

# THE PHANTOM

MARCH 2020

OUR TOP TIPS FOR  
WELLBEING

HOW TO GET  
BETTER SLEEP

GROUNDING  
TECHNIQUES

SPOON THEORY

STUDENT FRIENDLY  
RECIPE FOR A  
HEARTWARMING STEW

THE  
WELLBEING  
EDITION

# MEET THE TEAM



**Rebekah Smith**  
HEAD OF THE PHANTOM



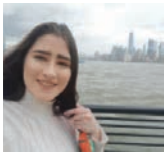
**Lilli Kent**  
DEPUTY HEAD



**Kira Rouse**  
SPORTS EDITOR



**Owen Corkin**  
HUMANITIES EDITOR



**Courtney McPhail**  
MUSIC/ EVENTS EDITOR



**Imogen Wright**  
NEWS EDITOR

# CONTENTS

## 4 WHAT IS WELLBEING?

What is wellbeing anyway?

## 5 SLEEP TIPS

Tips for better sleep

## 6 WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Helping a friend with a mental health condition

## 7 DR SELF-LOVE

How I learned to accept my emotions

## 8 TEAM PHANTOM'S TOP TIPS

Our team's top tips for wellbeing!

## 9 MY LIFE LESSON

Coping with a difficult break-up

## 11 HEARTWARMING STEW

Student-proof recipe for a heartwarming stew

## 12 WELLBEING AND CHRONIC PAIN

Maintain wellbeing with chronic pain

## 13 SPOON THEORY

What do people mean by 'spoons'?

## 14 AND BREATHE...

Breathing techniques

## 15 CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

Interviewing someone with CFS

## 17 LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

What's going on this month?

## 18 GROUNDING

Grounding techniques

## 19 PETS

Because who doesn't love animals?

## 21 FURTHER HELP

Where to find more info and help



# WHAT IS WELLBEING?

The simple definition of wellbeing is “the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.” Wellbeing is a combination of a person’s physical, mental, emotional and social health factors.

It could be described as how you feel about yourself and your life. How do we achieve wellbeing? We all have different levels of wellbeing, and there are a number of different elements that feed into our overall wellbeing. We need a balance of these key areas:

## PHYSICAL

What we eat and how active we are affects our overall wellbeing.

Emotional or psychological: This refers to our ability to cope with everyday life, and how we think and feel about ourselves.

## SOCIAL

This is how much we feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. This could be with friends, family, at work or in university or in the general community. Our relationships, the way we communicate, our values, beliefs, lifestyles and traditions are all important factors of social wellbeing.

## SPIRITUAL

This is the ability to experience and integrate meaning and purpose in life. This can be achieved through being connected to our inner self, to nature or even a greater power.

## INTELLECTUAL

Intellectual: It is important for us to be challenged. Intellectual wellness helps us to expand our knowledge and skills.

## ECONOMIC

Economic wellbeing is in short, our ability to meet our basic needs and feel a sense of security.



This issue is full of tips on how to manage and improve your wellbeing. For more information or support, visit The Student Wellbeing Centre in T Block (including where to find support for Buxton and Chesterfield students), or take a look at the website: [www.derby.ac.uk/services/student-wellbeing-centre/](http://www.derby.ac.uk/services/student-wellbeing-centre/)

WRITTEN BY REBEKAH SMITH



# GETTING BETTER SLEEP



As students, we're known for having pretty terrible sleep.

Getting enough quality sleep is essential for our mental and physical health. Poor sleep can affect our energy levels, concentration, productivity, emotional balance and even weight. Here are a few tips on how to improve your sleep. If you're struggling with sleep, you can visit your GP or the Student Wellbeing Service for help.

## STICK TO A SCHEDULE

Keeping regular sleeping hours programmes the brain and internal body clock to get used to a set routine. Most adults generally need between 6 and 9 hours of sleep every night; sticking to a schedule will help ensure you're getting the right amount of sleep. It's also important to wake up at the same time every day. Although it seems like a good idea to catch up on sleep after a bad night, this actually disrupts your sleep routine and can make you feel worse. Sticking to a schedule will be difficult at first, but will make you feel a lot better.

## WIND DOWN

It's important to wind down before bed. There are a number of things you can do to wind down, such as; reading a book, listening to relaxing music, relaxation exercises such as yoga or controlled breathing, taking a warm (not hot) bath. It can also be beneficial to write to-do lists for the next day or write in a journal to help clear your mind of distractions.

## AVOID TECHNOLOGY

You should aim to avoid or reduce screen time 1-2 hours before bed.

Melatonin is a naturally occurring hormone controlled by light exposure that helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Your brain secretes more melatonin when it's dark, making you sleepy, and less when it's light, making you more alert. You can help reduce the effects of this by turning on the 'night shift' mode on your devices, which changes the blue light. However, it is best to try and avoid technology if you can.

WRITTEN BY REBEKAH SMITH

## AVOID CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a stimulant, meaning that it keeps us awake. The effects of caffeine can take hours to wear off and can be detrimental to our sleep. You should avoid consuming things that contain caffeine, such as; coffee, fizzy drinks and tea at least 2 hours before bed. Cigarettes also contain caffeine, among other things that make it difficult to sleep, so you should avoid smoking close to bedtime.

## DON'T EAT BEFORE BED

Avoid going to bed hungry or on a full stomach. Eating before bed can cause discomfort as our body is still trying to digest the food. Rich, spicy or acidic foods can be particularly problematic and can cause issues such as indigestion and heartburn. You should try not to eat heavy or large meals 2-3 hours before bed. If you're hungry in the evening try having a light snack 45 minutes before bed.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

People who exercise regularly during the day generally sleep better at night. Being more physically active during the day can improve your sleep, help combat symptoms of insomnia and increase the amount of time you spend in the deep, restorative stages of sleep. You should avoid exercise and strenuous activity at least 3 hours before bed though, to give your body time to wind down.

## EVALUATE YOUR BEDROOM

Make sure your room is the ideal sleep environment. It should be quiet, cool (around 18°C), comfortable and should be reserved for sleeping.

# MAINTAINING WELLBEING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

ADVICE ON HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

## MENTAL ILLNESS DOESN'T REQUIRE A BREAKDOWN

Many people think that individuals with mental health issues need a full-blown meltdown in order for them to finally admit their wellbeing isn't the best – this isn't the case. It can be a quiet thing that grows slowly over time and you may not even notice it if you're not attuned to it. Their issues may manifest in different symptoms depending on their mental illness; for instance, they may become more nit-picky about something or more irritable than usual. Try to be patient with them; they're figuring things out. Maybe just ask them if they're ok and see where things go from there. Find out what comforts them and then try to help them through what's happening.

## CHECK ON YOUR FRIENDS

Just asking 'are you ok' is enough for some, they may be straightforward with you and tell you what's wrong. For others, it may not be. Ask them if they're okay mentally, or if they have the capacity to deal with the day. Many are good at eluding the fact that they aren't dealing with things as well as you previously thought, so keep on the lookout for signs. Withdrawal, an increase in self-deprecating jokes, moments of blankness, and many more language devices can be signs of how well someone is coping.

## IF THEY COME TO YOU FOR HELP, DON'T TURN THEM AWAY

Some individuals with mental health issues don't like admitting to others that they have them. If they've told you, they trust you. Do not abuse this trust. If they come to you to talk about it, let them. Try not to turn them away. Rejecting them may make the individual more closeted than before and may turn to isolation in order to deal with

their problems. If you feel like you cannot talk about it, let them know by saying you do not have the mental capacity yourself, but maybe later on in the day or offer to help find someone who can. That way, they know they can still trust you. If their issues seem prominent and dangerous, think about letting someone else know.

## GIVE THEM SPACE- OR NOT

How different people deal with their mental health differs greatly. Some need constant comfort of others and others don't. That's perfectly normal. Don't be afraid to ask them what they need: comfort or space. Many just want a hug or a comment on how well they're actually doing; they may just need to be in the vicinity of another person in order to help them. Others may ask to be left alone in order to deal with it. Everyone deals with it differently – find out what your friends need.

## EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT

No individual is the same as another, and the way we experience mental health is no different. Some may have the 'typical' symptoms of a mental health condition, others may have completely different ones. You could research your friend's mental health issue (if they have told you what it is), or maybe ask them politely what their symptoms are if they are heading towards a downwards spiral. This way, it will help both you and the individual identify where they may be falling and where interventions can be put into place to prevent their wellbeing from getting any worse.

## WRITTEN BY HOLLIE BAXTER

See page 19 to see where you can find support, information and crisis lines.

# DR SELF-LOVE

## HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND ACCEPT MY EMOTIONS

LET NOTHING DIM THE LIGHT  
THAT SHINES FROM WITHIN.  
MAYA ANGELOU

To say my 2019 got off to a rough start is an understatement. At the beginning of the year, I lost not one but two people who were close to me. If you've ever experienced mourning, then you know how hard of a time it is.

Both were unexpected and both were somewhat preventable, but that's life, and I'm not here to talk to you about that.

Instead, I'm here to talk to you about me. (I know, so self-centred) I want to tell you that I saw a counsellor last term, and for all the flack that I see some people give wellbeing Services, our Student Wellbeing did a brilliant job.

**"Anger, just like happiness and sadness, is a real, valid emotion that people are justified in feeling."**

Having tried counselling before, I'd written it off as something that just didn't work for me, (after all, I had been through two counsellors during high-school, three during college and one at uni prior to this). Even so, I thought why not give it another go. I went in with two problems: I was angry, and I was in mourning. What I didn't know before I started talking about my emotions was that I'd been holding onto anger for most of my life.

You see, when you grow up autistic, it's common for people not to realise. Either they're ill-informed or just dismissive of the idea. I had two teachers in primary school that fit into the latter category. To them, I was just irritating and straight-up naughty. I'm telling you this because I want you to know that counsellors can help you let go of grudges you didn't even know you were

holding onto. These teachers were actively antagonistic towards me. I had a big thing against doing PE barefoot, and one teacher forced me to do it anyway.

A person with power over me was actively pushing me to do stuff that my brain was wired against, and when my parents requested that I get tested for autism, she actively refused to help. I didn't realise I was holding onto this anger. I had been taught throughout my school year that the anger was wrong, but it's not.

Anger, just like happiness and sadness, is a real, valid emotion that people are justified in feeling. I learned through that counsellor that I shouldn't be ignoring my anger when it's perfectly justified.

How does this relate to the deaths I mentioned above? Well, I was angry at them, and that's the hardest thing I have ever accepted. I mentioned that both deaths were preventable, and that's true. One of them could have been solved in one trip to the doctors, and the other... Well, he could have prevented it, if he had sought help when he needed it, but he didn't, and now he's gone.

**It's not easy to accept your own emotions sometimes, and that's okay.** A counsellor's job is to help you process those emotions and recover mentally. Sometimes you just need to talk.

I write this because if you are having trouble processing emotions then I urge you to seek help. If you were hurting physically, you'd go to a doctor. So, if you're hurting emotionally, please see someone. Let me tell you when you lose someone to suicide or something so easily preventable, it hurts.

**WRITTEN BY IEUN GARFIELD TARRAN**



live  
your  
dream.

# TEAM PHANTOM'S TOP TIPS



**Don't be afraid to ask for help.**

Ieuan Garfield Tarran

**"Remember that everything you see on the internet is the best version of someone. You don't see the battles and the struggles on an Instagram post."**

Courtney McPhail

**Make sure you set aside time to relax, even (especially) if you have lots of work to get on with**

Lilli Kent

**What we eat is just as important for the mind as it is the body. Making sure you eat well, get plenty of fruit and veg and drink enough water really does affect how you feel.**

Bekah Smith

**7/5 breathing! If you're anxious, having a panic attack, can't sleep, or just need to calm down. This technique is so helpful.**

Bekah Smith

**Don't think you have to live up to someone else's achievements, because yours are just as valid and impressive**

Ieuan  
Garfield  
Tarran

**It is never too late to start something new or change a career. Many of the most successful people didn't start until later in life. Now is the time to try new things and create new experiences, but most importantly, have fun!**

Courtney McPhail

**"Physical separation, designating specific locations for certain general activities - e.g. uni is for work, home is for relaxation. This really helps me to decompress and prevent 'professional' work from bleeding into my 'private' life"**

Solomon Elvey

**Get yourself out there and don't shut yourself away! Putting yourself out there will open opportunities for new friends, people, connections and learning!**

Bethany Parks

# PERHAPS A GOOD LIFE LESSON

## HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND ACCEPT MY EMOTIONS

Cuffing season is amongst us, which means we want to be cuffed to someone, it's lonely and cold outside: we want love and cuddles and the desire of romance in these autumn and winter months.

But what if, instead of wanting to get into a relationship, you're trying to get over one, during this depressing time?

I'm going to tell you my heart-breaking love story and how I'm dealing with it in this harsh season, because as a university student: mental wellbeing is very important and we all need a little gossip and advice once in a while.

I've always been one of the guys, so this particular boy and I quickly became friends, he wasn't exactly my type, as a jock, class clown; I was a skater girl, but we shared the greatest of laughs with one another, with a cheeky flirt here and once in a while we'd go out for lunch together outside of uni for a catch up. Our personal lives were very separate from uni and our friendship, and so we didn't really discuss them. Though, with his manly personality, I could rely on him for dating advice when I became single.

But one day, because we'd grown closer, I found that I'd developed a crush. It's strange to think about now, as I'm going through the personal hell of being strangers with someone that I once considered a good friend. How can you become strangers with someone that has seen your soul? It absolutely breaks my heart when it crosses my mind. Even still. Because soon after getting a crush on him, he fell in love with me, and I fell right back.

We hadn't seen one another for quite a while, as we'd started our own courses and had personal lives to live – we went for one of our catchups and stupidly I told him that I liked him, to my surprise, he liked me back. From this moment on every moment he got spare would be spent with me. Literally after a few weeks, he told me he

"we all go through heartbreak it's a part of life and hurts like hell."

loved me and it took me a little more time, and eventually, I told him I loved him too; it was a quick amount of time to get feelings so strong, but it was definitely real. Our bliss continued for a few more weeks, lunch, coffee, him just hanging out together: we could spend hours on the phone or on video call, we just wanted to share each other's lives. We had it bad.... though it was bliss.

Then due to uni and work schedules we didn't get to spend much time together, so it was only every now and then we got the chance to be together and the phone calls had turned into texts. But this wasn't the main issue, as it turned out... he was seeing someone else, and it was rather serious between them. I was heartbroken at that point: Devastated, but because of having never claimed one another, I kind of let it slide, though I fell out with him, I didn't want to be a side piece and that's exactly what I was.

Though for some reason, no matter how much it broke my heart... him and I just couldn't stay away from one another, we'd leave it a few days, then have a great time and then fall out again; We were stuck in a rut. I told him to leave her and let us give it a go and sadly, this just scared him: He couldn't emotionally invest, he couldn't be mine. Eventually him and her broke up, but the whole thing put me off being with him. I didn't want to commit to somebody that couldn't commit to me, it didn't feel fair. I couldn't be with this guy that I had no trust in

and that repeatedly tormented me. Hell, I wasn't exactly an angel.

We both loved each other so hard, but clearly it just couldn't work. Have you ever sobbed so hard you've covered your own mouth to silence your cries? Felt mentally unwell and wanted to simply die because your heart is hurting so badly? No one should have to feel like their worth is meaningless over another person. It wasn't so easy for him, but it could have been, and I can't forgive him for that. My heart is still broken and it's still in the process of healing itself, it takes time to heal and everyone will heal at their own pace: I don't want to paint this person out as a monster, because he isn't; but I don't think he'll ever understand how much he hurt me.

These are some of the things that are helping my heart heal and if you're going through something similar, give them a try:

1. Find or engage more in a hobby.
2. Go out by yourself, whether for coffee or lunch or the cinema. Learn to love your own company.
3. Go on a few nights out to take your mind off things and just have a laugh with friends.
4. Go travelling! Whether with friends or on your own, go meet some people and do something new.
5. Watch your favourite films and listen to your favourite music.
6. Book a gig or a holiday to have something in the future to look forward to.
7. Pamper yourself, get your hair or nails done or get a tan. When you look good you feel good.

"When a chapter in your life ends, don't give up on the book."

Most importantly, if you need to stop or you need to cry, do it. Let it out, you need to express how you're feeling so it doesn't build up. Whether it be on your own or to another person, you need to go through the emotions you're feeling. Whether you're a guy or a girl, we all go through heartbreak it's a part of life and hurts like hell. Cuffing season is nearly over and it will be summer soon and we can focus on having fun in the sun!

When a chapter in your life ends, don't give up on the book.

**WRITTEN BY ANONYMOUS**

See page 19 to see where you can find support, information and crisis lines.



**LOVE YOURSELF**



# HEARTWARMING STEW



For those cold winter nights or when you're feeling a little under the weather, why not try out this heartwarming one-pot stew recipe? Easy to make, affordable, adaptable and simply delicious!

## INGREDIENTS:

Diced chicken (This can be omitted or swapped for another meat or meat alternative)

2 Large carrots

1-2 Parsnips

2-3 Potatoes

Sweetcorn (handful)

Peas (handful)

5 mushrooms

1 onion

Salt

Pepper

chicken stock cube

gravy granules.

You can add or substitute many other vegetables, such as swede, turnips, finely chopped cabbage... just add them in one at a time after step three.)

1. Put a large pan of water (half full) to boil and add salt and your chicken stock cube (omit if you want a veggie dish, change this for a vegetable stock cube)

2. Add diced chicken when the water is boiling.

3. Peel and dice your potatoes, carrots and parsnips. Add one ingredient at a time, Waiting for the water to boil again after each addition.

4. Slice your onion and add it in.

5. You can either add your peas, mushrooms and sweetcorn now or later, it doesn't really matter when.

6. Turn the heat down and let it simmer until the vegetables are cooked through (for a thinner/chunkier stew) or until the vegetables have broken down and the chicken is breaking up.

7. Mix up some gravy granules with water to form a paste and add it to the stew, mixing well to distribute evenly.

8. Allow to thicken as required and let stand for a few minutes before dishing up.

9. Serve with fresh crusty bread!

WRITTEN BY KIRA ROUSE



# WELLBEING WITH CHRONIC

Sometimes,  
students just need  
to be reminded  
that as long as  
they are doing the  
best they can,  
then that's all that  
matters.

## PAIN

WRITTEN BY SHELBY  
CLACKWORTHY

As a student who deals with chronic pain every day, the concept of wellbeing to me might be different in comparison to other students. When I think of wellbeing, I think of taking my time – which to a student seems very contradictory. In my everyday life I have to plan how long everything will take me; even the simple tasks like getting from one class to the other.

In the chronic pain world, there is a notion called the 'spoon theory'. This is where every morning when I wake up, I have a limited number of spoons and each activity takes away my spoons. Spoons are a representation of how much energy an individual has. Whereby a 'normal' student, who doesn't suffer with chronic pain, may start their day with more spoons and with each similar

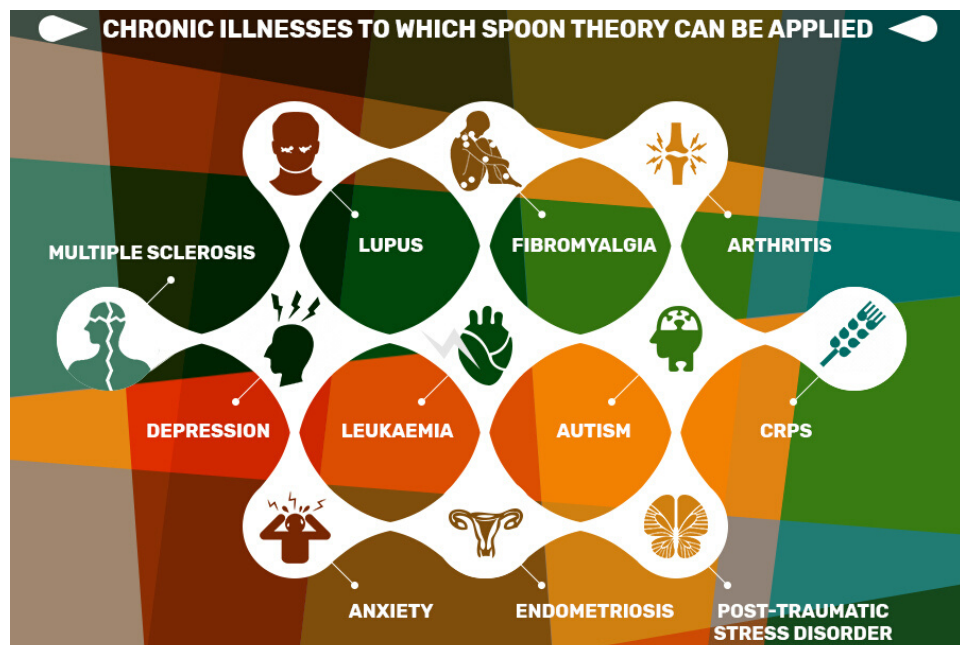
task taken it will cost them less spoons. This means that while other students believe that wellbeing is taking care of their physical health by going to the gym, to me it means having to rest after simple tasks and numerous hot water bottles to ease the pain. This also means that on the days where I am not in university, I like to take my days slow as the life of a student can seem to be 100 miles per hour whilst on campus.

To me, this is really what wellbeing means: taking the hectic days and not letting them run over into the rest of the week. Allowing myself to take the day slowly, calmly and not feel pressured to continue the fast-paced life that often makes students burn out. I have to remind myself that just because other students appear to be working constantly and appear always productive, that I cannot compare myself to them and I shouldn't feel inferior because I cannot work like they do.

Another part of well-being is the mental health aspect. While many students feel the need to care for their mental health just as they do their physical health, for me this even more important. The mental strain of constantly being in pain is hard. Due to this it is even more important for me to remind myself that I cannot compare myself to other students. Even for students who don't deal with chronic pain this is an important message. It only adds more stress and panic to an already stressful situation.

In order to avoid being overwhelmed by university and life, I enjoy doing mentally easy tasks. This may be taking the dog for a walk when I'm able to or binge-watching a series. I allow myself to do these things and not feel guilty. I feel that in our current society there is too much pressure on students to be 'perfect' students – constantly working and getting high grades. Sometimes, students just need to be reminded that as long as they are doing the best they can, then that's all that matters.

# THE SPOON THEORY



The Spoon Theory was devised by lupus sufferer Christine Miserandino in 2003 when, one day while out for lunch with a friend, she was asked what it felt like to have lupus.

Her response was to grab 12 spoons from nearby unoccupied tables, handing them out to her friends and inviting her to tell Christine about a typical day

Every time Christine's friend mentioned activities such as getting up, getting dressed, taking a shower and preparing meals, she would have a spoon taken from her. The spoons were a metaphor for the limited capacity of activities that invisible illness sufferers can handle during their day.

Christine added that while it is possible to use more than 12 'spoons' in a day, extra spoons used would be deducted from the following day's quota.

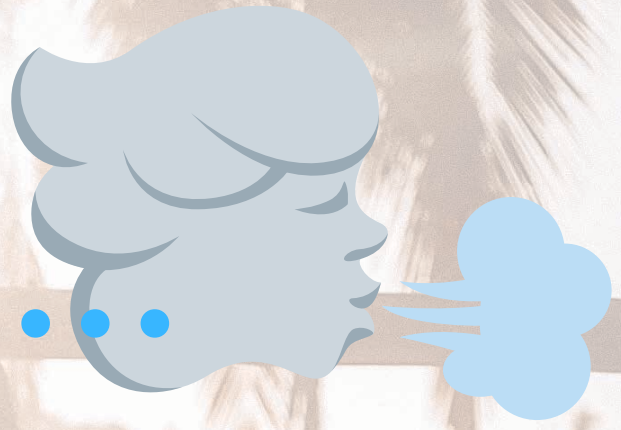
Her friend eventually became emotional at seeing her everyday pain described so acutely as the reality of the situation sunk in.

The Spoon Theory has since been used as a guide for invisible illness sufferers to explain to others how difficult it is for them to complete tasks that would seem routine to most people and how important it is to use 'spoons' sensibly just to get through the day.

			
 get out of bed <input type="checkbox"/>	 take a shower <input type="checkbox"/>	 visit your doctor <input type="checkbox"/>	 grocery shopping <input type="checkbox"/>
 call your parents <input type="checkbox"/>	 manage meds <input type="checkbox"/>	 walk your dog <input type="checkbox"/>	 take kids to school <input type="checkbox"/>
 get dressed <input type="checkbox"/>	 make dinner <input type="checkbox"/>	 socialize <input type="checkbox"/>	 go to work <input type="checkbox"/>



# AND BREATHE...



Breathing techniques can help relieve the symptoms of panic attacks and anxiety, and can help us to feel more relaxed and calm, making them good for things like stress and depression too.

The following techniques are some that I have found very useful.

[See page 19 for more information, support and crisis lines.](#)

## 7/11 BREATHING

1. Breathe in for 7 seconds.
2. Breathe out for 11 seconds.
3. Try to breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth.

If you can't do 7/11 you can try breathing in for 5 and out for 7, or in for 3 and out for 5.

Exhaling is linked with the parasympathetic nervous system, so lengthening the out breath influences our body's ability to relax and calm down.

This technique is my personal favourite, is recommended by therapists and is particularly good if you're having a panic attack.

## BELLY BREATHING

1. Sit or lie down as described above.
2. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach somewhere above your belly button.
3. Breathe in through your nose, noticing your stomach rise. Your chest should remain relatively still.
4. Purse your lips and exhale through your mouth. Try engaging your stomach muscles to push air out at the end of the breath.

## LION BREATHING

1. Get into a comfortable position.
2. Take a breath in through your nose.
3. Breathe out through your mouth, allowing yourself to vocalize "ha."
4. During exhale, open your mouth as wide as you can and stick your tongue out, stretching it down toward your chin as far as it will go.
5. Focus on the middle of your forehead (third eye) or the end of your nose while exhaling.
6. Relax your face as you inhale again.
7. Repeat the practice up to six times, changing the cross of your ankles when you reach the halfway point.

WRITTEN BY REBEKAH SMITH



# INTERVIEW:

## LIVING WITH CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME



Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a disorder characterised by extreme fatigue that is not improved by rest. Other symptoms include dizziness, nausea, insomnia, headaches, flu-like symptoms and difficulty concentrating. The cause for CFS is unknown, and there is no cure. It is also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) or systematic exertion intolerance disease (SEID). Symptoms vary from person to person; their severity for the individual can vary daily or even within a single day.

Artie Herbert is an engineering postgraduate who has CFS. They will be answering some questions about their experience with the condition. This interview has been split into two parts with this being the first. The second part of the interview can be found by searching for the same title on Phantom Papers blog (link below the article)

### HOW DOES CFS AFFECT YOU?

I just graduated this year, and I work with current students, so the mental fatigue has a much bigger impact on me day-to-day than physical fatigue.

When it sets in, your mind clouds over and your thoughts slow down until they eventually flatline. Mental over-exertion leads to headaches, dizziness, blurry vision, sometimes blackouts – basically any scene where the young, inexperienced protagonist pushes their mental magic powers too far and dramatically passes out. (Except the mental powers are reading and the impossible quest is keeping up with the sheer volume of emails from the Careers Department.)

I use a walking stick to help me when I'm low on energy – physical fatigue caused by CFS feels different to sleepiness. I can physically feel my body shutting down – I move slower, my motor control gets worse, my eyes unfocus, my speech gets slurred and so on until I can't move. (Huge shout out to my terrible endocrine system adding the “sulky teenager, always mumbles” to my street cred because I was for sure not cool enough to dye my fringe). It was scary the first few times it happened to me. I feel a strong sense of solidarity with the Mars rover whose solar panels got covered in dust and whose battery

slowly drained until they stopped moving (RIP Curiosity, you were a real one).

### HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR CFS?

I manage my CFS with the single-minded strategising of a Londoner trying to get home on a Saturday at 00:41 am whilst avoiding the Zone 1 travel charge. It takes so much planning to balance everything I need to do to keep myself alive with my illness that NASA won't stop hounding me for my tactical secrets. Every major activity – going shopping, meeting a client, hoovering the stairs – requires me to block off some time before and after to rest up and recover. I lay out the week ahead of me in these blocks of time. It's super important never to over-exert myself on a given day, although due to the chaotic nature of life, it happens – because even if I physically can do more, it could take me days to recover after. Preparing and freezing meals for the week ahead of time really helps because of the Catch-22 that comes up with cooking – to get energy, you must spend energy. If I'm already low, it's not possible, and I'll end up missing meals.

The other side of living with chronic illness is processing the emotional fall-out. I've only made progress with this in the last year or so. My CFS made me confront the ideas I'd picked up about self-worth – that it was tied to productivity, and to deserve a good life I first had to create something of monetary value. I essentially faced a choice between continuing to see myself as 'less than' because I could never be as productive in capitalist terms as other people, or radically change my concept of human worth. In order to continue to live with myself, I had to believe that all people, regardless of what they can do, deserve a good and dignified life. CFS transformed how I see the world - to paraphrase Karl Marx: Capitalism? It ain't all that.

### SO, ME/CFS AND FIBROMYALGIA INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAY IS MAY 12TH. WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO SHOW SUPPORT AND RAISE AWARENESS?

Around 0.4% of all adults in the UK live with CFS/ME, including a lot of people who haven't been diagnosed. If you can take some time on May 12th to read about CFS/ME and pay your knowledge forward, on social media or in person, it could help reach people who have been suffering without knowing.

"The book hasn't been closed on your life. It won't be any less full and joyful just 'cause you're taking the scenic route."

There's also the "go blue for ME" movement – every year, supporters go blue (the official colour of CFS/ME awareness) by wearing blue clothes, pinning on a blue ribbon, dyeing their hair or painting their nails to spark a conversation about CFS/ME and bring some colour to this invisible illness.

### WHAT ADVICE MIGHT YOU GIVE TO A UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO HAS RECENTLY BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH CFS?

The book hasn't been closed on your life. It won't be any less full and joyful just 'cause you're taking the scenic route.

To read the second part of the interview, follow the link below to Phantom Paper's blog and search for 'What is ME/CFS? An Interview – Part Two'.

CFS is not a well-known condition, and it is important to raise awareness for it. ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia International Awareness Day is May 12th. For more information on the condition and how to manage it, please check out the links below.

In the second part of the interview, Artie will explain the term 'invisible disability', outline the process of diagnosis, what university students and staff can do to support students and friends with ME/CFS and explain what Spoon Theory is.

Phantom Paper blog:

<https://phantom-media.co.uk/the-phantom/>

For more information on ME/CFS and how to manage it:

<https://www.healthrising.org/blog/2018/12/01/tips-newbies-fibromyalgia-chronic-fatigue-syndrome-me-cfs/>  
<https://ammes.org/coping-strategies/>

fbclid=IwAR2VFppTX8LV4xzcYJ75n9PgDPNYWUU0SJ4Dlu7CA8he4RqktlpNCR1vvDo

WRITTEN BY LILI KENT



**12 MAY**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**ME/CFS**  
**AWARENESS DAY**

### IT'S NOT JUST FATIGUE

Physical and mental **exhaustion** | Severe muscle and joint **pain** | High heart rate | Nausea | **Dizziness** | Very low blood pressure | Difficulty breathing | IBS | Fever | **Unrefreshing and disturbed sleep** | Night sweats | Sensitivity to light, noise and touch | Sensitivity to foods, chemicals, odours and alcohol | **Brain fog** | Poor memory & concentration...



[WWW.MECFSSA.ORG](http://WWW.MECFSSA.ORG)



# GROUNDING

Grounding is a therapeutic technique that help you become fully present in your body and surroundings and feel connected to the earth. Grounding helps distract us from what we're experiencing and refocus on what's happening in the present moment. It can help pull us away from flashbacks, unwanted thoughts or memories, and negative or challenging emotions.

Grounding techniques can help calm us and create space from distressing feelings in nearly any situation, but they're particularly helpful for dealing with; anxiety, PTSD, dissociation, self-harm urges, traumatic memories and panic attacks.

There are so many different grounding techniques out there, and it's important to find what works best for you. To get you started, I've made a list of some of my favourite grounding techniques that work really well for me.

See page 19 for more information, support and crisis lines.

## COLD WATER

Either submerge your hands in cold water or run your wrist and hands under the cold tap. Focus on how the temperature feels on your skin. The physical sensation of the cold water helps to bring you back into the present. This one is particularly good for when you're out and about, like at uni for example.

## ICE

This one is very similar to the cold water technique, but involves you holding an ice cube or piece of ice in your hand.

## 5-4-3-2-1

Use your senses to list the things around you. Find 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

## DESCRIBE WHAT'S AROUND YOU

Take in your surroundings, and describe what's around you in as much detail as possible. Use all 5 senses. For example; "This bench is red. It's warm under my jeans as I'm sitting in the sun. It feels rough, but there aren't any splinters. The grass is yellow and dry. The air smells like smoke. I hear kids having fun and two dogs barking."

## VISUALIZE

This involves visualising, or thinking about, your favourite place or somewhere that makes you happy. For me it's the beach, but it could be a park, at home on the sofa with your family, anywhere. Imagine yourself there, using all 5 senses to create it in your mind. What can you see? Is it warm or cold? What can you hear? How does it feel?

## NAME, DATE, TIME

This is a very simple technique that can help bring us back into the present. Simply state your name, where you are, the date and the time. You can also add "I am safe." to the end. Say it out loud if you can, but it's fine to say it in your head if you can't.

Looking at your phone or a clock so you can visibly see the date and time can also be helpful.

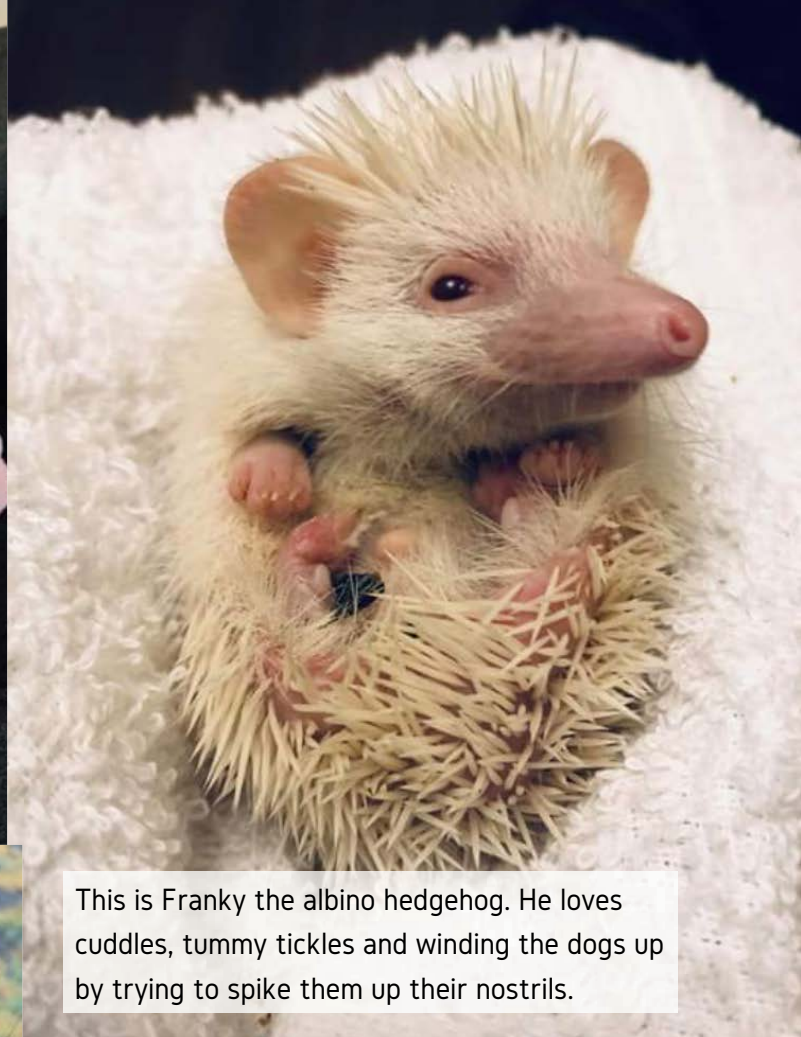
WRITTEN BY REBEKAH SMITH







This is Mika, a picky princess. She throws her food bowl across the room when she wants a snack and everyday is Opposite Day with her resting bitch face. The best friend in the world.



This is Franky the albino hedgehog. He loves cuddles, tummy tickles and winding the dogs up by trying to spike them up their nostrils.



This is Luna, her spirit animal is tigger, she has a wonky crooked tail, she's eaten through multiple sofas and she loves ice cream more than life itself.



This is Bella. She is always there to put a smile on all our faces. She is the craziest dog I have ever met (and the naughtiest) she loves eating everything, and I mean EVERYTHING.



This is Timmy the Border Collie, he's secretly a Christmas Turkey. Best fist bumper and high fiver around.





This is Neko! He joined the family back when I was obsessed with anime and Audrey Hepburn so, I decided to call him 'cat' in Japanese as a nod to the ginger kitty in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's'. I was a very creative fifteen year-old...



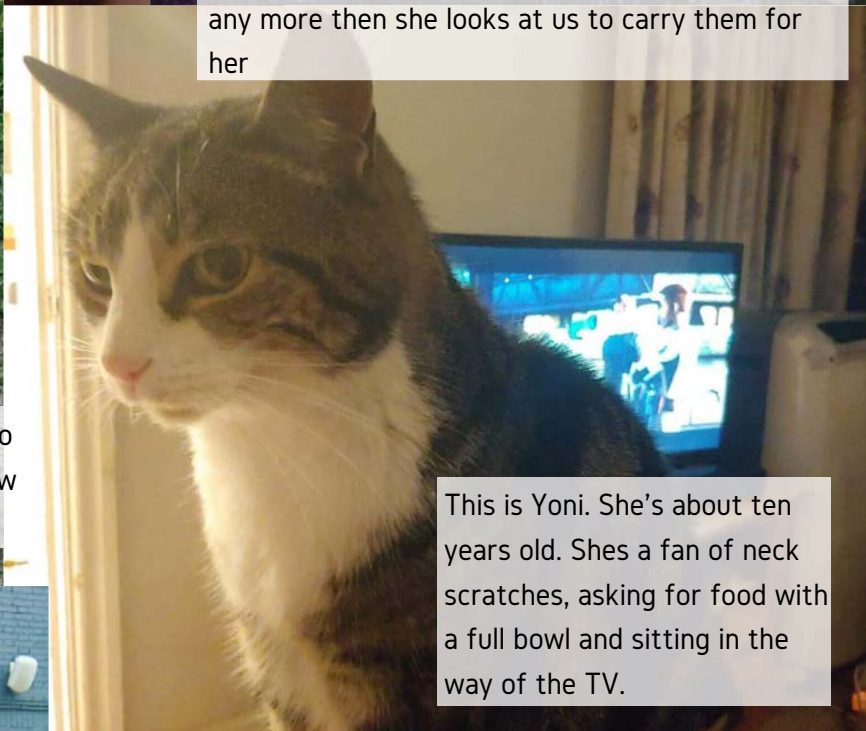
This is Bart, he is a fat, gay and fabulous catto



Poppy is a four year old Cavachon (a Bichon Frise crossed with a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel). She is often referred to as 'the leaf dog' in the local community because she cannot go on a walk without carrying leaves, flowers and feathers. She collects as many as she can hold for the entire duration and if she can't physically carry any more then she looks at us to carry them for her



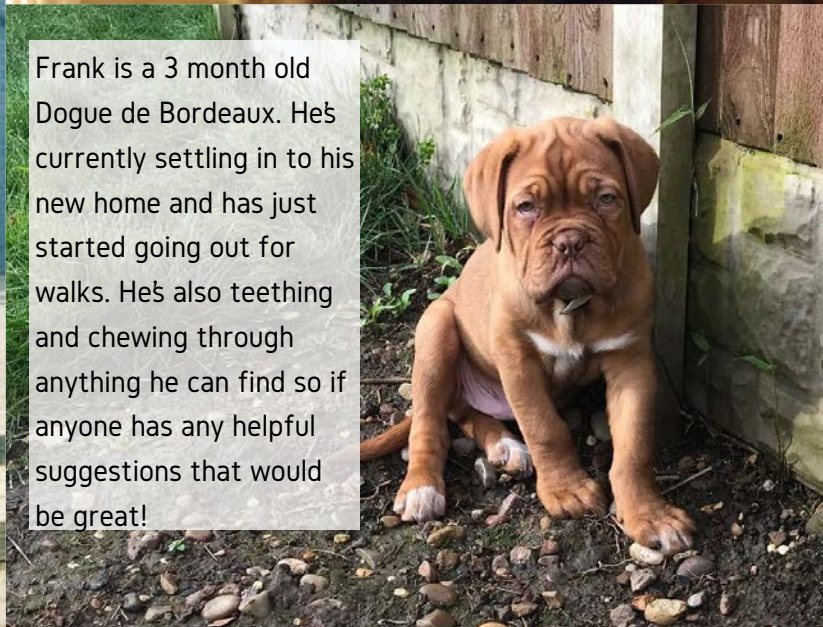
This is my boy Flynn, he's a rescue who is still learning to be nice to other dogs. His yellow lead lets everyone know he needs his space even if he acts like a prince at home.



This is Yoni. She's about ten years old. She's a fan of neck scratches, asking for food with a full bowl and sitting in the way of the TV.



This is Lola, the Lol Dog (@lolatheshowshiba). She's a Japanese Shiba Inu, rescued from deepest darkest Wales. Lol is 3, going on 4, and is basically a cat trapped in a dog's body. Lol is fan of many types of snack, including (but not limited to) chicken, ham, cat treats, candles, bed frames and the little straps on the back of caps.



Frank is a 3 month old Dogue de Bordeaux. He's currently settling in to his new home and has just started going out for walks. He's also teething and chewing through anything he can find so if anyone has any helpful suggestions that would be great!



## For more information

NHS England:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression)

NHS One You:

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou)

Mind:

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Samaritans:

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## Crisis lines

**Samaritans**

Call 116 123 (24/7)

**SHOUT**

Text 85258 (24/7)



## Student Wellbeing

You can find the student wellbeing centre Student Wellbeing Centre, Ground Floor, T-Block at Kedleston Road

Website: <https://www.derby.ac.uk/services/student-wellbeing-centre/>

Call: 01332 593000

Email: [studentwellbeing@derby.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@derby.ac.uk)

For Buxton and Chesterfield students: <https://www.derby.ac.uk/study/support/student-support/buxtons-student-wellbeing-service/>