

On the journey...



Podcasts and Music

These can be good resources for travelling. Music and podcasts can be a great source of distraction when we feel anxious. You may also find it helpful to add some helpful apps to your phone which can be used for mindfulness meditation whilst travelling.

4321 Counting Backwards

The amygdala, in our brains activates our 'fight or flight' response, important to enable us to respond quickly to potential threats but it can also cause us to feel anxious, nervous and overwhelmed. Scientific research has found that counting backwards can calm this part of our brain. When we focus on counting our brain has less capacity to focus on anxious thoughts and feelings.



Box (Square) Breathing Technique – 4 x 4 x 4 x 4

Breathing techniques can help with stress and anxiety by calming the heart rate. There are various strategies including this one. It's simple and effective.

Inhale through your nose for four counts. Hold for four counts. Exhale through your mouth for four counts. Repeat until you feel calmer and a sense of relief.



Bag of Tricks!

Consider making up a little bags of items that may help to calm your nervous system by engaging all your senses. You could use a small pencil case or make up bag.

Items could include:

- a favourite perfume or scent
- a favourite sweet or chocolate bar
- a photo of someone special to you or a picture of a favourite place
- a quote or saying that encourages you
- a sensory object that you can feel, for example, some putty
- something to read (other than your phone!)

Other ideas and resources

TfL GO Application

Updates on travel timetables.

Google Maps

Use "street view" to drag and drop a yellow man onto the map and experience the journey virtually.

Carpooling

Consider sharing the journey with a friend who is driving – with a financial contribution to the fuel everyone is a winner!

Commuter lounge

Situated behind the Ref, this has comfy seating where you can eat, relax, study and lock away your stuff.



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Twickenham
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For further support contact

Student Wellbeing Service
St Mary's University
J Building, 2nd Floor
Opening hours: Mon-Fri | 9am-5pm

wellbeing@stmarys.ac.uk
020 8240 4353

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Travelling anxiety

If you are anxious about travelling to university, you are not alone. Being aware of this anxiety is the first step to addressing the emotions you are experiencing and finding strategies and solutions to help you manage it.

Speaking to someone may be helpful – the University Wellbeing Service can support you with this. There are also some practical strategies you can try.

It may feel like the best option is to avoid public transport altogether, however, this may exacerbate the problem and potentially increase your anxiety restricting where you go and what you want to do.



Causes of anxiety

- Crowds of people?
- The movement of the train or bus?
- Fear of finding a seat or sitting next to another person?
- Fear of getting the wrong train or bus?
- Fear of an accident?
- Fear of missing a train and being late?

Strategies and solutions

Checklist

- New commute – plan the journey in advance of the first day you need to take it and make a trial run.
- Get everything ready the night before the regular commute – pack your bag, choose your clothes, and make your lunch – to reduce morning anxiety.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before – tiredness increases our anxiety and affects our ability to cope.

Also consider...

- Consider heading to a quieter length of the train – sometimes there are fewer passengers waiting at the end of the platform.
- If you are not comfortable sitting down, consider standing.
- Don't be afraid to ask someone to move their leg or bag to allow you to sit – it's the expected thing to do and you have every right to do it.
- If you are worried about getting stuck in the middle of a crowded train, consider getting on last and standing by the door.
- If you are worried about making eye contact with another commuter – read, or even close your eyes. Lots of people sleep on the train!
- If you miss your train to uni and are worried about being too late, consider still going. Completing the journey in itself will be a victory! You can pop to the library or meet a friend for coffee afterwards – your journey will not be wasted!

