

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT...
GOING BACK TO
SCHOOL!**



AWARE's Top Tips for Students

1. Routine

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lifting of restrictions have resulted in many of us losing our sense of routine. Leading up to returning to school, try to get back to the routine you used to have during term time. There has been a lot of change recently, but building routine can be a great way to keep our minds healthy. Try to figure out what works best for you!

2. Sleep



A minimum of 8 to 10 hours of sound sleep on school nights is recommended for teenagers. Try to get into a good sleep routine as this is important. Do this by setting yourself a time to turn off devices before bed, doing something relaxing before bed, and limiting your caffeine intake. Drinking too many caffeinated drinks can stop you from falling asleep and reduce the amount of deep sleep you have.

3. Exercise

Regular exercise helps you sleep more soundly as well as improving your general health. Teenagers should be aiming for at least 60 minutes of exercise every day, including aerobic activities such as fast walking and running. Exercising out in daylight will help to encourage healthy sleep patterns too.

DID YOU KNOW?

Being active is essential for both our emotional and physical health!

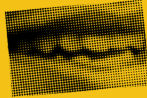


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OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
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4. Be Prepared

Try to stay informed about how things will be different at your school as schools may have different approaches. You can expect to be asked to keep a social distance, and you may find yourself in a much smaller group. The more you are prepared for these differences, the better you'll feel when you get back. Pack up your school bag, making sure you have enough supplies and have a designated space each evening to do school work.

5. Talk



With uncertainty and constant news updates becoming part of our daily lives, it is more important than ever to talk about how we are feeling. You are likely to have mixed feelings about returning to school but it is not helpful to bottle up your worries. Putting our feelings into words helps us to understand them and ourselves better. Talking to family and friends about how we feel helps them to understand us better too. Set aside a time each day to talk through any worries you may have with someone you trust.

6. Reconnect

At times like this, it's easy to get caught up in your own fears and concerns. However, research shows that those who focus on others in need, especially during crises, tend to be happier and healthier. Why not catch up with your friends via text, phone call or a virtual platform to ask how they are before you return to school? At school, look out for others and let them know they can come to you if they feel worried or concerned about anything.

7. Helpful Thinking

We have a tendency to focus on thoughts that are unhelpful or things that add to our fears rather than those things that might be helpful or make us feel good. One way to counteract this pattern is to list the things we are grateful for. You can also start to think about what you are looking forward to when you return to school. Lots of students have been talking about how nice it will be to see their friends and teachers again and have a change of scene from being at home.



8. Do some things you love!

Think of the things you enjoy doing and think about incorporating something nice and uplifting to do each day. For example, singing along to music, watching a funny film, drawing and painting, playing a game, building or making something, listening to podcasts, playing instruments, playing with or walking a pet etc. Doing things that bring us pleasure can help lift our moods and help us feel good about ourselves.

9. Go easy on yourself

Getting back into school will take some time, so go easy on yourself and give yourself time to settle in. There will be many changes, and all students will be trying to adjust to being back in school. If the day does not go as you expected or planned, that is okay; praise the effort you made. It will take time to adjust to getting back to school, but if you keep gradually persevering with it, you will get there.

10. You're not alone

Remember, you are not alone, and there are many people and organisations that you can reach out to for help and support when you return to school. We all need help and support at times.



Where to get help

- **Childline (call 0800 1111)**
- **Your school counsellor**
- **Your form teacher**
- **www.mindingyourhead.info**
- **Here to Help app**
- **Samaritans (call 116 123)**
- **Lifeline (call 0800 808 8000)**

