

Last week we asked Dr James to share how he is keeping his personal and workplace wellbeing in check. He has shared his top tips below, along with some great apps that you can try too!

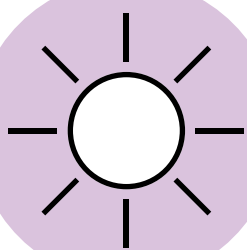


I don't do all of these things every single day, but the more that I do each day, the better and calmer I feel. Give them a go and I'd be interested to see if they help you too!



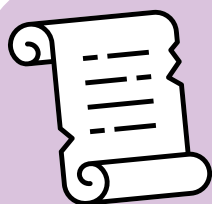
Forest Bathing

This is not exercise, or hiking, or jogging, this is a concept proven by scientists, to ease our frustrations, help us relax and think more clearly. This is about slowing down and allowing yourself to just 'be' in nature. Dr James recommends taking a regular long walk in the bush, but if time isn't on your side, even a five-minute stroll in the garden at Tōtara House can be a nice little nature break, especially when the tui are sharing their songs. The sounds of the forest, the scent of the trees, the fresh, clean air - these things give us a sense of comfort, can restore our mood and give us back our energy.



Direct Sunlight Exposure

Sunlight is essential for human health and well-being with many benefits including, promoting good mental health. Being exposed to five to ten minutes of unfiltered sunlight first thing in the morning, can wake you up for the day, and reset your body clock which might help your sleep. Even better if you combine it with a bit of exercise, e.g. skipping rope or jogging on the spot.



The Morning Pages

This is from Julia Cameron's 'The Artist's Way', and I've restarted doing them in the past two months. Lined A4 paper and a pen is what you need, and you write three pages as quickly as possible as soon as you can after waking up. Daily brain dump as a refreshing start to the day.



Listening

To music, podcasts, audiobooks, whatever is your preference! I enjoy listening to The Tim Ferris show, especially to pass the time when doing household chores. I have also been using free Spotify which is great to find music for any mood. There is also now a Tōtara Hospice 2021 playlist, filled with uplifting songs to listen to any time of the day. Feel free to add your favourite to the list so all of your colleagues can enjoy too!

Dr James' Favourite Apps!

Headspace

I have been using this app for 7 years. It provides great guidance in Mindfulness Meditation. You can have a free ten day trial by downloading the app. There are also many free apps which provide similar meditation guidance e.g. Insight Timer, Calm.

Mentemia

This is Sir John Kirwan's mental health app which is free and has lots of useful information and suggestions. The mood and worry trackers are useful.

5 Minute Journal

At the start of the day this free Android app asks you to list three things that you are appreciative for, three things that will make your day great, and for you to write down a daily affirmation. At the end of the day it asks you for three great things that occurred today, and what you could improve upon today. This is something you could also do in a notebook.

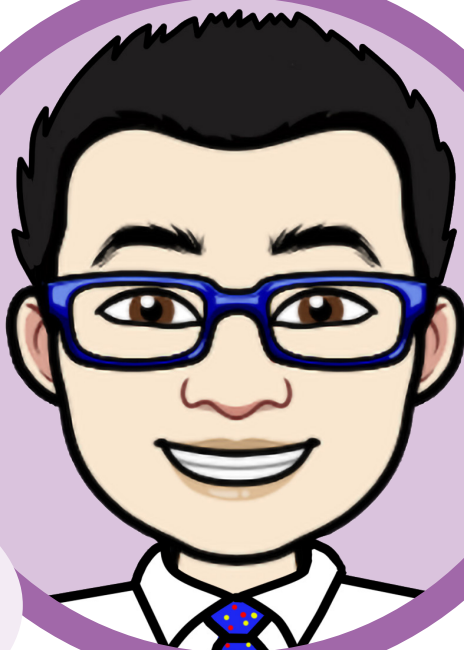
***It's OK to download these free apps onto your work cellphone**

Dr James' COVID risk-reducing tips on-site at Tōtara House

Regular hand hygiene

Wear face masks

Covid-19 vaccine offers extra protection



Use of appropriate PPE

Maintain a physical distance where possible