

The Fundraising 4 step wellbeing programme for the MND Association.

Step one : Coherent Breathing

In my work as both a yoga teacher and physiotherapist, the most potent tool I have found to kick start wellbeing is breathwork.

So many of us do not utilise the breathing muscle (diaphragm) to gain its maximum benefits. MND will weaken this muscle, the implications of this go well beyond the simple act of breathing.

To understand the benefits of developing a breathwork practice then I suggest you read 'The Breathing Cure'. By Patrick McKeown.

There are many different types of breathing practices, but the most simple ,and most effective in terms of wellbeing is coherent breathing.

I have pasted several links below that should help you get you started.

So what is coherent breathing?

<https://www.verywellmind.com/an-overview-of-coherent-breathing-4178943>

This next link helps with the pacing of the breath

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5apnLrzaT4>

When performing coherent breathing, being able to bring on line the diaphragm is really important.

Here is a short video to become familiar with what a gentle but deep diaphragmatic breath looks like.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSoQuby1Yjw>

Step Two : Balance

I love working with elderly people and I spend a proportion of my working life working in care homes. Week in week out one of the biggest challenges the residents face is lack of balance. Indeed, many residents are admitted to the care home due to a fall. Those who live with MND find balance a challenge when they are still ambulant.

If we had our leg in plaster for 12 weeks we would expect there to be significant muscle wasting through lack of use. Interestingly, this is not the only place that wasting occurs, the part of the brain that is involved in innervating those wasting muscles also shrinks. This also appears to be the case with balance. It is a question of use it or lose it.

Michael Mosely runs you through the science in the link below. He also invites you to improve your balance by standing on one leg when brushing your teeth and then when you get the hang

of that you'll be invited to try with your eyes closed! Without giving too much away.....how well you are able to balance is a good predictor of mortality! The great thing is balance can be greatly improved with practice!! So get wobbling!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/35QytBYmkXJ4JnDYI9zYngb/why-you-should-stand-on-one-leg>

Step Three : Connect

Perhaps one of the most upsetting aspects of MND is the decreased ability to communicate.

Extensive evidence shows that having good-quality relationships can help us to live longer and happier lives with fewer **mental health problems**. Having close, positive relationships can give us a purpose and sense of belonging. ... take social relationships as seriously as other risk factors that affect mortality'. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Relationships, like the garden, need tending to. One of the main reasons I am doing the South West Coastal Footpath is that it will give me the opportunity to walk and talk with people I care for and about. Not only will it give me the opportunity to reconnect with old friends but to make new friends as well.

Relationship skills

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3041774/7-key-habits-for-building-better-relationships>

Step Four : Move

The opportunities for movement get smaller and smaller when you live with MND.

Many might assume by movement I mean going to the gym, running, signing up for a yoga class or getting on your bike. A sense that we have to carve out a chunk of our day to make space to exercise. An example of what I mean can be found in the practice of standing on one leg when you brushing your teeth. You are simply adding a healthy habit to another healthy habit with no time cost. Another example could be when you are stuck in traffic, why not tune into some breathwork.

When we have a break at work, we might choose to stay sitting rather than getting up and/or going for a walk.

Prolonged sitting has been likened to the 'new smoking'

<https://theheartfoundation.org/2019/08/10/is-sitting-the-new-smoking/>

<https://bjgp.org/content/66/646/258>

Many with disability have no choice but to spend long periods sitting. Those of us without disability have that choice to move, so lets get up and move!
Every minute counts!

Thank you

I am very grateful and appreciative of you donating to the MND Association. I look forward to hearing how you got on with the 4 step programme, or better still walking with you on the South West Coastal Footpath some time soon.

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Just giving page

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Why not take a look at the great work the MND Association do

<https://www.mndassociation.org/>