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**Top tips for coping during COVID-19**

**Work life balance;**

1. Organise your space so that you have a separate area for work and a separate area for relaxing.
2. Write a to-do list at the beginning of each day and if appropriate schedule in times to do these tasks using your diary/calendar.
3. Have a schedule / plan your day & prioritise it so you do the most important things first, in case you run out of time.
4. Having a time plan means you won’t run out, otherwise you may ‘drift’, also if you are not careful you will lose track of time and work extra house / have too much screen time. Forget about other activities, danger of becoming ‘obsessed / caught up in what you are doing’
5. Schedule in breaks and set an alarm to ensure you take them – have set meals and plan your food in advance so that you don’t get hungry and snack.
6. Do not eat in your working environment. Make sure you differentiate between work time and rest/break time
7. Read and respond to emails at set times during the day e.g. 9am, 1pm, 3pm.
8. Move around and get away from the screen.
9. Drink plenty of water and fruit to keep you going.
10. Exercise before work or during your lunch break (not in the evening before bed). Exercise is good because it oxygenates your brain so you can think sharper, however in the evening you need to do something to relax your mind.
11. Don’t work late into the evening because screen time before bed can disrupt your sleep pattern.
12. Glasses with a blue filter can help reduce the strain on your eyes.
13. Keep a list so that you can tick off what you have done – otherwise you won’t realise and may feel de-motivated, it’s easy to lose track of your achievements. By ticking off and listing what you have done will give you a sense of achievement.
14. Keep in contact with people - If you are not customer facing or seeing others, ensure you create regular, planned contact with managers and colleagues via telephone, video conferencing, teams 'chat' facilities or similar.
15. Keep to your normal daily schedule – get up early, make sure you make your bed, use your time that you would normally commute productivity – a course, a hobby, the garden, exercise, baking etc.
16. When it is the end of the working day - switch off all devices. Do not respond to calls or emails outside of working hours, unless you absolutely have to because you are on call for example.
17. Do not work in your PJ’s! Aim for smart casual and treat it as a uniform which will help retain a professional mindset, which will assist you in maintaining those all-important boundaries.
18. Sit correctly to support your lower back by adjusting your chair. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips. Adjust the chair height if possible, to be able to use the keyboard with wrists and forearms straight out in front of you. Place your screen at eye level and keep the screen as glare-free as possible.
19. If you are working from home more than usual, you may find it especially difficult if you are also looking after children would usually be in nursery, school or college while you work.
20. Think about how to balance your work with caring for your children. If you have an employer, they may be able to help you balance your work and childcare responsibilities.
21. Think about being more lenient with your children's social media and mobile phone use during their time at home. If your children would normally go to school or college, they will be used to being around other children for several hours a day. They might find it difficult to be removed from this, especially if they're also worried about their health.
22. Ask their school or college if any digital learning is available while your children are at home, and what technology they may need. Remember to add time in for breaks and lunch.
23. If no digital learning is available, you could encourage your children to select books or podcasts they'd like to explore during their time away from school or college. You can also think about card games, board games and puzzles, and any other ways to stay active or be creative.
24. For older teens, there are free online courses they could try out. For example, these could be from [FutureLearn](https://www.futurelearn.com/)and [BBC Bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize).

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing team has more [tips for people working from home](https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/coronavirus-supporting-yourself-and-your-team/), including advice if you manage others while working remotely.

For adults who can work from home

* If you have an employer who has asked you to work from home, you can ask them about any policies they have for home working.
* You can also ask them to help with setting things up at home, like any technology you might need.

For parents and carers of children and young people

* Although high street library branches are closed, your local library might also have online activities or resources you can use.

**Plan and write out your routine**

* Plan how you'll spend your time. It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall.
* Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible. Get up at the same time as normal, follow your usual morning routines, and go to bed at your usual time. Set alarms to remind you of your new schedule if that helps.
* If you aren't happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently. For example, you could go to bed earlier, spend more time cooking or do other things you don't usually have time for.
* Think about how you'll spend time by yourself at home. For example, plan activities to do on different days or habits you want to start or keep up.

If you live with other people, it may help to do the following:

* Agree on a household routine. Try to give everyone you live with a say in this agreement.
* Try to respect each other's privacy and give each other space. For example, some people might want to discuss everything they're doing while others won't.

**Keep active**

Build physical activity into your daily routine, if possible. Most of us don't have exercise equipment like treadmills where we live, but there are still activities you can do. Exercising at home can be simple and there are options for most ages and abilities, such as:

* cleaning your home
* dancing to music
* going up and down stairs
* [seated exercises](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/)
* online exercise workouts that you can follow
* sitting less – if you notice you've been sitting down for an hour, just getting up or changing position can help.

**Things you can do to relax when you are not working;**

* Take up a new hobby
* Do something creative – painting, creative writing
* Keep a journal
* Exercise, yoga and fresh air where you can. If you can’t get out and don’t have a garden you can use stairs if you have them or exercise via facebook or you tube videos.
* arts and crafts, such as drawing, painting, collage, sewing, craft kits or upcycling
* DIY
* colouring
* mindfulness
* playing musical instruments, singing or listening to music
* writing
* meditation.
* Try having a clear out. You could sort through your possessions and put them away tidily, or have a spring clean.
* You could also have a digital clear out. Delete any old files and apps you don't use, upgrade your software, update all your passwords or clear out your inboxes.
* Write letters or emails, or make phone calls with people you've been meaning to catch up with.
* Keep your brain occupied and challenged. Set aside time in your routine for this. Read books, magazines and articles. Listen to podcasts, watch films and do puzzles.
* Although high street library branches are closed, some libraries have apps you can use online. These allow you to borrow ebooks, audiobooks or magazines from home for free, if you're a library member.
* [FutureLearn](https://www.futurelearn.com/)and [OpenLearn](https://www.open.ac.uk/about/open-educational-resources/openlearn) have free online courses you could try.
* There are lots of apps that can help you learn things, such as a foreign language or other new skills.
* Stay in contact with friends and family via facetime, zoom etc – have remote quizzes

**Keep in touch and stay connected digitally**

* Make plans to video chat with people or groups you'd normally see in person.
* You can also arrange phone calls or send instant messages or texts.
* If you're worried that you might run out of stuff to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a show or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.
* Think of other ways to keep in contact with people while meeting in person is not possible. For example, you could check your phone numbers are up to date, or that you have current email addresses for friends you've not seen for a while.

**Connect with others in similar situations**

* Speak with someone you trust. If you are feeling anxious about coronavirus or staying at home more than usual, you may find it helpful to talk about these worries with someone you trust, especially if they are in a similar situation.
* You could join a peer support community. Mind runs an online peer support community called [Elefriends](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/support-community-elefriends/%22%20%5Co%20%22Support%20community%20Elefriends), where you can share your experiences and hear from others.
* If you're going online more than usual or seeking peer support on the internet, it's important to look after your online wellbeing. See our pages about [online mental health](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/online-mental-health/) for more information.

**If you're worried about loneliness**

* Think about things you can do to connect with people. For example, putting extra pictures up of the people you care about might be a nice reminder of the people in your life.
* Listen to a chatty radio station or podcast if your home feels too quiet.

**Nature**

Bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make you feel more relaxed.

It is possible to get the positive effects of nature while staying indoors at home. You could try the following:

* Spend time with the windows open to let in fresh air.
* Arrange a comfortable space to sit, for example by a window where you can look out over a view of trees or the sky, or watch birds and other animals.
* Look at photos of your favourite places in nature. Use them as the background on your mobile phone or computer screen, or print and put them up on your walls.
* Listen to natural sounds, like recordings or apps that play birdsong, ocean waves or rainfall. Get as much natural light as you can. Spend time in your garden if you have one, or open your front or back door and sit on the doorstep.
* If you have safe access to green space like a garden, you could bring some natural materials in to decorate your living space, or use them in art projects. This could include leaves, flowers, feathers, tree bark or seeds.
* You may be able to buy seeds, flowers or plants online for delivery, to grow and keep indoors. If you order items for delivery, ask to have them left at your doorstep, to avoid face-to-face contact

**Keep your home environment tidy**

* If you are spending a lot of time at home, you may find it helpful to keep things clean and tidy, although this is different for different people.
* If you live with other people, keeping things tidy might feel more important if you're all at home together. But you might have different ideas about what counts as 'tidy' or how much it matters. It could help to decide together how you'll use different spaces. And you could discuss what each person needs to feel comfortable.
* Cleaning your house, doing laundry and washing yourself are important ways to help stop germs spreading, including when there are warnings about particular diseases. The NHS website has [advice about how to stop germs from spreading](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-prevent-germs-from-spreading/). And the UK Government website has [advice about self-isolation which includes information about household cleaning](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).
* Your energy costs will probably rise if you're at home more than you usually would be. Think about how you can manage your energy use, or how to cover any higher bills. You could also ask your energy provider about any support they offer, for example if you can sign up to their [priority services register](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need). If you're worried about money, our page of [useful contacts for money](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/money-and-mental-health/useful-contacts/) has details of organisations who may be able to help.

**Dealing with feelings of anxiety and feeling claustrophobic**

* If you have [panic attacks](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/panic-attacks/) or [flashbacks](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/self-care-for-ptsd/), it might help to plan a 'safe space' in your home that you'll go to.
* You can also find ways to comfort yourself if you're feeling anxious. For example, there are [games and puzzles you can use to distract yourself](https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/how-can-i-distract-myself/games-and-puzzles/), and [breathing exercises](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/self-care-for-anxiety/) which may help.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) has more information on [how to cope if you're feeling anxious about coronavirus](https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/28-february-coronavirus-anxiety-how-to-cope-if-you-re-feeling-anxious-about-the-outbreak/).

* Open the windows to let in fresh air. Or you could spend time sitting on your doorstep, or in the garden if you have one.
* Try looking at the sky out of the window or from your doorstep. This can help to give you a sense of space.
* Regularly change the rooms you spend time in.

**Resilience tips;**

1. Positive thinking
2. Make the most of what you have i.e. extra time, tidy your house, ne grateful for what you have etc
3. Look after your mental health;
* Limit your media time
* Keep busy doing things that you enjoy / keeping your mind active will help to stop you worrying.

There is extensive news coverage about the outbreak. If you find that the news is causing you huge stress, it’s important to find a balance.

It’s best that you don’t avoid all news and that you keep informing and educating yourself, but limit your news intake if it is bothering you.

* Stay connected with current events, but be careful where you get news and health information from.
* For up-to-date advice in English, see the [NHS coronavirus webpage](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and [gov.uk coronavirus webpages](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).
* For up-to-date advice in Welsh, see the [NHS Wales coronavirus webpage](https://icc.gig.cymru/pynciau/gwybodaeth-ddiweddaraf-am-coronavirus-newydd-covid-19/#Cyngor%20i'r%20cyhoedd) and [llyw.cymru coronavirus webpage](https://llyw.cymru/coronafeirws-covid-19).
* If news stories make you feel anxious or confused, think about switching off or limiting what you look at for a while.
* Social media could help you stay in touch with people, but might also make you feel anxious including if people are sharing news stories or posting about their worries. Consider taking a break or limiting how you use social media. You might decide to view particular groups or pages but not scroll through timelines or newsfeeds.

**Help other people as much as possible! Work together as a community – pulling together is how we get through!**

**Checklist for staying at home**

* **Food**: do you have a way to get food delivered if you need to self-isolate?
* **Cleaning**: do you have cleaning supplies?
* **Work**: can you carry on working, including working from home? If not, can you find out 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?
* **Connectivity**: have you got ways to keep in contact with people you see regularly, like their phone numbers, email addresses? Do you need help setting up digital communication, like a video calling app?
* **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, like going up and down the stairs, using bean tins as weights, or exercises you can do in your chair?
* **Nature**: have you thought about how you can bring nature into your home? Can you get some seeds and planting equipment delivered, or put up photos of green spaces?
* **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 pencils and paper?

If you are on medication and out of your routine, it is easy to forget to take your medication.

**Eat well and stay hydrated**

* Think about your diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels. See our tips on [food and mood](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/) for more information.
* Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your mental and physical health. Changing your routine might affect when you drink or what fluids you drink. It could help to set an alarm or use an app to remind you. See the NHS website for more information about [water, drinks and your health](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/water-drinks-nutrition/).
* If you are self-isolating, you can ask someone to drop off essential food items for you. If they do this, ask them to leave food at your doorstep, to avoid face-to-face contact with each other.
* You may find that supermarkets and online delivery services feel busier than usual at the moment. If you're feeling anxious about going to the supermarket or arranging an online delivery, it might help to try some of our [self-care tips for anxiety](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/self-care-for-anxiety/), such as breathing exercises.