Meditation exercise
The mind like any muscle, must be exercised.

This basic meditation technique will take you just a few minutes and it will hopefully leave you feeling deeply relaxed.

1. If your condition allows it, sit upright but relaxed in a straight-backed chair with your feet on the floor. If you cannot sit, then lie on your bed. Allow your arms and hands to be as relaxed as possible.

2. Gently close your eyes and focus your awareness on the breath as it flows into and out of your body. Feel the sensations the air makes as it flows in through your mouth or nose, down your throat and into your lungs. Feel the expansion and subsiding of your chest and belly as you breathe. Focus your awareness on where the sensations are strongest. Stay in contact with each breath inwards and each breath outwards. Observe it without trying to alter it in any way or expecting anything special to happen.

3. When your mind wanders, gently focus it back to the breath. Try not to criticise yourself. Minds wander. It’s what they do. The act of realising that your mind has wandered – and encouraging it to return to focus on the breath – is central to the practice of mindfulness.

4. Your mind will eventually become calm – or it may not. If it becomes calm, then this may only be short lived. Your mind may become filled with thoughts or powerful emotions such as fear, anger, stress or love. These may also be fleeting. Whatever happens, simply observe as best you can without reacting to your experience or trying to change anything. Gently return your awareness back to the sensations of the breath again and again.

5. After a few minutes, or longer if you prefer, gently open your eyes and take in your surroundings.

This has been sourced from a Qualified meditation teacher Dr Danny Penman.