
Wellbeing Session: Physical Resilience

Hi there! How's it going?

Welcome to our weekly wellbeing sessions! Good to have you along for the ride!

We're **Heads Above The Waves** - a charitable organisation based in Cardiff that supports young people who struggle with things like mental health and self-harm. If you want to know more about us and what we do, head to **hatw.co.uk**!

Over the next few weeks, we'll be sharing some sessions that you can do in your own time, and at your own pace that focus on your mental health and wellbeing.

Everyone has a bad day from time to time, but that's ok! Our aim is to give you some food for thought, get you completing some super simple tasks, and encourage you to build what works for you into your day to day life.

Each week will focus on a different topic that we reckon will be useful to you. To kick things off, we'll be looking at **physical resilience**. For anyone note sure: resilience is your ability to deal with, and bounce back from, tough situations. A pretty important thing to think about!

Weekly Check In

To start, we've got a worksheet which you can print off and fill out (or if you don't have access to a printer, then just write out the questions in a notebook!). This is a chance for you to check in with yourself, so answer the first 3 sections, up to '*Physical Resilience Activity*'.

This exercise helps boost your overall resilience too! It helps to be able to identify exactly what's bothering you, so you can think about how to deal with it. It's also helpful to be able to celebrate the things in your life that make you happy!

What is Physical Resilience?

You might be super sporty and already well ahead with this one. However if, like me, you're no athlete, let me give you a little background on physical resilience.

This type of resilience focuses on your body fighting off stressors (such as illness, or anything that your body perceives as a threat). It harks back to early man fighting off scary predators like sabre-toothed tigers! When confronted with a threat, something called the *Fight or Flight Response* kicks in. It means your body's getting ready to either stay and fight the threat, or flee to safety*.

When your body is in this high stress state, the *health* of your body will play a massive factor. If you're looking after yourself and are more physically active, the better your body is going to handle fighting or running off. It's gonna make you more able to withstand stress and health yourself faster.

These days, those stressors might look a little less sabre-toothed tiger-y, but they can still be scary! Things like upcoming exams, dealing with arguments, or even what you'll do with your future. Basically: anything that stresses you out!

Ultimately, what we're saying is: exercise is rad, and is really gonna help your mental health! What's great, is that every second you're not sitting still, you're actually improving your physical health. You could be exercising and not even know it!

*HATW does not endorse fighting sabre-toothed tigers. Or anyone actually..! It's just a metaphor for explaining the *Fight or Flight Response*.

Benefits of Exercise	Downsides of Exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps your brain, heart and lungs be healthier ● Actually, exercise makes your entire body healthier! ● Can help you sleep better at night ● Regular exercise helps boost your mood with the release of dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine in your brain. These are all good brain chemicals that increase your happiness and wellbeing. ● Outrun sabre-toothed tigers (<i>what do you mean they don't exist anymore?!</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not really any tbh! Exercise is rad! ● You might get a bit sweaty but then you get to have a nice chill shower, or a soak in your bath depending on your vibes! Wait... this is another benefit actually!

Over to you!

Now we've done the science bit, it's over to you! We challenge you to get up now. Yes, right now!

Have a little stretch.
Reach above your head and clench your fists.
Now hold it for 5 seconds.
Now take 3 steps side to side & shake out your arms.

This should immediately make you feel a little more awake, as you've increased the blood flow around your body. Without even realising, you'll be more focused and ready to deal with the rest of your day!

The more regularly you do this, the more you can build up to bigger and more challenging exercise too. For example, no-one goes to the gym and heads for the biggest, heaviest weight straight away. You start with smaller weights and work your way up.

The most important thing here is: the more you stick with it, the easier it will become! Like most things in life, right!

We've done this really small activity, but now let's think about what the next step could be to take building up your physical resilience to the next level..

A few suggestions from us!

- Do a few cheeky **Joe Wicks** videos a week! This guy means business; these vids are def not just for kids.
- Some chilled stretching and mindfulness from a yoga video! We like **Yoga with Adriene** - she just has the most soothing voice!
- Create a mini circuit in your home! I do 30 reps of hand weights (or just lifting something with a bit of resistance), run up and down my stairs 5 times, and then 30 sit-ups. And repeat!
- Kitchen dance party! Probably my fave exercise. Bang on a playlist and create your very own club in the kitchen! Here's a playlist we've been loving for the pure cheese value, but it's sooo good to dance to: **HATW Feel Good Playlist!**
- There's a bunch of apps that you might find handy! Check out **7 minutes** for beginners, or **Gymshark** if you're into fitness already. There's even ones you can do where you earn currency while you work out - like **Sweatcoin** - that's a *well* good incentive in my eyes!
- If you have limited mobility, then there's seated workouts on YouTube too. **Here's one to try** but there's lots to choose from if you have a search!
- Tidying up or cleaning your house - sounds boring but *can* be super physical! It also leaves you with a nice clean space and your parents/carers will be well pleased with you!

TOP TIP: Get your friends and family involved!

If you can't exercise with your mates in person, you can chat over Zoom or FaceTime while you workout or dance around!

They can encourage you and push you to go that little bit harder with your workout! And give you a pat on the back when you smash it out the park!

Now we need you to fill in the rest
of your worksheet.

Commit to doing something physical - depending on what you're comfortable with - every day this week. Hold yourself accountable and tick it off when you've done it every day! Dunno about you, but I flippin' love a good list I can tick off. It makes me feel really productive, and gives me a reason to celebrate when I've ticked my tasks off every day.

If you were stoked on this week's activity and want to go a little further, then here's what we suggest!

- Make your own playlist of workout tunes or pick some podcasts you want to listen to while you exercise! Make sure they have a good beat or are really motivational!
- Note how you feel an hour before exercise and an hour after to see if there's a lift in your mood. Have you got more energy? Do you feel more focused? Or happier?
- Look up some healthy recipes you might want to try! I'm really into green juice at the moment. Looks gross, but tastes delicious!
- Challenge yourself to try a type of exercise you've never done before. You never know, you might find something new that really works for you! If you play rugby in school, try some yoga and see if it helps with your flexibility! Always wanted to try skateboarding but been too nervous to actually do it? Now's the time to give it a whirl! Push yourself out of your comfort zone!

**Thanks for getting involved and giving this a go!
We'll catch you next week for our second session**

**Take care and stay safe
- Team HATW**

PS. If you're having a tough time right now, there are lots of places you can get help and support from - whether it's chatting through things with a family member, a friend, or a teacher from school. Alternatively, you can check out our website - hatw.co.uk - where we signpost to lots of different **helplines** who are always there to listen. We've included a sheet with the workshop resources with a few of them on too!

**Your problems are valid. YOU matter. And there are people
out there who can help you. Keep going!**