



Many factors affect our daily functioning

Biological factors

- Sleep
- Diet
- Exercise / physical fitness
- Illness
- Injuries to the body



Psychological factors

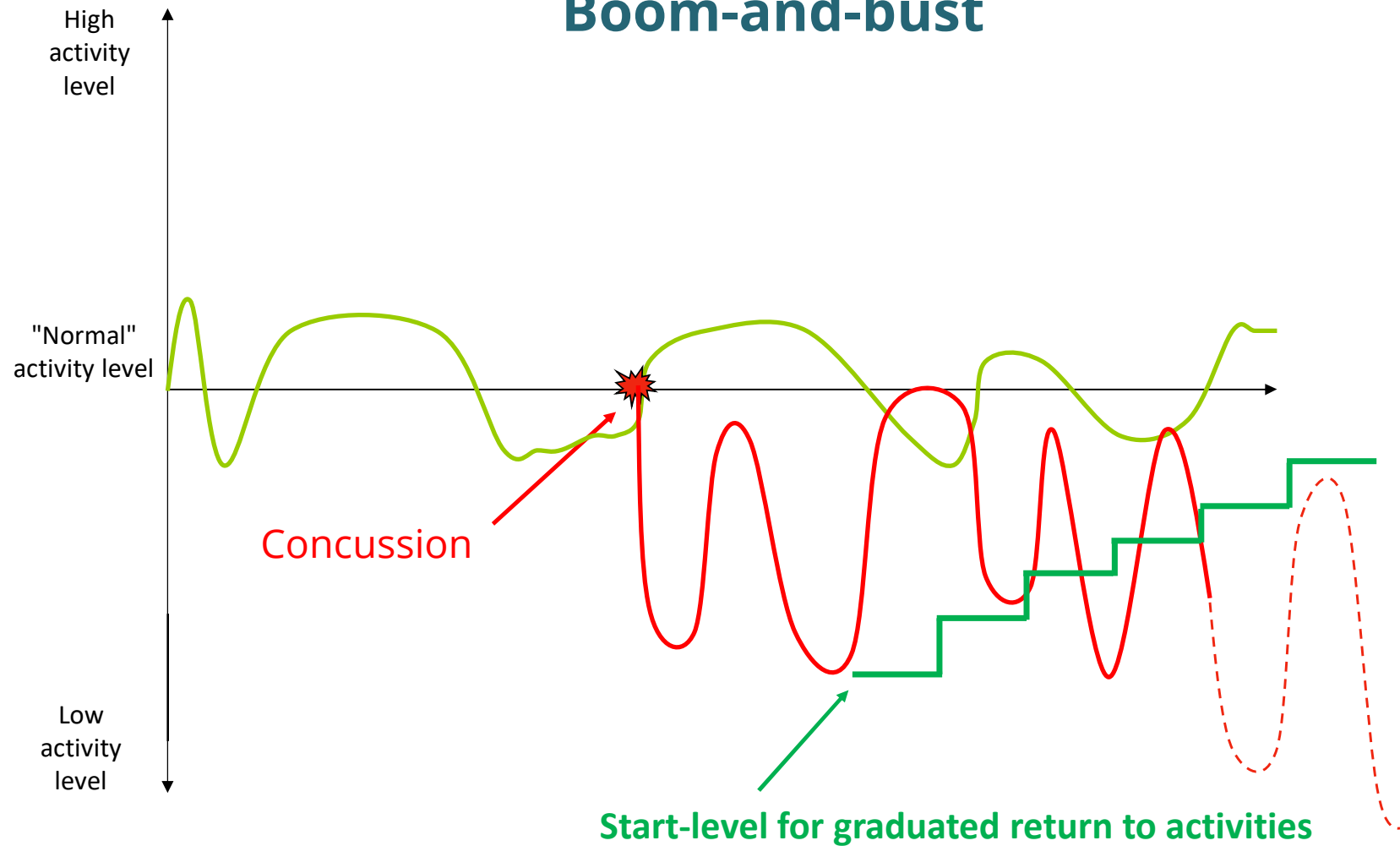
- Long-term stress (imbalance between resources and strains)
- Perception of symptoms
- Behaviour and coping strategies
- Emotional state (e.g. anxiety, depression, sadness, guilt, shame?)
- Personality traits

Social factors

- Social support from network
- Physical environment
- Contextual demands (e.g. family, school, workplace, society)

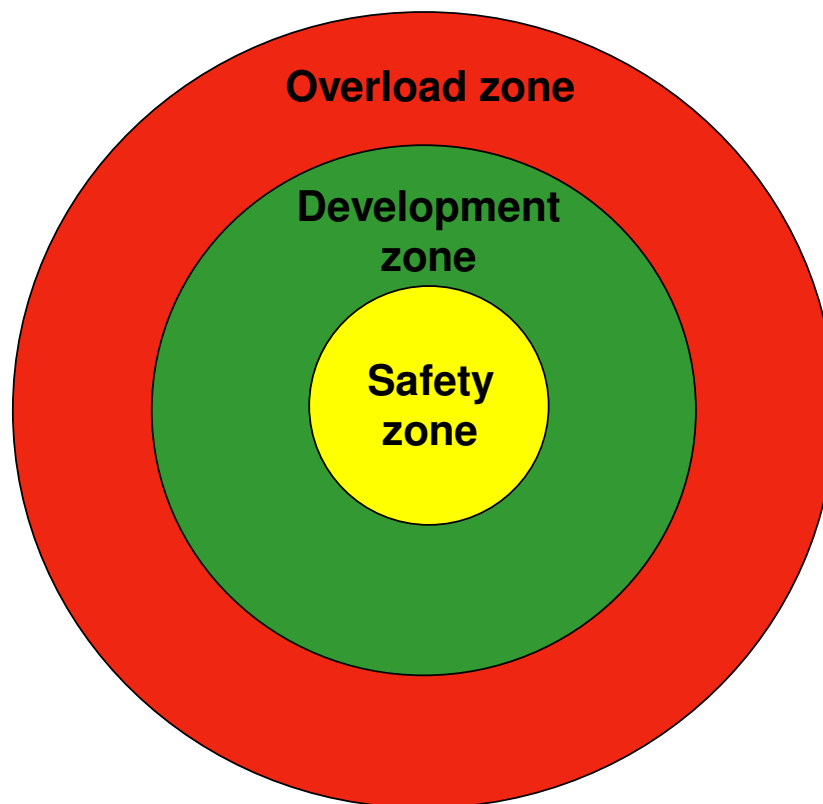


Boom-and-bust





Challenges without overload lead to development



You challenge yourself too much and overload yourself → you get worse

You challenge yourself without overloading yourself → you feel better

Taking too much care of yourself → will not make you feel better, possibly worse

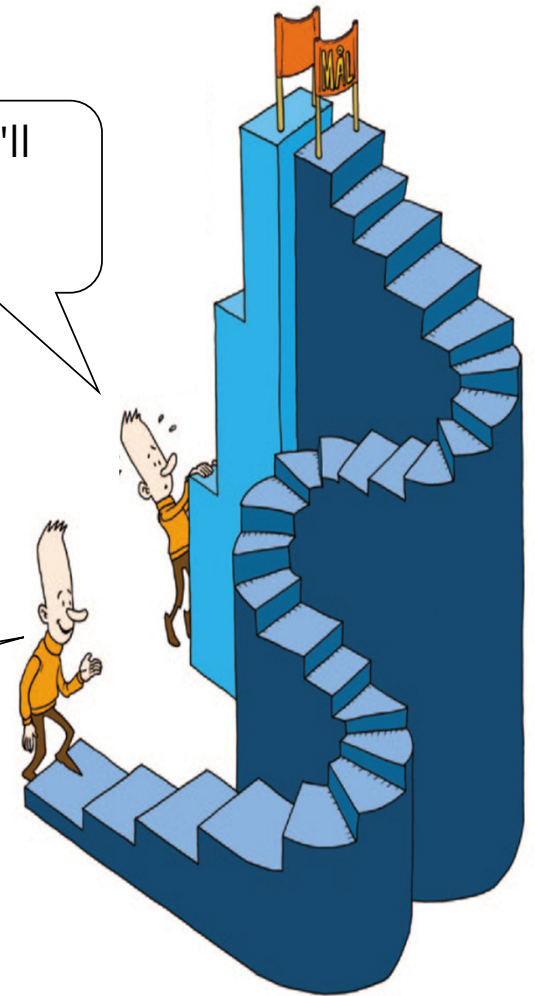


Patience!

- Applies in relation to all activities of daily living
 - physical
 - social
 - everyday activities, e.g.
 - Practical chores around the home
 - study or work

Take small steps, one step at a time, and you'll get there.

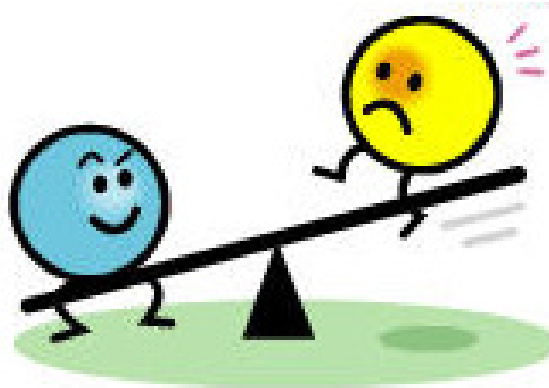
Oh no, I'll never make it!





What is stress/overload?

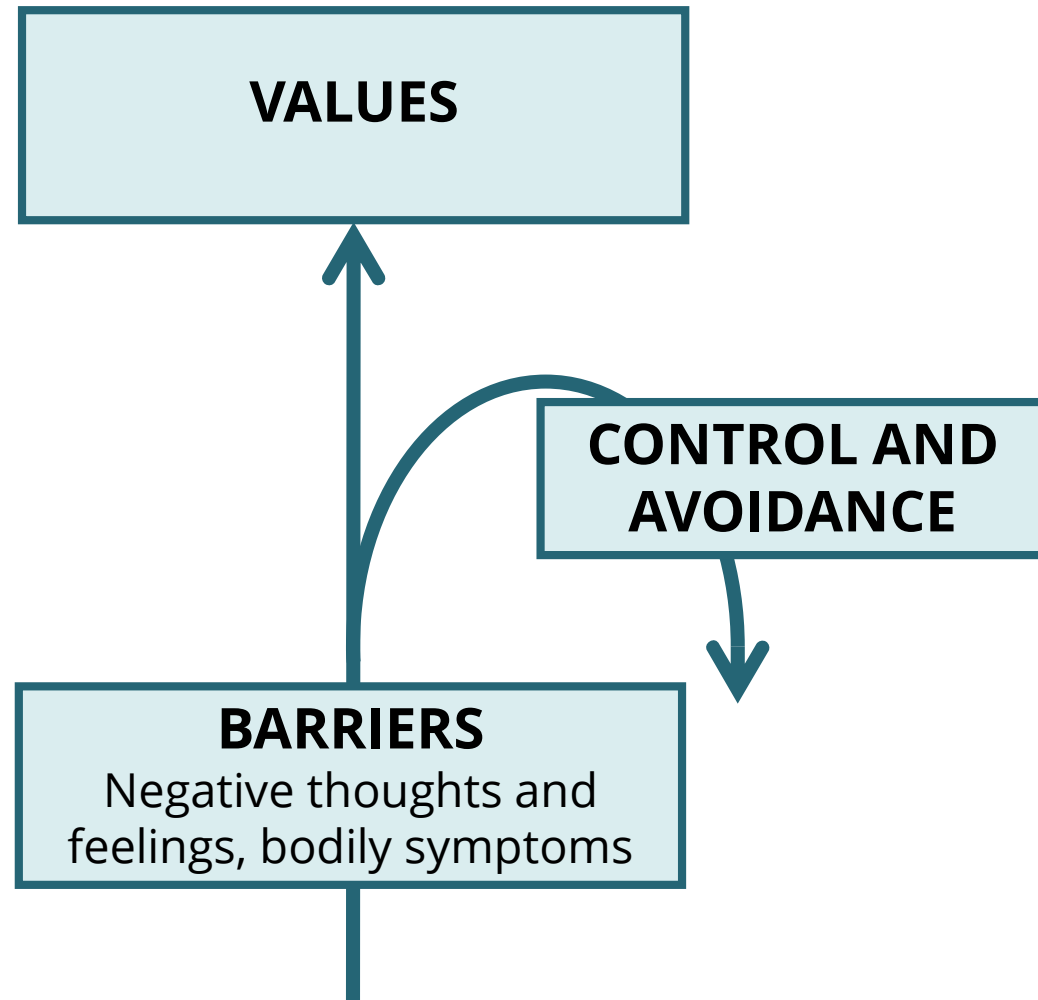
Demands of
everyday life

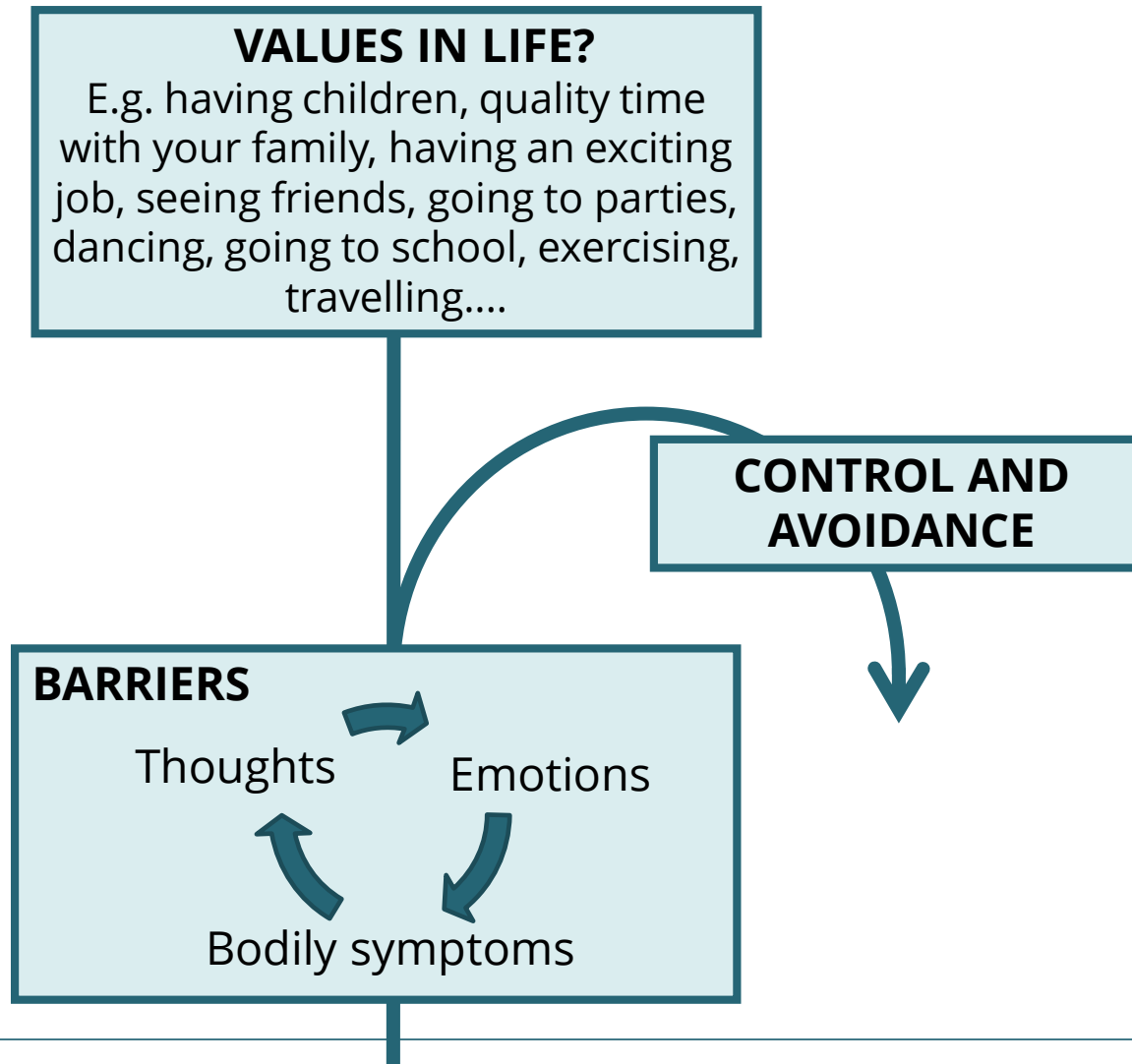


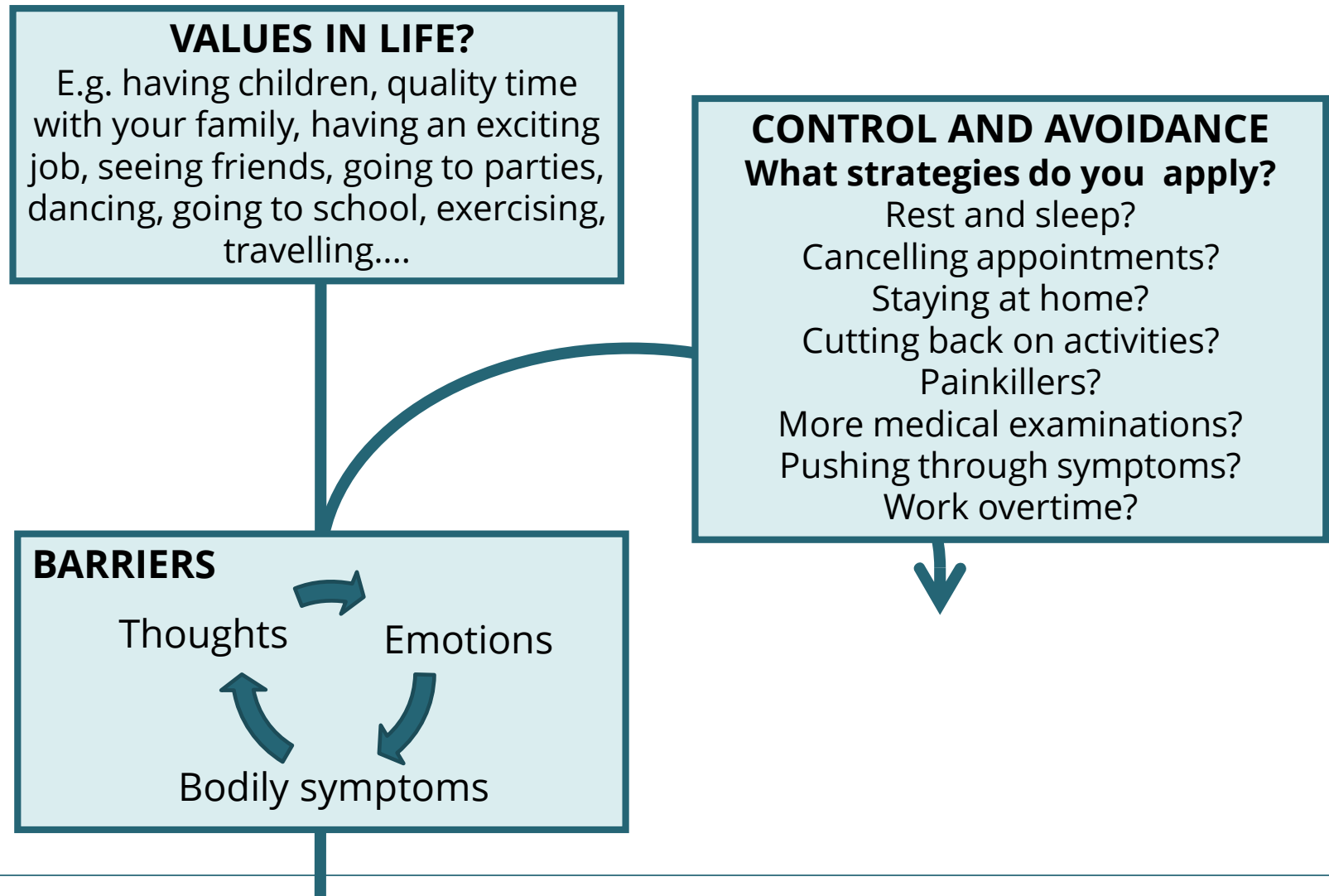
Resources



Move towards what matters....









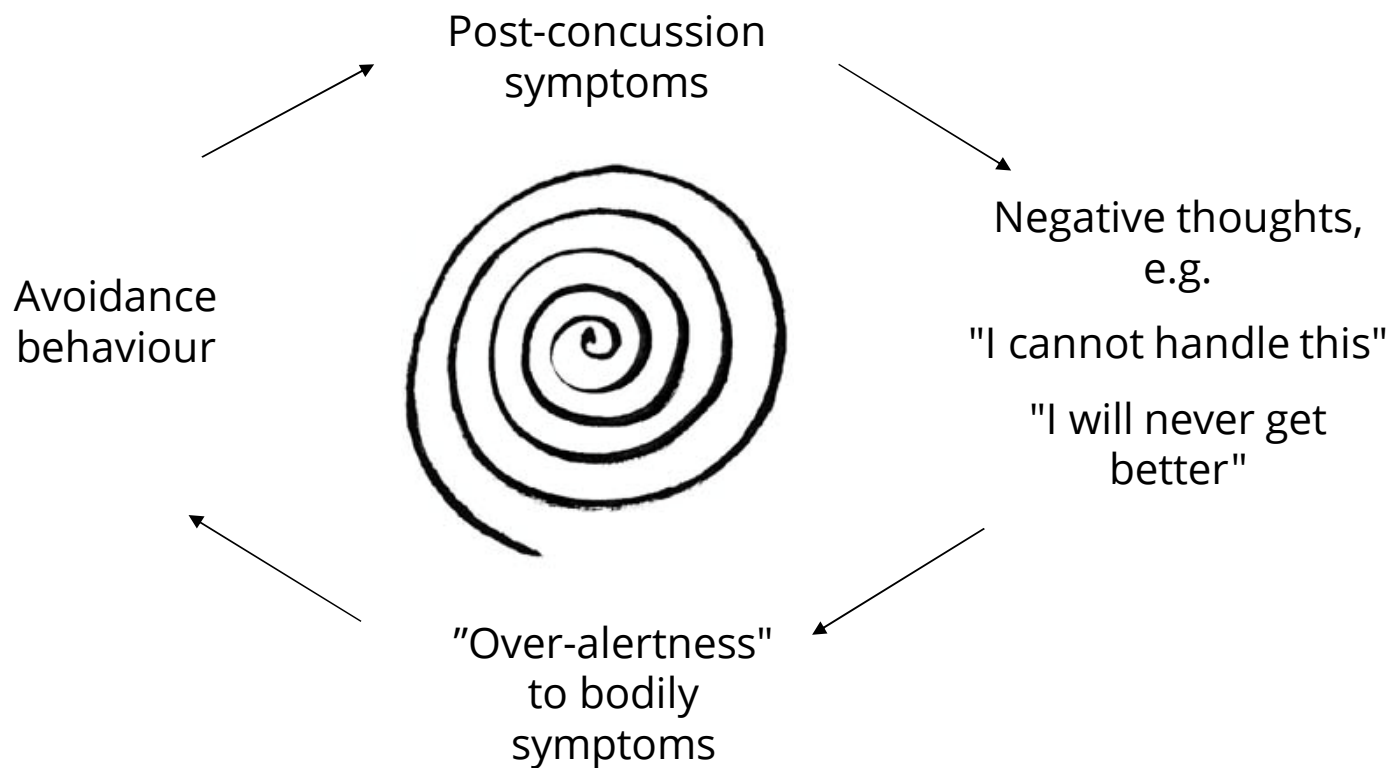
Barriers: What is stopping us?

- Thoughts:
*"I can't...", "It'll never work", "I don't dare...",
"Last time it all went wrong", "My body is weak"
"Headache means something is broken inside my brain"*
- Emotions:
Anxiety, doubt, fear, sadness
- Bodily symptoms:
E.g. stomach ache, nausea, fatigue, headaches
- Contextual demands / expectations





Negative thoughts may maintain a "vicious circle"





General advice on ergonomics and work habits

1. Contact ergonomics consultant in your workplace to ask for help to assess whether your workplace is optimally organised, and to ask for advice on work habits.
2. Change position when working.
3. Take breaks from work (set aside time for breaks and preferably simple exercises during the working day).
4. Do neck, shoulder and back exercises regularly (a few minutes of exercise three times a week can be enough, see suggestions in the pocketbook from the "Job and Body" campaign (link below) or ask your GAIN therapist to show you the exercises).
5. Use assistive devices - even when it doesn't hurt (agree with management, colleagues and health and safety representative how to prevent and manage muscle and joint pain together).
6. Be physically active in your everyday life (Follow the Danish Health Authority's recommendations: be active at least 30 minutes a day with moderate to high intensity. In addition, twice a week you should increase and maintain your fitness, muscle strength and bone strength, with 20-30 minutes training of high intensity)

Link: https://jobogkrophandel.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BFA-Handel_Job-og-krop_Lommebog.pdf



Exercises for neck and shoulders

Overall instruction

- Do the 4 exercises at least 3 times a week and preferably up to 2 times a day.
- Tighten the elastic band so you can do about 20 repetitions. When you can easily complete 20 repetitions, you may tighten the band further. Remember to take a 1-minute break between each exercise.
- If an exercise feels strange or hurts your joints, try reducing the load. Otherwise, skip the exercise.

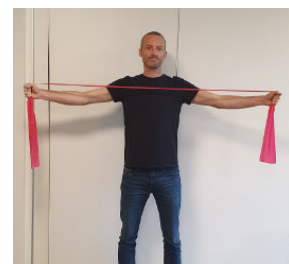
1. Sidelift (the large neck-shoulder muscle)

- Stand as illustrated and lift your arms out to the side and up. The upper arm is horizontal. Then lower your arms in a controlled manner.
- Keep your arms slightly in front of your body throughout the movement
- Keep your elbows slightly bent throughout the movement.



2. Shoulder blade squeeze (the muscles between the shoulder blades)

- Shorten the elastic to approximately shoulder width and keep your arms stretched out in front of your body.
- Now pull your arms out and backwards until the elastic band hits your rib cage. Squeeze your shoulder blades together on your back.
- Bring your arms back again in a controlled movement.
- Keep your elbows slightly bent throughout the movement.



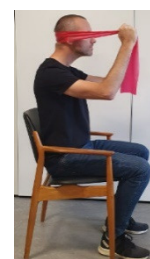
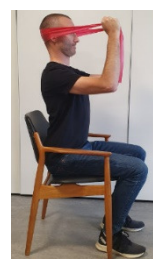
3. Outward rotation (the muscles that control the arm)

- Keep your elbows bent 90 degrees with your forearms straight ahead in front of the body. The elastic band should be lightly tensioned.
- Keep your elbows close to your body at all times and then rotate your arms out to the side and back again.



4. Neck exercise (the muscles that stabilise the neck)

- Sit in an upright position with your neck pulled back, place the elastic band around your head, and stretch your arms as shown in the picture so that the elastic band is tight.
- Slowly slide your head back and forth.
- Adjust the elastic band to fit with proper resistance.



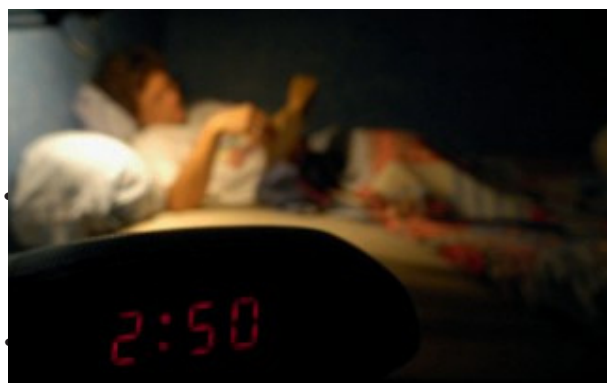


Guidance and exercises for dizziness

- If you experience persistent dizziness, you should first and foremost talk to a doctor.
- Dizziness that persists for a long time after a concussion is harmless in the vast majority of cases, and most often your doctor will not be able to find a specific cause for the dizziness.
- Although no specific cause can be found, evidence suggests that graduated training with activities and exercises that challenge the vestibular nervous system (also known as vestibular rehabilitation) can eventually reduce or eliminate dizziness for many.
- If you don't exercise in your everyday life (e.g. cycling, walking, running, fitness), we recommend you start with this. These activities will help stimulate the sense of balance and the vestibular nervous system. For walking/running, you can aim for an intensity of BORG scale 11 and upwards and gradually increase the difficulty week by week by varying the pace, varying the terrain, and changing direction.
- If your dizziness is triggered by specific movements or activities, you may benefit from exposing yourself to that specific movement or activity. Perform the activity until you experience short-term dizziness, and then stop the activity until your dizziness has resolved. Repeat the activity a minimum of five times, twice a day. Increase the difficulty level gradually from week to week (e.g. starting lying down, then gradually move to sitting, standing and walking exercises). If you experience dizziness when turning your head or moving your eyes, you may also do the following exposure exercise sitting on a chair with your arms straight out in front of your ears, as shown in the picture:
 - Turn your head and eyes towards your left thumb
 - Redirect your eyes to the right thumb, while your head still turns towards the left thumb
 - Turn your head quickly to the right so both your head and eyes are directed at the right thumb
 - Now redirect your eyes back towards your left thumb, while your head still turns towards the right thumb
 - Turn your head quickly to the left so both your head and eyes are directed at the left thumb
 - Perform the exercise 3-5 times to each side



Advice for those with sleep problems



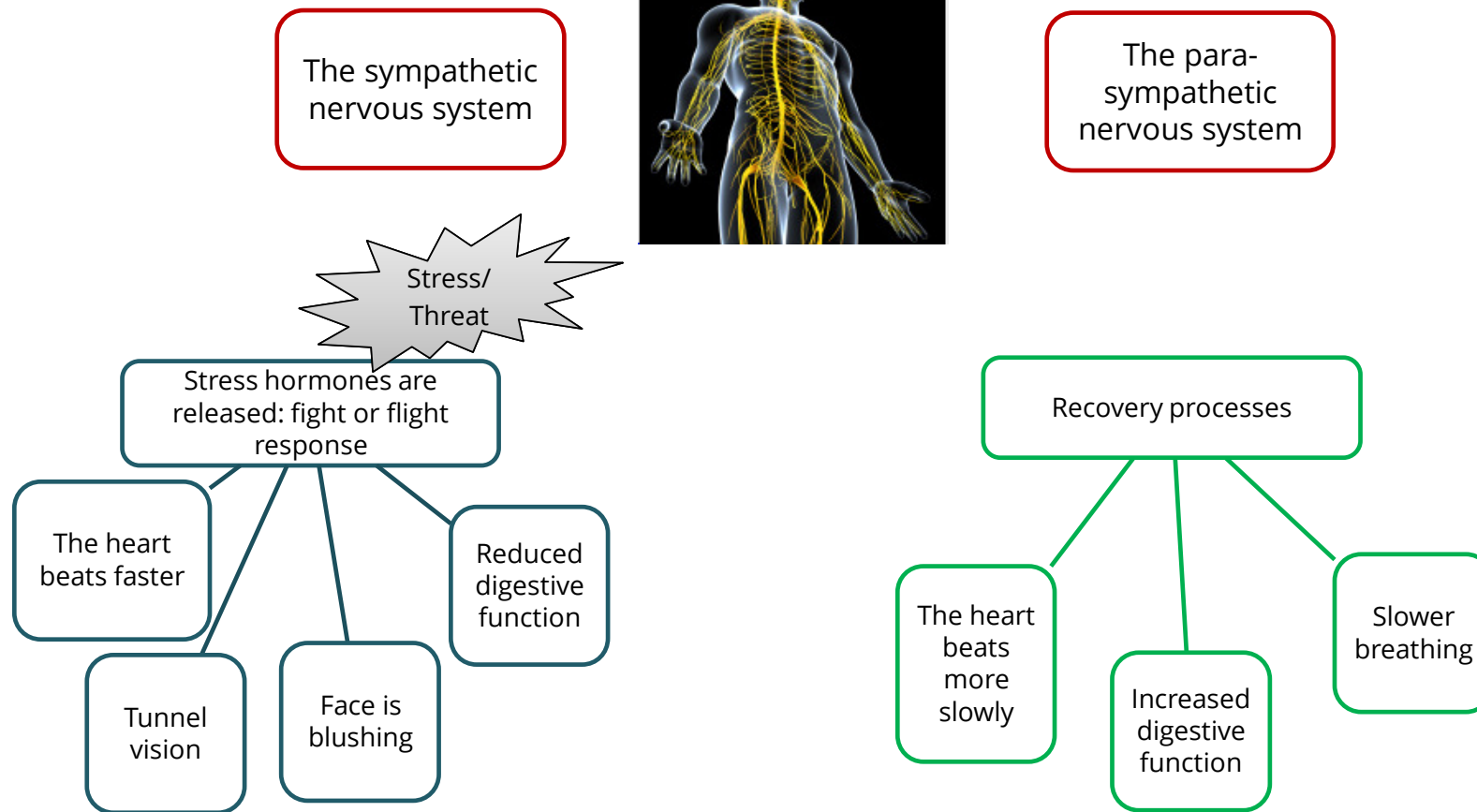
- Keep a regular circadian rhythm. Get up at the same time every morning, even if you haven't slept much, and even on weekends.
- Make sure you have a good bed that suits you. Keep the bedroom at a comfortable temperature and ventilate well.
- Do not keep computers, mobile phones etc. in the bedroom.
- Use a dark curtain so that sunlight/street lamps etc. don't wake you up.
- Avoid napping late in the day. Avoid falling asleep on the sofa in front of the TV, go to bed if you're tired.
- Avoid heavy coffee consumption. Avoid caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea and cola in the evening. Avoid alcohol in the evening.
- Don't go to bed hungry. Have a snack and a glass of milk if you're hungry. Not too sweet, salty or fatty and not too much. Keep a glass of water on your bedside table.
- Switch off the light immediately when you go to bed.
- Try different relaxation techniques or listen to quiet soothing music that you like. Use a device that switches off after a certain amount of time.
- If you can't sleep, or if you wake up and can't get back to sleep, get out of bed. Try not to stress about not being able to sleep. Rejoice in the fact that you have several hours before you have to get up. Read a book (not too exciting), do a crossword puzzle or similar activities. When you feel sleepy you can go back to bed again.
- The bed is for sleep and sex - nothing else.

Sincerely yours,

Staff
Danish Centre for Sleep Disorders
Department of Brain and Nerve Research



Stress response





Short-term stress and stress responses such as sweating, flushing etc. are natural to experience from time to time. It is the body's way of reacting when something extra is required of us. It is when we are exposed to stress over a long period of time that it may become unhealthy. There are many ways to cope with stress. There may be basic things in your everyday life that need to be taken care of or reprioritised, but there are also specific tools that you can use to manage and reduce stress responses.

Some of these tools are breathing exercises, visualisation, bodyscan/mindfulness and listening to music. These tools can affect the autonomic nervous system and the body's stress response, give the mind a break, and reduce tension. Physiologically, what happens when we breathe deeply is that we activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This mechanism relaxes the muscles and promotes recovery processes. The opposite is activation of the sympathetic nervous system, which prepare the mind and the body for fight or flight. It puts the body on alert and prepares us to go the extra mile.

Short breathing exercise that may have a relaxing effect

- Find a comfortable seating position, and sit with your eyes open or closed as you prefer.
- Make sure to lower your shoulders and relax your jaw muscles (perhaps open your mouth slightly).
- Breathe in and out through your nose and start taking deep, slow breaths.
- When you breathe in, your stomach should move outwards. You may place your hands on your stomach to check.
- See if you can let go of any tension as you exhale and relax more and more from exhalation to exhalation. Continue doing this at your own pace for around five minutes.

"Bodyscan and visualisation as relaxation exercises

There are many different apps that guide relaxation through bodyscan exercises, mindfulness exercises and visualisation. These can be great tools for managing or reducing stress. It is typically done to relaxing music. The exercises can be done while sitting or lying down, as long as you position yourself as comfortably as possible. If you are tired and exhausted, you may fall asleep during the exercises. In this case, try to find another time when you are more refreshed (unless you use the methods to fall asleep in the evening). It usually takes a bit of practice to get the full benefit of relaxation exercises, so try practicing it daily for a week or so before evaluating the effects. Initially, you should probably spend 20-30 minutes on an exercise, but later on, shorter exercises may have the same effect.



Advice on the use of painkillers

It is important that you only use over-the-counter painkillers for a limited period of time (e.g. codeine, paracetamol or acetylsalicylic acid). This is mainly because there is a risk of getting medication-overuse headaches. Medication overuse headaches can occur if you use these painkillers for 15 days per month or more, or if you use specific migraine medication (triptans) more than 10 days per month. If you stop taking the medication, you may experience a short-term worsening of the headache. Most often, the headache will improve within 1-2 weeks with continued cessation (*Source: Sundhed.dk*).

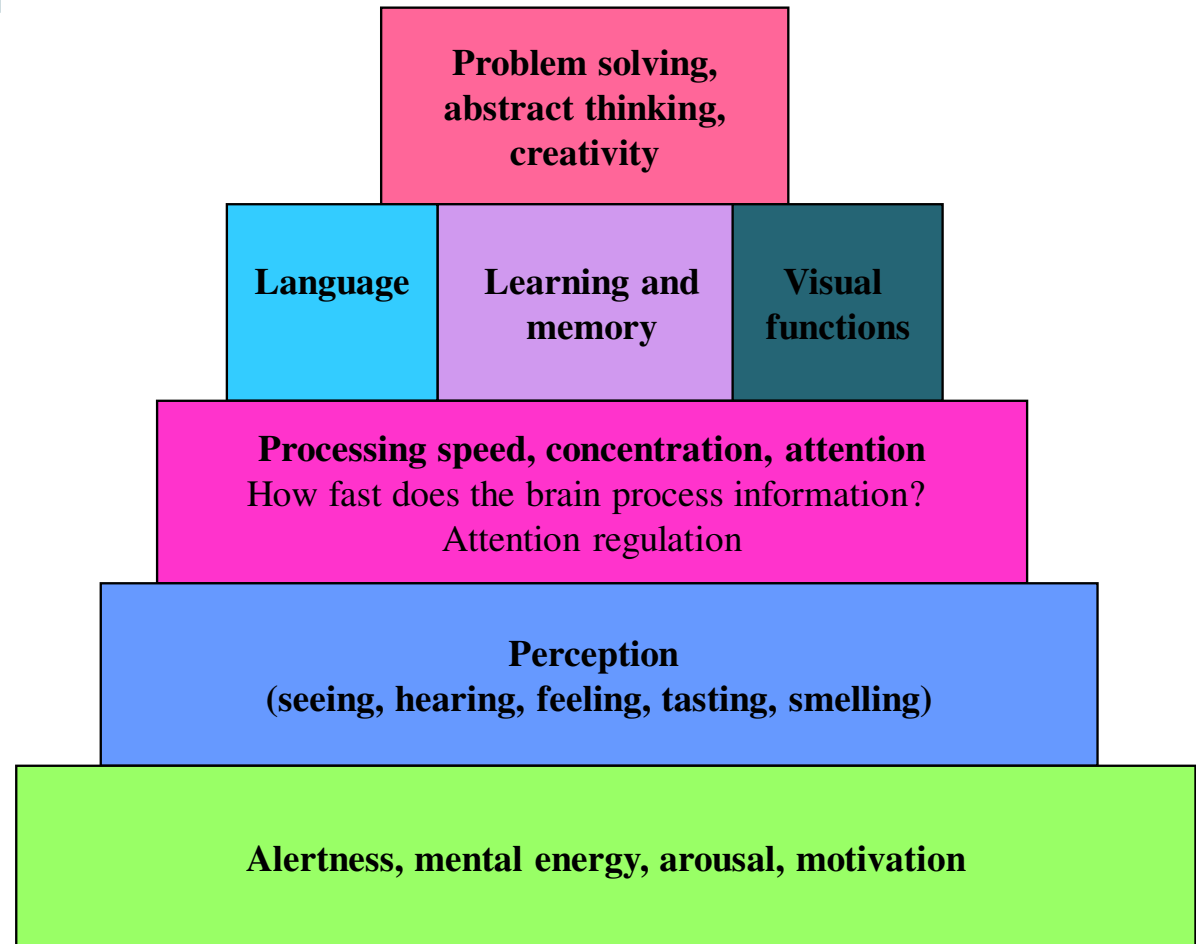
You can find more information on the following link:

<https://www.sundhed.dk/borger/patienthaandbogen/hjerne-og-nerver/sygdomme/hovedpine/hvad-er-medicinoverforbrugs-hovedpine/>

If you need further advice on medication, you should speak to your own doctor.



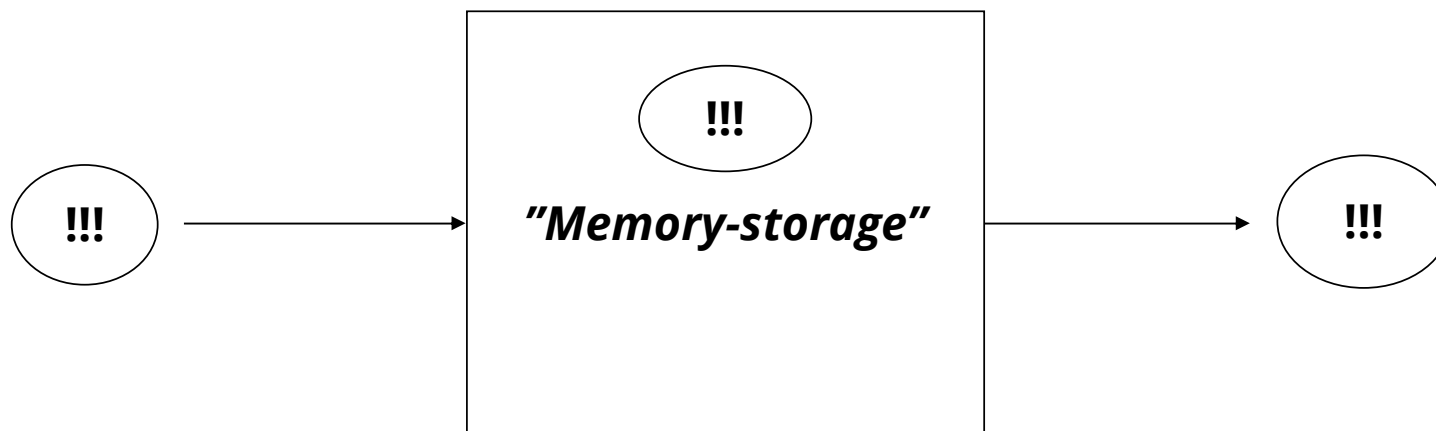
Pyramid of cognition





Learning and memory

Many people imagine memory as a storage or a “box” in the brain, where things are automatically stored and retrieved when you need it.





Learning and memory is a process

But memory is a process, and it requires other cognitive functions and often active effort to get something stored in memory.

