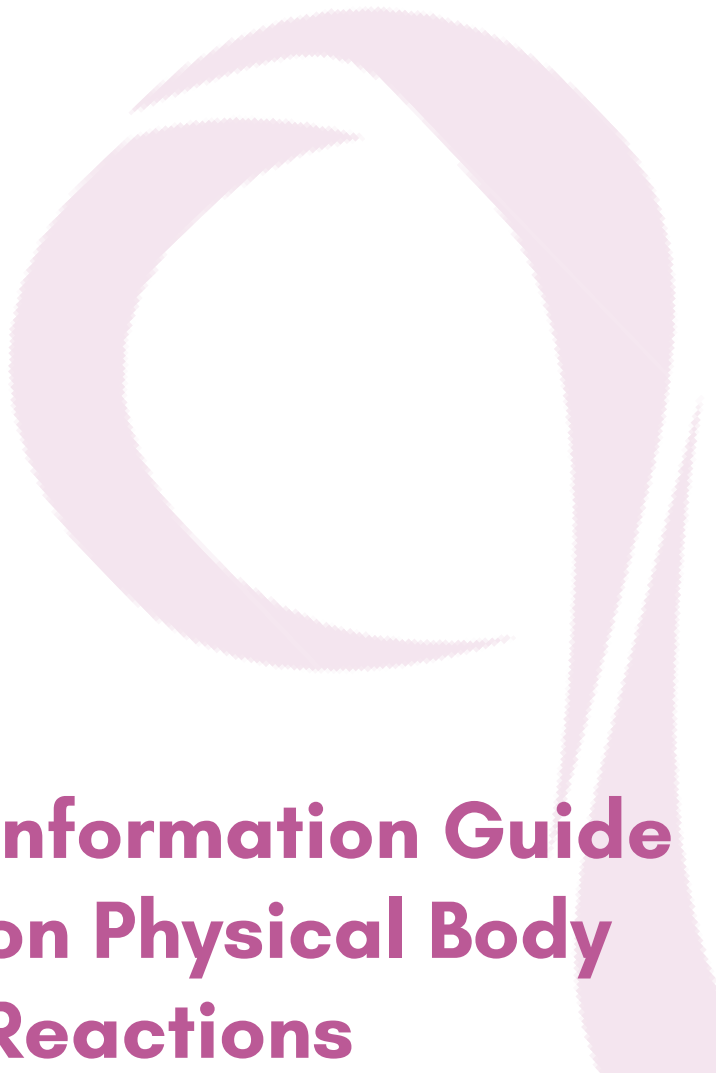




Information Guide on Physical Body Reactions

Physical Body Reactions (Somatisation)

Our bodies can hold the trauma from sexual abuse and rape. Your body may have its own unique responses to your experiences.

It can be helpful to identify your body's unique response to the trauma you have experienced and to consider why your body may have reacted in that way. (You may wish to do some research around the fight, flight and freeze responses).

Think about whether these reactions are helpful or, if they used to be helpful, whether they are still helpful now.

Some common bodily reactions to rape or abuse are;

- Irritable Bowell Syndrome
- Aches and Pains
- Tensions in muscles
- Headaches
- Changes in Body Language

Noticing patterns of bodily changes can be the first step towards controlling them.

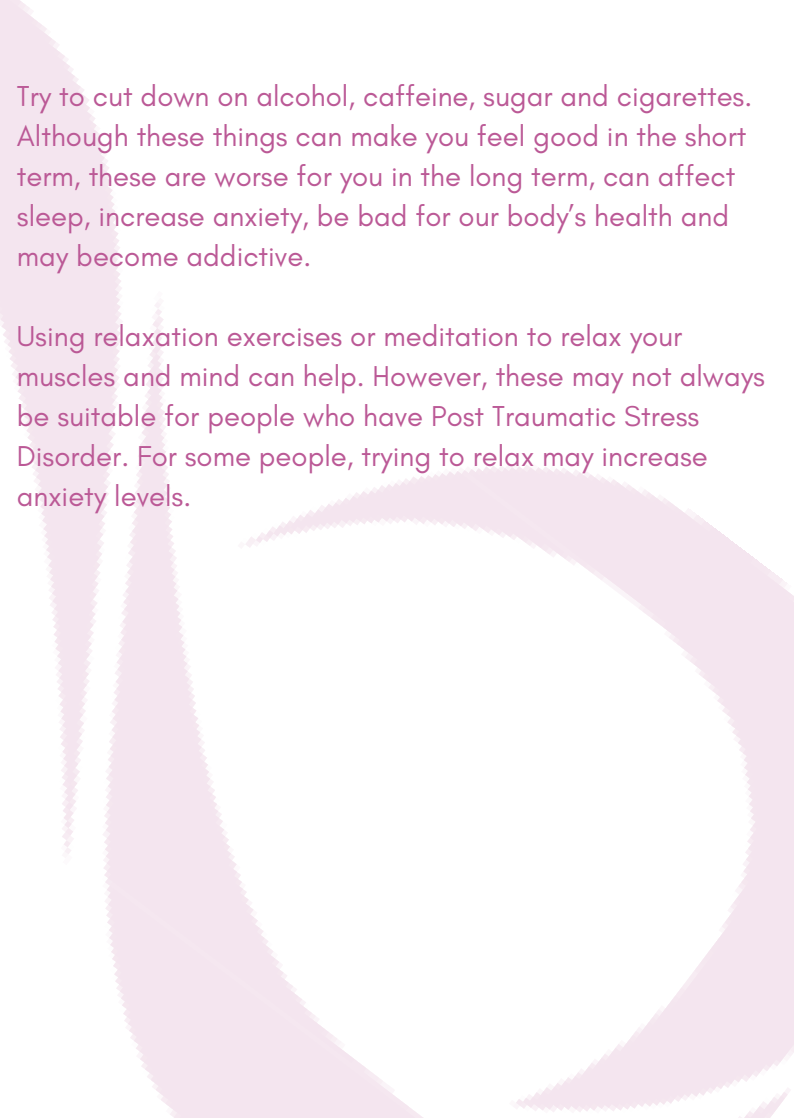
- Identify – Where in your body do you feel the most pain?
- Is there anything you can do to soothe it?

Exercise is a good way to boost our immune system to help us stay healthy and strong, improves mental health, helps prevent depression, and encourages positive self-esteem. Exercise may also help with improved sleep.

Some forms of exercise also build muscle and being stronger can make us feel more in control of our bodies and environment.

Honour your body clock and try to get enough sleep. Our bodies and minds can benefit from extra healing during sleep. Switching our TV, tablet or mobile off in advance of going to bed can help our minds to unwind and mentally prepare us for sleep.

Have a laugh! Watch a favourite comedy – when you laugh your whole body relaxes as endorphins are released which are our body's natural painkillers.



Try to cut down on alcohol, caffeine, sugar and cigarettes. Although these things can make you feel good in the short term, these are worse for you in the long term, can affect sleep, increase anxiety, be bad for our body's health and may become addictive.

Using relaxation exercises or meditation to relax your muscles and mind can help. However, these may not always be suitable for people who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. For some people, trying to relax may increase anxiety levels.

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