

- **Taking up a hobby** – people who have stressful jobs often find that taking up a hobby can help them switch their brains off from work pressures once they are away from work. For example, if you are knitting, you are concentrating on what your fingers are doing rather than thinking about that essay that needs handing in next week that is stressing you out. Often when you go back to the thing that you were finding stressful, you can cope better having taken a break from it and switching off.
- **Aerobic Exercise** – exercise where the heart rate is increased releases endorphins which make you feel good. Exercises could include going to the gym or sport such as football or netball but could also include cycling, skate boarding, surfing, riding a horse, swimming – think about the type of things you are interested in and build your exercise around that. (See our section on exercise below.)
- **Walking** – walking also releases endorphins but can also help you to switch off from pressures as you take in the scenery around you and get into a steady rhythm – and can be a far more pleasant way to travel than on a stuffy tube or busy loud bus which in itself can be stressful. Getting fresh air also helps you to relax and sleep better.
- **Yoga** – yoga, tai chi and pilates are designed around relaxation and breathing techniques which can all aid relaxation.
- **A warm bath** – it sounds simple but a nice warm bath helps the muscles relax and encourages a general feeling of relaxation. Aromatherapy candles or bubble bath could also help your mind to relax and some people find listening to chilled music while you are having a soak helps.
- **Watching a film or reading a book** – escapism is a great way to switch off from reality for a while and help the mind to relax.
- **Meet a mate** – leaving the stressful situation you are in and talking things over with a mate or even chatting about something completely different from what caused the stress can take your mind off things and aid relaxation.