time that you will have to be up for school.

This might seem strange when you don't have to be at school, but it will help you when you do go back. By changing your waking time, this will adjust the time you are ready to go to sleep at night.

It is important to remember that teenagers need at least 8-9 hours of sleep each night in order to cope and learn the next day.

Think about this when you are planning your new sleep routine.

While you are preparing for going back to school, it can also be **helpful for you to eat your meals around the same time each day** as this helps your body to adjust to its new routine.

Try to **take breaks from what you are doing at regular intervals throughout the day**, as you would in school, for example, when you walk from class to class, break and lunch times.



My Routine

Activity	Time
Get up	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Bedtime	

Create your own routine including other activities (school work, chores, hobbies etc.)

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2. Preparation is key

You have been off school for quite a long time. It might be hard to think about going back.

It is important to **mentally prepare for going back to school**. When you find out what date you are going back to school it might be helpful to put this date on your calendar or as a reminder on your phone.

We all need preparation for change and you are not alone in this feeling. Adults will feel the same about going back to work if they have been off.

Using a daily countdown can be a helpful way to remind yourself that you are going back to school and how many days you have left until school starts.



3. Looking forward

Lots of people might be talking about it being difficult to go back to school, and this might be true. However it is also **important that you think about the things that will be good about going back.**

- What were the things you enjoyed about school?

- What are you looking forward to?

You might be looking forward to seeing your friends, getting out of the house and having normal weekends again.

4. School might be different

School will most likely look different than when you were there before.

Your teachers will tell you what the new school rules are. You might not be in school the same hours or days as you were before.

It is hard not knowing, but when schools decide what the rules will be, they will let you know.

It is important that everyone follows the rules to stay safe and well.



One thing we do know is that social distancing will be in place where possible. This is something you will have heard of and possibly had to do while you've been off school.

5. Learning to cope

As you adjust into your new routine **it is important to look after yourself.**

When things change it can cause anxiety, stress and other unpleasant feelings.

These feelings can sometimes pass quickly or last for a long time.

You are in control of managing these unpleasant feelings. It is important to recognise when you are starting to feel this way and do something that helps you to feel better.

It can be helpful to make sure you have time in your day to do the things you enjoy and help you to feel calm. This will help you to control unpleasant feelings.

There may be things you can do at home that you can't do in school, for example accessing social media or your consoles.

It is important to begin to recognise **calming activities** which you can do both at home and in school – for example deep breathing, exercise, counting slowly to 10, thinking of a favourite memory or talking to a friend.



The more you practice these strategies and make them part of your day, the easier it will be to manage your emotions and remain calm.



Other calming activities to consider:

- Reading a book or magazine
- Cooking or baking
- Taking a bath or shower
- Exercising: NHS website has some good ideas:
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/>
- Colouring in
- Squeeze and Relax: Lie down and take a deep breath, as you breathe in, squeeze all the muscles in your body. Now breathe out and relax all the muscles in your body. Repeat this exercise 3 times.
- Drinking water
- Playing with a pet
- Using positive affirmations: When you're feeling anxious, it's important to **speak kindly to yourself**. Fighting negative thoughts isn't easy when you're feeling anxious, angry or stressed. Reciting positive affirmations, several times, is a great way to shift your mindset so that you can move forward. Think of these short statements as helpful tools to combat your fears and help you to think more positively when you feel overwhelmed. Here are some positive affirmations to try:
 - *With each breath I take, I feel calmer*
 - *When I breathe in, then exhale slowly and steadily, I will let go of worries and stress*
 - *I am doing the best I can*

- *I will focus on today: 1 hour at a time, 1 thing at a time*
- *I am in control of my body and my thoughts*
- *I feel safe, calm and at peace*
- **Body Scanning** - body scanning is a very useful and effective activity that can help you to return to and maintain a relaxed state when you become too tense.
 - a) **Get comfortable** - Lying down is preferable, but sitting comfortably is also an option.
 - b) **Take a few deep breaths** - Let your breathing slow down, breathing from your belly instead of from your chest, letting your abdomen expand and contract with each breath. If you find your shoulders rising and falling with each breath, focus more on breathing from your belly, as though a balloon is inflating and deflating in your abdomen with each breath.
 - c) **Pay attention to your feet** - Slowly begin observing sensations in your feet.
 - d) **Breathe the tension away** - Visualize the tension leaving your body through your breath and evaporating into the air. Move on when you feel ready.
 - e) **Scan your entire body** - Continue this practice with each area of your body, gradually moving up through your feet until you reach the top of your head. Notice how you feel and where you're holding your stress. If there's any tightness or pressure, continue to breathe into it. This can help you release tension in your body now, and be more aware of it in the future so you can release it then, too.

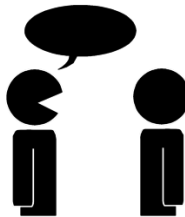
6. It's good to talk

During the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, life changed a lot of everyone. For this reason, as life changes again, everyone will have thoughts about how they feel about it.

You are not alone in the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing.

You are not expected to just go back to normal; this is going to take some time. This will be the same for everyone.

In preparing for going back to school, you will be provided with information about how this will look. If you have any questions or concerns, you can talk to your family, friends or teachers.



It is important to remember that this will be a strange time and everyone will be feeling the same.

Our Vision

To deliver excellent integrated services in partnership with our community

If you would like to give feedback on any of our services please contact:

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Northern Health and Social Care Trust



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