



# The Feel Good Pack



Brought to you by Pound Arts

## About this pack:

We all have some days where we feel more energised, optimistic, able to work at our best. Other days life feels much gloomier and more difficult to face, this can be described as our wellbeing or mental health.

We've put this 'Feel Good Pack' together to encourage you to take some time to consider what we all need in our lives to remain at our best and to suggest a few things you might be able to do to help keep yourself well and fulfilled.

We'd love you to make your favourite drink, maybe even treat yourself to a biscuit or a piece of cake, and take some time out exploring some of the things we hope might help you thrive in a world that we know is throwing all sorts of challenges at us.

## How to use:

This pack is here for you whenever you need it. Feel free to dip in and out and come back to it as often as you like.

The pack has a range of creative activities that you are invited to try. Each of these has been designed in response to the 10 Keys to Happier Living. By taking part you are putting these into action! Be kind to yourself, try not to worry about doing it right or wrong, just give it a go.

## Created by:

This pack has been brought to you by Pound Arts with the help from James Aldridge, Jo Beal and Sarah Gilmartin. Pound Arts is based at The Pound arts centre in Corsham, Wiltshire.

The wellbeing support given in our 'Feel Good Pack' was written by our friend Tracy Sullivan from Open Minds Mental Health. Tracy has worked in the arts sector for over 15 years and is a Mental Health Trainer accredited by Mental Health First Aid England.



**Funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, has helped us create and print this pack. Thanks to the Government for making this possible.**



## Giving

Holding out a helping hand makes other people happy and will make you feel happier too.

## Relating

The people around you offer a valuable pool of support so it's important to put time into strengthening those connections.



## Awareness

Taking time to switch off autopilot and 'be in the moment' is a great tool to combat stress.

## Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence.



## Trying out

Learning new things is stimulating and can help to lift your mood.



# 10 Keys to Happier Living

Created by MHFA  
England in partnership  
with Action for Happiness.

Find out more about the 10  
Keys to Happier Living  
at [actionforhappiness.org](http://actionforhappiness.org).



## Resilience

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens.

## Direction

Working towards positive, realistic goals can provide motivation and structure.



## Acceptance

No one is perfect. Longing to be someone different gets in the way of making the most of our own happiness.



## Meaning

People who have meaning in their lives experience less stress, anxiety and depression.

## Emotions

Positive emotions can build up a buffer against stress and even lead to lasting changes in the brain to help maintain wellbeing.

# The 10 Keys to Happier Living

Use this list along with the shorter illustrated version as a checklist.

Take some time to reflect which keys you might need to focus on. There are suggestions of ways you can give them a go. By taking part in this pack you will be putting some of the keys into action.

Why not add your own ideas too?

## 1. Giving

Holding out a helping hand makes other people happy and will make you feel happier too.

Give it a go:

- Share your skills or offer support
- Ask others how they are and listen without judgement

## 2. Relating

The people around you offer a valuable pool of support so it's important to put time into strengthening those connections

Give it a go:

- Pick up the phone and chat to someone you haven't seen in a while
- Turn off distractions to chat with friends or family about your day

## 3. Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence.

Give it a go:

- Find an activity that suits you and your schedule
- Swap the car, bus or train on short journeys and walk instead

## 4. Awareness

Taking time to switch off autopilot and 'be in the moment' is a great tool to combat stress.

Give it a go:

- Pay attention to your senses: what can you see, hear or feel?
- Choose a regular point in the day to reflect

## 5. Trying out

Learning new things is stimulating and can help to lift your mood.

Give it a go:

- Take on a new voluntary role in the community
- Try out a new hobby, club or activity that interests you

## 6. **Direction**

Working towards positive, realistic goals can provide motivation and structure.

Give it a go:

- Choose a goal that is meaningful to you, not what someone else expects of you
- Remember to celebrate progress along the way

## 7. **Resilience**

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens.

Give it a go:

- Find an outlet such as talking to friends or writing it down
- Take action to improve your resilience skills

## 8. **Emotions**

Positive emotions can build up a buffer against stress and even lead to lasting changes in the brain to help maintain wellbeing.

Give it a go:

- Take time to notice what you're grateful for and focus on the good aspects of any situation
- Set aside time to have fun

## 9. **Acceptance**

No one is perfect. Longing to be someone different gets in the way of making the most of our own happiness.

Give it a go:

- Be kind to yourself when things go wrong
- Shift the focus away from what you don't have and can't do, to what you have and can do

## 10. **Meaning**

People who have meaning in their lives experience less stress, anxiety and depression.

Give it a go:

- Prioritise the activities, people and beliefs that bring you the strongest sense of purpose
- Volunteer for a cause, be part of a team, notice how your actions make a difference for others

**Set small, realistic goals and celebrate your progress along the way.**

# ART JOURNALING FOR WELLBEING

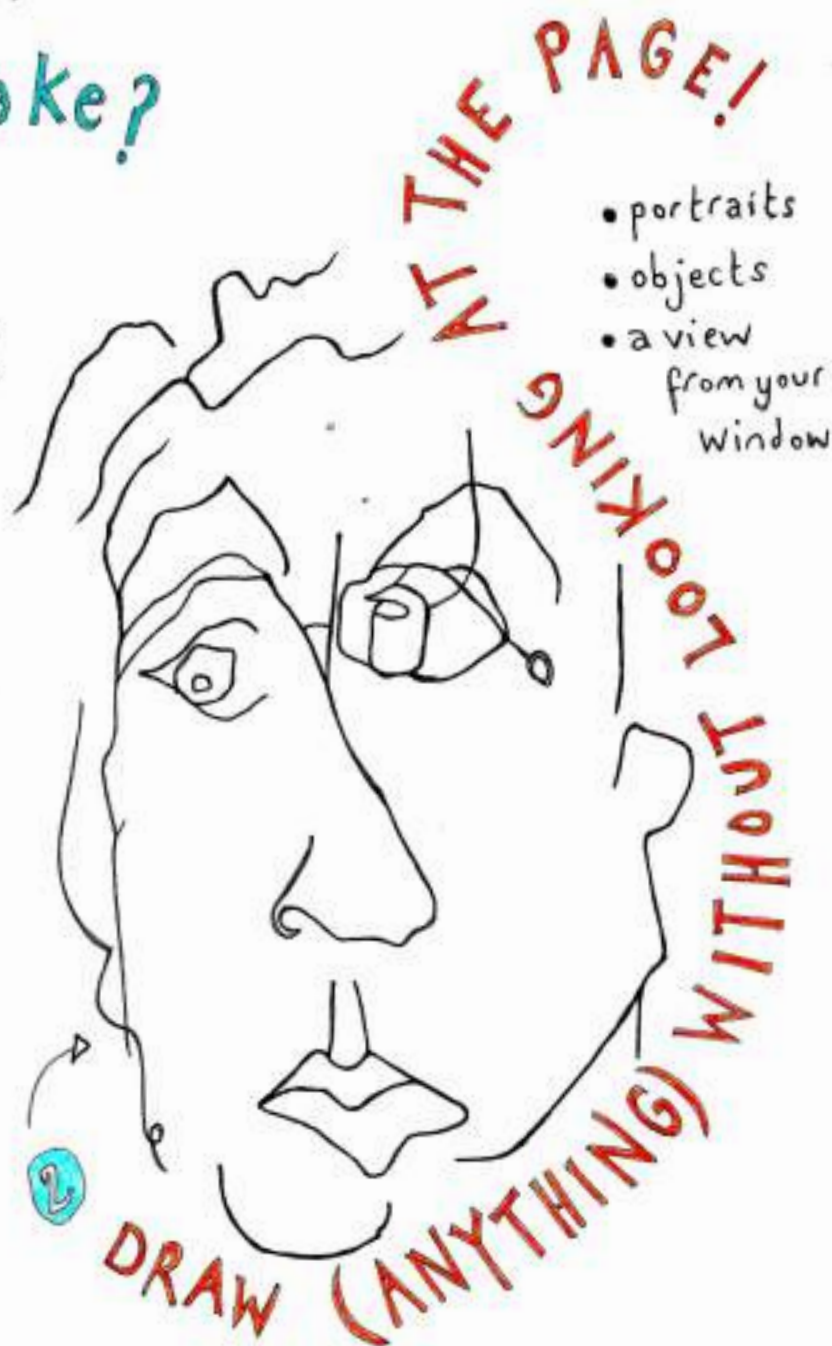
BY JO BEAL

① GATHER ALL YOUR PENS AND PENCILS AND  
SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO...

What variety of  
marks can you make?



- what colour combinations can you come up with?
- which colours and marks do you like most? why?



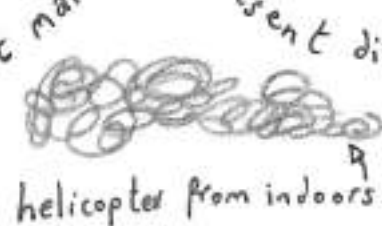
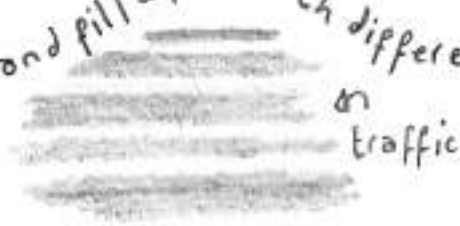
- portraits
- objects
- a view from your window

TRYING OUT - LEARNING NEW THINGS IS STIMULATING AND CAN HELP TO LIFT YOUR MOOD.

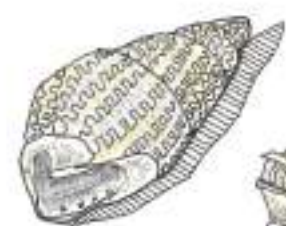
AWARENESS - TAKING TIME TO SWITCH OFF AUTOPILOT AND 'BE IN THE MOMENT' IS A GREAT TOOL TO COMBAT STRESS.

# 3 STOP FOR 5 MINUTES AND DRAW WHAT YOU CAN HEAR!

listen carefully and fill a page with different marks to represent different sounds



## 4 CHOOSE A FEW THINGS FROM HOME ...



## ... AND DRAW THEM!

• how much do you notice when you really look?

## 5 LAST THING AT NIGHT OR FIRST THING IN THE MORNING THE NEXT DAY, REFLECT ON THE DAY THAT'S BEEN AND MAP IT USING DRAWINGS AND WORDS!



# Inhale

Breathe in through your nose.

Count up to 5 while you are breathing in.

# Exhale

Breathe out of your mouth.

Let the air flow out gently.

Count up to 5 while you are breathing out.

# Repeat

...as often as you need to.



# Stress

Stress is something we all experience and is entirely normal. In fact, it can be a helpful motivator. But it becomes a problem for us when it is experienced continuously over a long period of time. Sustained stress can cause us to find day-to-day life difficult to manage; it may cause us to seek unhealthy coping mechanisms and eventually can lead to diagnosed mental health conditions. So, it's important we understand our own capacity to manage stress and how we can ensure it doesn't make us unhappy or unwell.

## **Where to get help:**

If you're feeling at breaking point there is help available 24/7. Don't suffer alone please ask for help if you need it because you are worth it.

With the right help and support, you can feel well again.

These services offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans  
or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a reply within 24 hours.

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line.

Mind are a great source of information and signposting to services.

Visit [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk) or email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

Call their Infoline: 0300 123 3393 or text: 86463

Their Infoline provides an information and signposting service and is open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays).

Ask them about:

- Mental health problems
- Where to get help near you
- Treatment options
- Advocacy services.

# Our Stress Container

**The Stress Container:** is a tool the Mental Health First Aid England teach us to help identify our stresses and how we manage them. Our 'container' is like our vulnerability, how much stress we can manage before we start to see the effects of it. Some people have large stress containers and can seem to take huge amounts of stress without it affecting them detrimentally, others have smaller stress containers and for them, it would take far less stress for it to start impacting on their quality of life. This model invites us to think about what stresses we are experiencing now. We can draw or write these inside our stress container.

**The Overflow:** When our stress container becomes full we might start to experience signs of not managing very well, these will vary for each of us: not sleeping or over sleeping; eating too much or not enough, drinking more alcohol than usual, being short tempered, retreating from people and the things we usually enjoy are a few examples. It is really useful to know what these are for ourselves and others so we can respond before they start to cause longer term problems.

**The Tap:** The tap is where we can take control of emptying our stress container. We may not be able to control the things that are in it, or the way we respond to too much stress but we can take time to empty our container. We call this self-care, the things we know we really enjoy doing that help us to relax and recharge our batteries. Again, this is different for everyone. It could be: taking time with a good book, going for a walk, drawing, painting, singing or taking a bath. It may well be that some of the things you use as your 'tap' aren't possible all the time, but take time to think about what you might be able to enjoy right now from the variety of choices on hand. Taking time to do these things to prevent our container from overflowing is essential to be able to remain well and happy but also to be able to be the support we want to be to others. So remember self-care isn't a luxury it's essential!

## What's in your Stress Container?

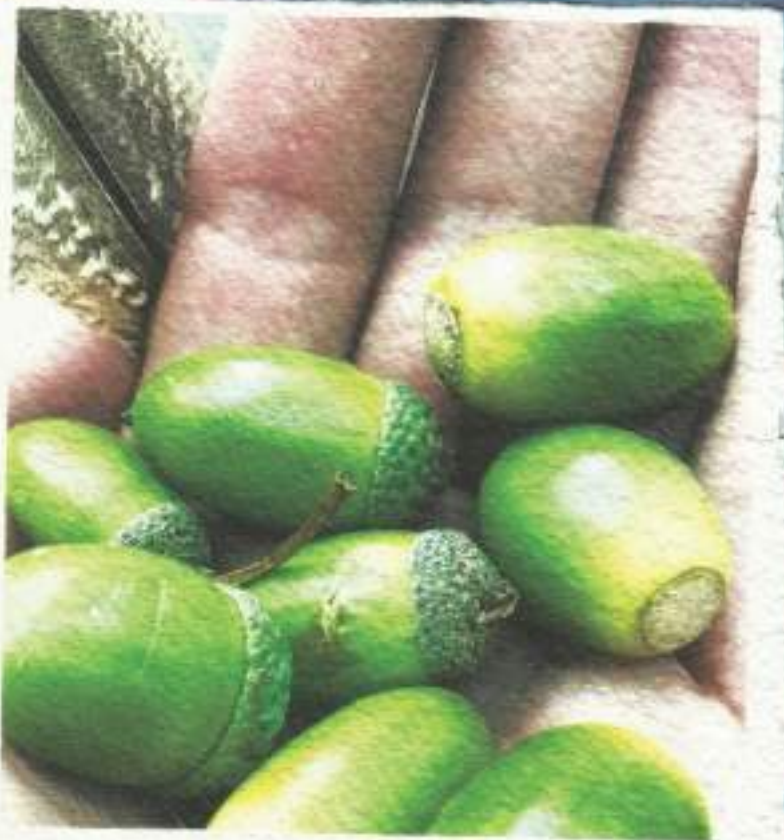
We've created a stress container for you to complete for yourself but do take copies or draw your own to share with others. It may well be that the things you would have used as your 'tap' aren't possible at the moment, singing in choirs, playing in bands, taking yoga or art classes but take time to think about what you might be able to enjoy right now. This can be quite an emotional thing to do so take care of yourself and have someone in mind to speak to or hug if you can, just in case you need it.

To see this model explained there is a short film available at [openmindsmentalhealth.co.uk/mental-health-resources](https://openmindsmentalhealth.co.uk/mental-health-resources)



# Collections and Bundles

By James Aldridge



Notice

Touch

Collect



On a short walk, slow down and pay attention to what you notice. What can you see, hear and smell?

Gather a few treasures and make a collection that helps to record your experiences. House your collection in a box or envelope or arrange them on a table. If you like you can add a label with more information, the place, date or time, what you heard or how you were feeling...



## Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence. Use this time to take notice of your body, how is it feeling? Does it feel different after you have exercised?



Gather

Bind

Bundle



Take some string and a pair of scissors on a walk. Look out for materials that are particular to that street, park, beach or woodland. Use pieces of string to bind each new stick, feather or leaf together to form a bundle. As more are added a hand-held sculpture will emerge that is unique to your experience...



## Resilience

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens. We can build our resilience by taking part in creative activities.

# Connecting with your breath

## By Sarah Gilmartin

Find a **comfortable chair** that you can sit upright in, with your back supported and your feet on the ground.

First we are going to **pack our imaginary back pack** and one by one put all the things we have been thinking about or worrying about into it and do it up and place it by our chair and we are ready to go.

Now bring your awareness to **your breath** and with your hands on your stomach try breathing in through your nose if possible and feel your lungs filling all the way down to your hands as the air pushes them out. Then slowly blow the air out through your mouth like out of a straw. Can you make each take 5 counts? You can also try holding for 5 before you let the air out. Try repeating it 5 times.

Moving from **your feet on the ground to the top of your head**, start to take your awareness to each body part to see how it feels, is it holding on/tensing or relaxed? What surface if any it is touching?

For example: Are your feet and toes flat on the ground? Are your ankles and calves relaxed? Can you feel the back of the chair against your legs? Are your knees in a straight line with your hips and toes? Do they feel connected to your thighs? How do the different surfaces of your thighs feel? Are you floating on the chair or sitting relaxed into it? Is your back supported all the way up? Are your stomach muscles engaged, supporting your spine? Are you leaning one way or the other? Are your shoulders relaxed? Can you feel your shoulder blades lying flat down either side of your spine? Are your arms supported? In line? Relaxed? Are your hands flat and fingers uncurled to feel the surface under them? Is your neck long? How are you holding your head? Is it supported?

Now try tapping your **finger tips** to the top of your head like rain or snow flakes falling. First on the top of your head and then onto your face and neck.

As you arrive at your chest the **gentle taps** can be created by your whole hand. Across your chest, feeling your shoulders widen and relax downwards, don't forget the back and top of your shoulders, then move down your arm and up the other one, tapping the surface area, noticing any aches or pains and any sensations created. Then move down to your stomach and around to your lower back, then down one leg and up the other. Hopefully your skin and muscles have been awakened and your fingers feel tingly?

# Dancing with Detail

## By Sarah Gilmartin

**From your chair or standing** to move around your home, take your awareness to the surface quality of the floor beneath your feet, is it hard or soft? Warm or cold? Are you warm enough? What is your breath doing? Try to keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth as you go.

**Imagine you are looking through the lens of a camera.**

Pick an object or piece of furniture and zoom in. Don't look at the whole object, focus on a tiny section. Zoom in. What textures and patterns can you see? What material is it made from? What shapes or pictures do they form?

**Use different parts of your body to draw** the lines, angles, patterns and shapes that you have been focusing on. Start with your finger or hands. Now try with your elbow or your nose. Can you move more than one part of your body at the same time. How about your whole body?

**Think about how you use the space around you,**  
in front of you, behind you above and below you.

Is your weight heavy or light in your movements?

How fast or slow are your movements? Are they choppy or fluid?

Do different details have different speeds or weight?

Can you add a pause somewhere?

Can you find 6-8 different movements that represent different details and join them together to make a phrase. You could repeat each one a few times before starting the next.

Try to move them in space and facing different directions.

Then try doing them very fast and very slow.

Now... lets add some music!

Mix it up! Try a flowing piece of music like water flowing, something with a strong beat like your favourite pop song and something dramatic like orchestral music.



## Movement Examples:

Carpet - threads looping and twisting in and out, like hands moving, weaving over and under each other, or taking a meandering wandering path. Do you have any ribbons or scarves you could hold to extenuate this movement?

Wood grains with knots and joints - what pattern does the wood grain form, can you walk it as a path adding in abrupt stops for the joints and circles for the knots, the circles could be with different joints of the body. What shape has the wood been cut to, what angles are there, can you form them with your body?

Curtains - Have a look at the threads the different colours, how they weave over and under, are they in straight lines? How do all those threads work together to undulate as the hang. What does it remind you of? Finally how does your body feel? Try taking 3 big breaths using your arms opening or lifting with the in breath and lowering or closing your arms with the out breath. Give yourself a bow!

Extra options:

Sit down and **free flow write for 2 mins** focusing on what you noticed, the details and how it felt.

**Draw some of the detail**, try to leave your pen on the page and or close your eyes to focus on the object, texture, shape and the process and not the final picture or how 'good' it is. You could add marks for the sounds you heard and place them on the page like a map.





# Colours of the Sky

Find a comfortable space where you can sit and look at the sky. Spend a few moments taking it all in. What can you see? Are there any clouds? Are they moving gently or rapidly?

The colours below are all taken from photos of the sky. Find the closest shade to the sky that you can see right now. Come back to this page as often as you like and notice the changes of colour. Perhaps you could create your own collage of the different colours you see.



# My weekly wellbeing check-up

This is a suggested checklist which you can use on a regular basis to help you monitor your mental health and wellbeing. You can write on this page or on some paper or in a notebook.

## Where is my mental health today?

How do I feel today? Mentally? Physically?

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## My Stress Container

How full am I? Are any relying on any of my unhealthy coping strategies?  
Am I taking time for my helpful coping strategies, the things at my tap? Are they helping?

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## Looking after my wellbeing

Am I drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet?  
How did I sleep last night? Did I feel rested when I woke up?  
Is there anything I can improve?

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**Have I used any of my 10 Keys to Happier Living strategies recently?**

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# Thanks

Thank you to all of the the wonderful people who have contributed to this pack with their knowledge and creativity.

## **James Aldridge**

[jamesaldridge-artist.co.uk](http://jamesaldridge-artist.co.uk)  
[Facebook.com/JamesAldridgeArt](https://www.facebook.com/JamesAldridgeArt)  
[Twitter.com/JamesAldridge4](https://twitter.com/JamesAldridge4)  
[Instagram.com/JamesAldridgeArt](https://www.instagram.com/JamesAldridgeArt)

## **Jo Beal**

[jobeal.net](http://jobeal.net)  
[Facebook.com/jo.beal.12](https://www.facebook.com/jo.beal.12)  
[Twitter.com/jobead4](https://twitter.com/jobead4)  
[Instagram.com/jobead4](https://www.instagram.com/jobead4)

## **Sarah Gilmartin**

[www.iid.org.uk](http://www.iid.org.uk)  
[Facebook.com/iid.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/iid.org.uk)  
[Instagram.com/iid\\_dance](https://www.instagram.com/iid_dance)

## **Vanessa Lovegrove**

[vanessalovegrove.co.uk](http://vanessalovegrove.co.uk)  
[Twitter.com/vclovegrove](https://twitter.com/vclovegrove)  
[Instagram.com/vloveg](https://www.instagram.com/vloveg)

## **Tracy Sullivan**

[openmindsmentalhealth.co.uk](http://openmindsmentalhealth.co.uk)  
[Facebook.com/OpenMindsTrainingConsultancy](https://www.facebook.com/OpenMindsTrainingConsultancy)  
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**This pack has been illustrated by Vanessa Lovegrove**



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please contact Pound Arts on 01249 701 628  
or email Antonia Ramsey on  
[creative.learning@poundarts.org.uk](mailto:creative.learning@poundarts.org.uk)**



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