

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING SELF ISOLATION



A long period of self-isolation may be necessary to protect the public from the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus. This booklet contains some useful tips to help keep your mental health in check during this difficult time.

Engage with nature

Try and get exposure to the outside world and exercise as much as possible within the safety limits. Try using any outdoor private space you have such as a garden or balcony. Physical health and mental health are closely linked so it is vitally important to keep to a routine that includes some physical exercise. If you don't have any outdoor space then you could try some Yoga / exercise classes on YouTube.

Embracing nature can help our well-being. Try looking out of the window observing the birds and other animals you might see or tend to houseplants to keep your mind stimulated. It is also good to open the window regularly and let fresh air into your room.



Do maintain a sense of routine

Keep to a good routine and give structure to your day, not spending most of the day in your night wear forgetting to clean your teeth because you knew you wouldn't be seeing anyone. Although in the short term it can feel good to laze around but in the long term it isn't going to be good for your health and mental wellbeing. Whilst trying to maintain as much of a routine as you can, remember to wake up and go to bed at appropriate times to ensure you get enough rest and sleep.

Find some time to add value to your day, life is not just about eating and sleeping. Engage in some fun activities for yourself. It is natural for people who are self isolating to lose their positivity for the future, they use this time for self reflecting and pulling apart everything that is wrong with their life, this could be their job, relationship or friendships. When overwhelmed by lack of activity in our life, it can quickly impact on what we enjoy, so we must make time to have fun within our daily routine.



Vary your activities

Sitting in front of a TV, phone screen or computer all day is not the best way to spend long periods of time.

Below are some productive activity ideas to help fill your time...

1. Download and listen to podcasts.
2. Do some arts and crafts which you could share with your friends on Facebook, sharing pictures of what you have made.
3. Try Knitting or crochet. The hospitals need small baby hats!
4. Try learning meditation techniques to help you stay focused.
5. Bake cakes or try new recipes.
6. Learn a new hobby like origami
7. Skype friends and family, FaceTime calls to keep in touch.
8. Try Creative writing, scrap booking, or making a Self Soothe Box.
9. Read a book. Choose a book that you and your friends can all read (you could all order from Amazon) and set up a face time book club so you can discuss the book and share your thoughts.
10. Engage in some DIY or gardening.
11. Pamper yourself with a face mask or foot spa.

Do stay connected to people

Just because you're self-isolating, it doesn't mean you have to cut yourself off from the world completely. If you feel that you're beginning to struggle, take some time to call a friend or family member and let them know how you're feeling. If your friends or family are not available, you can call emotional support lines, such as Samaritans or Mental Health Matters.

During periods of self-isolation, try your best to maintain personal daily routines or create new positive routines. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact, you can stay connected via email, social media, video conference and telephone. Remember you don't have to be alone!



Limit your news intake

If you are finding the constant 24/7 coverage of coronavirus on the TV and social media is impacting your mental health then give yourself a break. The World Health Organisation says: “A near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed.”

Only seek information updates and practical guidance at specific times during the day from health professionals, GOV .UK and the WHO website. It is also important to try and avoid listening to or following rumours that make you feel uncomfortable.



Handy Checklist from MIND

- Food: do you have a way to get food delivered?**
- Cleaning: are your cleaning supplies stocked up?**
- Money: can you budget for any higher bills or expenses? Will you save money from lower transport costs that you could spend elsewhere?**
- Work: can you work from home or not? If not, what are your rights to payment or benefits?**
- Medication: do you have enough medication, or a way to get more?**
- Health: can you reorganise any planned therapy or treatments?**
- Commitments: can someone else help you care for any dependents, walk your dog, or take care of any other commitments?**
- Connectivity: have you checked the contact details of the people you see regularly, like their phone numbers or email addresses?**

Routine: can you create a routine or timetable for yourself? And if you live with other people, should you create a household schedule? Do you need to agree how the household will run with everyone at home all day?

Exercise: is there any physical activity you can do inside your home, such as going up and down the stairs, using bean tins as weights, or exercises you can do in your chair?

Nature: have you thought how you could access nature? Can you get some seeds and planting equipment, houseplants or living herbs?

Entertainment: have you thought about things to do, books to read or TV shows to watch?

Relax: have you got materials so you can do something creative, such as paper and colouring pencils?

- **Reference:** <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#AreYouReadyToStayAtHomeForTwoWeeks>