

## Coping on the day

Preparation is everything  
but just in case...

### The Agenda

This last set of documents don't really need an agenda so here's a list of contents. Take some time before the day to read through them and choose some of the 'resources' mentioned to have on stand-by.

Exercise 8 - Managing your Emotional 'State'

Exercise 9 - a series of exercises for Managing your Physical 'State'

Tips on how to defuse tricky situations

### Getting in the right mindset ('state') for Christmas

Your mindset in tackling the Christmas events is all important. Take a moment to remind yourself of your purpose. You'll have your own after working through the earlier series of exercises and they might be something like:

- To have the best Christmas ever
- To make Christmas go as smoothly as possible
- To avoid nagging or being nagged
- To avoid rows
- To be clear about what we both want for Christmas

### Checklist of things to help your day go smoothly

- Make time with each other to acknowledge the potential for enjoyment today.
- Choose a signal that says "help".
- Eliminate or minimise possible hazards and flash points.
- Check you have the papers that go with this exercise.
- Have a hug and a kiss before you start and at the end of the day
- If at any time you feel tensions rising, take several deep breaths and make sure you are looking upwards and not down to the table or floor. If that doesn't reduce the tension, you will find more ways to help in this pack.

If in any doubt about your physical health talk to your doctor before performing any of these exercises. They are offered here as suggestions and you must take ultimate responsibility for your own body. As we also encourage you to take ultimate responsibility for your role in your Christmas relationships.

## Exercise 8 Managing your Emotional 'State'

### Setting up your Christmas emotional 'state'.

One of the best ways to take "control" of your state of mind is to visualise just how you want to be. This can be through finding good memories or maybe by creating new imaginary experiences.

Being in a 'state' often refers to not being very resourceful and generally out of control. However we also experience positive 'states' when we feel 'over the moon', 'bursting with energy', or like 'we could conquer the world'. You can learn to create positive 'states' when it's useful rather than waiting until something happens to trigger the 'state' for you.

The 'state' you are in is important because it not only affects how you feel it also determines how you behave.

### This is what you do

Find a warm safe place to sit comfortably.

Hold your index finger in front of your face. Slowly move your finger away, focusing on it all the time. (You can blink!) Now take your focus of attention further away until you are looking at the edge of the room. Lengthen your focus even further, imagine you are looking at the horizon. Notice how your awareness widens as you use your peripheral vision to remain in touch with what is going on around you.

Continue to relax, maintaining this sense of 'wide' awareness.

Take your attention inside; close your eyes and take yourself back to an event or time when you felt curious, wondering what was about to happen? Perhaps from childhood. Perhaps from a recent holiday. Something you saw on TV, or in a film. Something that started your mind wandering and wondering.. what next?

As you think about this time develop your memory of it by asking yourself what you saw, colours, shapes, movement. What sounds you heard, voices, music, nature. Exactly how you felt, emotionally and physically. Perhaps there is a smell or taste associated with this time of curiosity. As you find yourself fully experiencing this 'state' think of a word or a name that would help you recall it later. Practice doing this and it becomes stronger and stronger.

Congratulations! You have just created a positive emotional state from your own internal resources.

### Having a spot of trouble doing this?

Take some time with this and use the breathing exercise on page 3 to help you still your busy mind. Open your quieter side to reflection and contemplation of something wonderful you can be curious and excited about.

## Exercise 9 Managing your Physical 'State'

### It's all in the breath

One of the best ways to calm your mind and change your 'state' positively is by using a breathing pattern from Yoga or a similar exercise discipline. The breath pattern below, called "Nadi Shodhana" or "Alternate nostril breathing", is a relaxing, calming and balancing breath. It also helps to stimulate left brain-right brain connection and balance the energy between left & right hemispheres. Once you have done this you will feel calmer and centred and at peace with yourself.

### Alternate nostril breathing

Start in a comfortable seated position with your spine tall.

When you are ready, take your right hand and place your first and second finger between your eyebrows. Lightly pressing this point, can calm the mind.

Exhale fully.

Close the right nostril with your right thumb and inhale through your left nostril.

Close your left nostril with your right ring finger, then release your thumb and exhale through your right nostril.

Inhale right side, closing this nostril, then exhale left side.

Inhale left, close, exhale right.

Continue with this breath for a few minutes, slowing down the pace of the breath a little more with each round.

Release your hand back to your lap and notice how you feel now compared to when you first began.



## Exercise 9 (cont'd) Managing your Physical 'State'

The mind and body are linked to each other. Change your posture and you will change your mind-set. Use the exercise on this page to release tension and invigorate your energy system.

### The Helicopter exercise

The simple movements of the helicopter exercise make this one of the best exercises to practice totally letting go of tension in the upper body.

Start in a standing position with the feet a little wider than hip width apart.

Keep the knees slightly bent.

Allow the arms to hang freely down by your side and start to turn the torso from side to side.

As you start to move, the arms should flop back and forth like coat sleeves flopping in the wind.

Imagine that the tension is rolling off your upper back, shoulders and arms, releasing out your fingertips, never to return again!

Gradually come back to stillness after you feel that you have released some tension. Pause and notice how you feel.



By now you should be feeling calm and in control of yourself. Continue through this pack to discover more ways of synchronising the two sides of your brain and helping you to be in the 'state' you want.

## Exercise 9 (cont'd) Managing your Physical 'State'

### Left / right brain co-ordination

Here are some simple exercises from 'BrainGym', based on Kinesiology or muscle balancing. This set is designed to improve the dialogue between left and right hemispheres of the brain. They energise the mind, opening up new connections and helping learning.

### Water, water

Water is a great energy conductor, so drink a glass before you start. It will also fill your stomach so you eat less and will dilute alcohol. Have another glass!

### Waking up your "Brain Buttons"

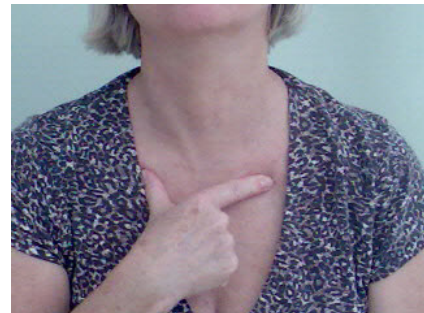
This exercise helps improve blood flow to the brain to "switch on" the entire brain.

The increased blood flow helps improve concentration skills required for reading, writing, 'careful' conversations and learning generally.

Open one hand so that there is as wide a space as possible between the thumb and index finger.

Place your index finger and thumb into the slight indentations below the collar bone on each side of the sternum. Press lightly in a pulsing manner. The area may feel sensitive.

At the same time put the other hand over the navel area of the stomach. Gently press on these points for about two minutes.



### Cross Crawling

This exercise helps coordinate right and left brain by exercising the information flow between the two hemispheres. It is useful for spelling, writing, **listening**, reading and **comprehension**.

Stand or sit. Put the right hand across the body to the left knee as you raise it,

Lower the leg and return your hand to its start position.

Now Put the left hand on the right knee as you raise it.

Alternate hands and legs - just as if you were marching.

Repeat for about two minutes.

## Exercise 9 (cont'd) Managing your Physical 'State'

### "Hook Ups"

This works well for anxiety before potentially difficult conversations. Any situation which cause nervousness benefit from a few "hook ups" in advance to calm the mind and improve concentration.

Stand or sit. Cross the right leg over the left at the ankles.

Take your right wrist and cross it over the left wrist and link the fingers so that the right wrist is on top.

Bend the elbows out and gently turn the fingers in towards the body until they rest on the sternum (breast bone) in the centre of the chest. Stay in this position.

Keep the ankles crossed and the wrists crossed and then breathe evenly in this position for a few minutes. You will be noticeably calmer after that time.



### Ready for a good Christmas

Now you have a variety of ways to get yourself in a 'state' that will be useful for you. A calm, resourceful and curious state. Having a quiet mind and one which is firing on all cylinders, puts you in a good space to change some of your less useful interactions with your partner, family and Christmas guests. You will also be able to deal with their patterns of behaviour, which in the past may have automatically triggered a negative response in you.

### How to deal with tricky situations

When things start to get a bit overheated it's tempting to use a bucket of cold water or to wade in and get involved in the shouting match. By far the best way to deal with bad behaviour is to pretend it's not happening and begin some form of distraction.

Have handy:-

Christmas crackers

Games you can all play - including board games, team games, TV games, X-box, Wii etc

A quiz for all to play (Google 'family quiz', to find the online or if you have time and energy make one of your own)

A large box of sweets / toffees / crisps / nuts / biscuits

Something that makes a loud noise - tin drum - whistle - musical instrument

Offer cups of tea - glasses of port or brandy - mince pies - Christmas cake

Suggest a nice walk - trip to the pub - shops - neighbours

Get everyone else practising 'Alternate nostril breathing', 'The Helicopter exercise' etc

Resist the urge to be a referee. It only gives the antagonists an audience to prove their point to.

If it's all too much for you retire as gracefully as possible and practice the breathing exercises, positive visualisations and other physical exercises until the need to scream or throw something passes.

Then give distraction another go.

### Have a truly wonderful Christmas