



CHALLENGE 8

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF...

The journey to your dream job can be a tough one. Along the way, you may experience set-backs and disappointments and although they can leave you feeling less than your best, they are all a part of the learning experience guiding you towards securing work. Although it's necessary, it doesn't change the fact that sometimes, the rejection can lead you to feeling down and seriously stressed-out. Here's our top 5 tips for taking care of yourself:

1. Sleep

It's recommended that you get 8-9 hours sleep each night. Too little and your tiredness will soon catch up with you, too much and you'll risk feeling groggy the day after! To get better sleep, try out the following;

- **Reset your body clock** - Try to go to bed at the same time each evening. Your 'internal body clock' works best if there is a regular routine to follow
- **Relax** - Include a relaxing routine before bed – try having a warm bath, reading a book or drinking warm milk
- **Steer clear of caffeine** - Avoid caffeine and cigarettes at least 4 hours before bed as these are stimulants which make you feel alert. Caffeine (which is found in tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks) works by blocking chemical signals in your brain, stopping you from feeling sleepy

- **Put that phone away!** - Avoid high energy, stimulating activities at least an hour before bed – this includes exercise, playing computer games, watching TV or having important discussions. Also, try and avoid using your mobile, laptop or tablet when getting ready to go to sleep. The blue light from these devices mimics the effect of the sun and tricks your body into thinking it should still be awake. It affects the levels of the sleep inducing hormone it produces, called melatonin which can make getting to sleep very difficult – all very scientific stuff!
- **Get comfy** - Make your bed as comfortable as possible – you may want to check over your mattress to see if it needs to be replaced, change your bedsheets so that they're fresh and clean and make sure your bedding is inviting! Try and make sure you're not too cold or not too hot as well!

Sleep has proven advantages for memory and performance – both vital for acing any job interviews you may get!

2. Diet

What you eat has a huge impact on how you feel. Food is our energy source, and so you have to make sure you're fuelling your body with all of the right stuff and enough of it. Here's some tips to help you to eat better;

- Try and not skip breakfast.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and veg a day
- Stay hydrated. Make sure you drink 6-8 glasses of water or fluids a day. As mentioned before, drink less caffeine (yep, that includes all of that cola and energy drinks!) and try and drink more water or low fat milk.
- Try and reduce the amount of take-away's and junk food you eat. Limit these to a treat once in a while.

3. Exercise

Regular exercise helps you to sleep more soundly, as well as improving your general health. Do a little physical activity every day and aim for around 60 minutes. This could be a game of football, hitting the gym or just going for a walk or run (which costs you nothing at all!)

4. Talk

All of us hate feeling like we're not good enough. When you're getting knocked back from the job you really want or the job you really tried hard for, that in turn, can really knock your confidence. Try and remember all of the things you do well, and keep perspective. You don't know how many other people you were up against or who they were and what experience they had. Sometimes, if you are certain you tried your absolute best and delivered a fantastic effort, then maybe even take

some comfort in knowing it was probably the wrong job or employer for you.

Really importantly, when the job-hunt is starting to grind you down, don't keep your feelings bottled up to yourself. Make sure you talk to friends, family or any support worker you may have if you're feeling low. There are several counselling services available, and your GP can also refer you for talking therapy.

5. Use support

There are services out there that receive funding from the government just to help you to get the experience and skills you need to secure work. Share the burden of finding work with the people who are paid to help you! These services exist solely to help you, so use them! You'll find that having that specialist support helps to make the journey into employment a less lonely one. Having the help of those expertise and skills could make all the difference.

