

But too much stress can also cause us to freeze; the caveman pretends to be dead when he meets that tiger because he can't out-run it. For you, the Leaving Cert is in a few months and all you can do is stare at the cover of your books. You're frozen in indecision because you don't know where to start, so to briefly get away from the stress you look at Instagram instead.

Stress rarely appears alone. You might also be feeling down, anxious, angry, irritable, overwhelmed or overloaded. Stress can interfere with our sleep and leave us lacking motivation and make it difficult to concentrate.

“Sometimes when people are stressed they'll get really self-critical and think ‘oh I have to do this all on my own. I should be doing better’ where as it really is a time to show some compassion to yourself”

- Conor, Jigsaw Clinician

Dealing with stress - Discover what is really bothering you

Getting in tune with yourself is the first and essential step to dealing with stress.

Think of stress as an alert telling you that there are some parts of your life that might need changing. To defuse this alert, you'll need to work out what's triggering it. This sounds simple, but often we are unaware (or afraid to admit) how much a relationship, job, person, or lifestyle is stressing us.

There is no magic bullet for stress, but there are many ways to help you manage and defuse it.

Tips for dealing with stress

Talk it out

Saying out loud how you're feeling to someone else can make a huge difference. This could be with a friend, parent, counselor or teacher. They don't have to have all the answers (in fact, they probably won't), but talking about what's stressing you will help you find your own solutions.

Write it all down

This might seem daunting, but your problems will seem a lot less overwhelming when they're all out on the page. You can keep a journal, or burn the pages afterwards if you really want to.

Break things down into manageable chunks

Maybe your room has been in a mess for months and it just seems too much to manage. If you get a to-do list and write 'clean room', it'll be too daunting to even start. Instead, start with something manageable, like 'do washing', or 'de-clutter desk'.

Achieving a simple task (and ticking it off the to-do list) gives us a little boost. This often reduces our stress and motivates us to tackle another manageable task. Before we know it, what once seemed like a task too big to start, is done.

Watch that inner voice

Notice how you talk to yourself. Make sure you're not being overly critical, which will make you more stressed.

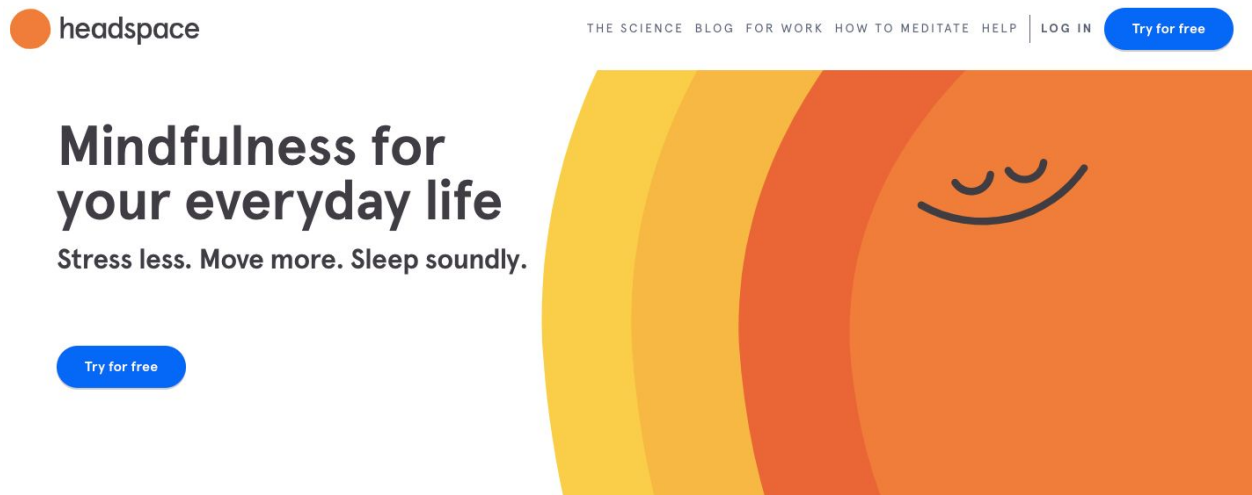
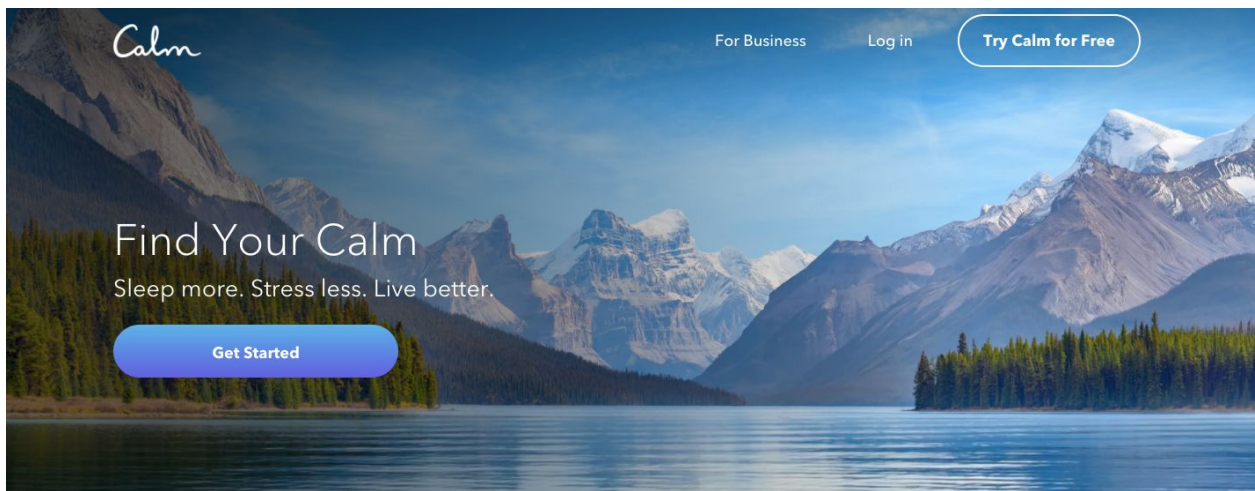


Find time – and ways – to relax

There are countless ways to unwind your body and mind; find out what works for you and schedule it into your week. It could be running, flicking through a magazine, deep breathing, or colouring books. No matter how busy we are, we all need downtime.

The following apps have guided meditations to help manage stress:

(If you have any other apps that you find useful, please send them on to any of the Guidance team, we always like hearing about relaxing techniques that work for other people!



The following websites have up to date and relevant mental health support should you need it:

www.pietahouse.ie

www.jigsaw.ie

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Remember to reach out to your One Good Adult if you're feeling overwhelmed.

If you need us, please email us. We're always here.

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[READ MORE ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN DCC ON OUR SCHOOL'S FACEBOOK PAGE](#)



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