

Accessing Support: Self-Care and Relaxation

Whether you have recently been diagnosed, are going through treatment, or are in recovery, cancer can bring additional difficulty and stress into life. Ensuring that you are looking after yourself is important in supporting your mental and physical wellbeing, and can give you a well-earned break from the stresses that can accompany cancer. This resource aims to provide resources that highlight the importance of self-care and provide suggestions of how you might look after yourself and relax.



Below is a list of organisations who may be able to offer you some support, as well as some resources that you may find helpful to read/listen to. The range and quality of services/support available from such organisations may vary. This list has been gathered as signposting only, and The Royal Marsden cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by an organisation listed or the quality of their services.

If you have any questions or would like further advice/guidance about where to seek specialist help in your local area, you can speak with a member of your Royal Marsden treatment team or the Adult Psychological Support Service.

"Hell, Yeah Self-Care" Leaflet

A comic-style leaflet which aims to reframe our thinking of self-care as a self-indulgent act to a necessary act that can also benefit others. The leaflet breaks down self-care into 5 core elements and gives advice against barriers that may otherwise prevent us from engaging in self-care (e.g., self-criticism and fears of selfishness or inadequacy, finances, time, finding balance between caring for others and the self).

Website link: <https://rewriting-the-rules.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/HellYeahSelfCare.pdf>

Maggie's – Exercise and Cancer

Engaging in exercise has been shown to benefit both our mental and physical health, and is an important part of self-care. Maggie's centres offer a range of physical exercise classes specifically for those affected by cancer including: Nordic walking, gym sessions, yoga, tai-chi, armchair exercises, gardening and walking. Classes are free and run by qualified instructors and can be a good opportunity to meet others in similar situations.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/managing-practically/exercise-and-cancer/>



The Royal Marsden – Eating well when you have cancer

Good nutrition is an important part of looking after yourself, and for some people cooking can be a fun and relaxing activity. This booklet created by The Royal Marsden gives advice on adapting your diet, and is based on a combination of the nutritional evidence and suggestions from patients. It includes some recipes for you to try out.

Website link: https://rm-d8-live.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/d8live.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/s3fs-public/Eating_well_when_you_have_cancer.pdf

The Royal Marsden – Supportive Therapies

The Royal Marsden offers a range of supportive therapies which many patients find to be enjoyable and relaxing. Sessions in massage therapy, aromatherapy, reflexology and acupuncture are offered. Additionally, supportive therapies offer advice on exercise and diet, and even yoga sessions, to support your physical health.

Website link: <https://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/your-care/supportive-therapies>

SoundCloud Series of Relaxation Scripts.

Relaxation scripts are audio files that provide instructions on different relaxation techniques. Below are some freely accessible scripts that are examples of different types of relaxation scripts, but there are many other scripts out there should you wish to find some yourself.

Autosuggestion Technique:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/autosuggestion-technique-for-relaxation/s-9nblM>
Cottage by the sea:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/guided-visualisation-cottage-by-the-sea/s-yiow3>

Passive neuromuscular relaxation:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/passive-neuro-muscular-relaxation/s-ORMLL>

Progressive muscular relaxation:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/progressive-muscular-relaxation/s-Taz9v>

Unguided Visualisation:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/unguided-visualisation-relaxation/s-jtKKQ>

Relaxation using colours:

<https://soundcloud.com/royalmarsden/relaxation-using-colour/s-RGNaG>



YouTube – Sutton Uplift

This YouTube channel has videos that aim to support your emotional wellbeing. It includes a [Self-care and Relaxation Workshop](#) which shares ideas around managing stress, understanding wellbeing and practical tips to improve your own wellbeing, and some relaxation techniques. Also of interest may be the [Self-confidence and Assertiveness Workshop](#) which describes self-confidence/assertiveness, the differences between them and has lots of practical tips and strategies to try.

Website link: <https://www.youtube.com/@suttonuplift8800>

Other APSS Information and Resources

The Adult Psychological Support Service has a range of signposting information sheets on topics such as: coping at different stages of the cancer pathway, supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, and information specific to certain types of cancer.

You can view the signposting information sheets on The Royal Marsden's [Patient Information Library](#) and the [Adult Psychological Support Service Website](#) (under 'Further information and resources'). You can also request a copy of these by emailing Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephoning **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton).

Additional support services

Cancer Care Map

An online database of cancer support services. You can search by postcode or by particular themes e.g. cancer type.

Website link: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>

Maggie's Cancer Centres

Cancer care centres with multiple locations, including The Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Charing Cross Hospital, West London. Workshops, groups, information and one-to-one counselling available.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/>

Phone number: **0300 123 1801**

NHS Talking Therapies

NHS website to help you find your local psychological talking therapies service based on your GP address. Your local NHS talking therapies service can be helpful if you would like psychological support for cancer when you are no longer regularly coming in for appointments at The Royal Marsden, as well as for concerns unrelated to cancer or that predated your cancer and have become worse due to it.

Website link: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service/find-your-gp>



If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **020 8915 6899**.

The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service offers short-term, cancer-specific psychological and psychiatric support. You can either self-refer or ask somebody in your Royal Marsden healthcare team to refer you. For more information, visit [Adult Psychological Support Service | The Royal Marsden](#). Alternatively, contact us directly on **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea), **020 8661 3006** (Sutton), or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk.



If you have ideas for other signposting or information sheets, or if you would like to be involved in working with APSS to improve the service we offer, please scan the QR code to see more about our patient and public involvement, or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephone **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton) with your ideas.

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