

April's Newsletter
"Social Distancing" and "Sheltering-in-Place"



This year 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges, and now in the month of April, we are dealing with daily changes such as "Social distancing," "Wearing a face mask," and "Sheltering-in-place." These are the new norms that can be stressful to say the least, especially the "Shelter-in-place" mandate which have rolled out to each of our local communities.

At the most rudimentary level, what is being asked of each person is to stay at home to "flatten the curve" because the uncertainty of the "apex" of this pandemic has yet to be reached. There are a few exceptions that allow mobility, including exception of travel for workers in the "essential industries," such as the grocery workers, pharmacists, aerospace fields, mechanics, plumbers, electricians, accountants, and take-out businesses. So when our jobs are considered non-essential or non-operable in the office, most Americans including many business owners are staying home or working from home. In this same scenario, this new norm calls for an extensive time at home that many people are not used to having. With abundant time at home, all of us are having to reassess and reallocate activities and time to all things that have become challenges and obstacles themselves. The challenge of home stay caused uncertainties especially in our fast track society that had lacked the patience or pause that the new norm requires.

Therefore, this month's newsletter is dedicated to making sure we are helping to resolve any issues that arise along this brand-new societal path. We also want to share the new ways to survive and thrive while staying at home. At Active Aging 365, we have actively vested interest in making ourselves to stay positive individually so our emotional levels can overflow optimism to our loved ones to be kind and respectful, especially during this time when everyone is in close quarters including children, spouses, and/or aging parents in one residence.

Today's reality of uncertainty, we will conquer! It is important to begin by staying positive, even if you are feeling isolated, lonesome, worried, anxious, confused, upset, or even depressed. It is good to realize that these emotions you carry are completely normal in today's circumstances. These feelings are completely valid, and no one is resilient from this exposure that makes us less than optimistic or spiral down to complacency. Simply, these feelings due to the uncertainty are being experienced by

most people in the United States, if not all over the world at this time. Despite the fact these feelings are widespread and prevalent, that does not mean we want people to continue to the path to negativity. We want to help you feel positively, cheerfully, bright, and better! In order to do that, this article is going to discuss ways to stay sane in this new norm in which we are living. We are also going to provide some suggestions to help you along the way.

The current situation we are living in has new challenges that we are not equipped to handling. This isolation has nearly denounced socialization, and that we are not experiencing any levels of social interaction we are used to having. Emotionally it can cause harm as the isolation can lead to “diminished cognitive stimulation,” which means that we are not utilizing our brains as much as we did before or as much as we should. Keeping a sharp mind is highly important for both the body and the brain. So, when social isolation is paired with diminished levels of cognitive activity, it creates a slippery slope towards depression. Therefore, in order to help combat feelings of isolation and the allowance of “brain break,” we are going to discuss ways to keep it from happening. Following some simple ideas outlined here will help you develop and formulation your own happy mind and healthy body.

For those who already worked from home, this new norm is considerably less of an adjustment than for those people who are used to driving out every day and going to an office. Working from home definitely requires clear direction, stern self-control, and an optimistic end goal to keep workflow a priority and task a momentum of focus. Bless the internet, free wi-fi, and cellular data, which all help us work and connect to keep the brain stimulated outside the 4 walls of your home. So if at all possible, carve out a small “15-minute break” and find ways to integrate work buddy to create boundaries for work and home balance while keeping distractions down to a minimum. The “non-commute” may save time, but without a focused goal, your work and job duties can all go astray. However, once the work is done, rest in the fact that you just saved 2-3 hours of traffic time to keep for yourself. This added time can be a bonus where you can have fun and stimulate your brain on your laptop or computer. There are so many free classes being offered right now, it is incredible! Harvard, for example, is offering a multitude of free online classes that you can participate to continue your education, earn credits towards professional development, or just to take time to learn about something new! These classes are self-paced to keep the brain in tip-top shape! Additionally, there are a considerable number of free resources you can find online to educate about anything. For example, you can take free virtual tours of many museums, learn a new language, watch Ted Talks, or watch live camera feeds of places like the San Diego Zoo! The internet offers endless amount of ways to keep yourself busy while learning at the same time.

Now, let's move the discussion towards socialization. Whether for work or just to stay in touch, there are many different Apps that can help you stay in touch with people outside your home. Here are some great examples: Zoom, Google Hangout, Google Meet, Google Duo, and of course for our iPhone users, FaceTime! These Apps are easily downloaded on practically any device, and they are free! It is important to remember

that we are social creatures, which means we can stay in touch with our friends and family, even if we cannot see them in person. A new common trend is dinner parties via the Zoom App! Just because you can't physically be together, it does not mean that you can't gather and have a great time.

While connecting with those people outside of our home is great, we need to continue to reconnect with the family we do live with. Prior to COVID-19, it's quite possible that we had not taken the time to sit down and talk to our loved ones about their life and their dreams as well as any hardships they may be facing. If you and your family have been disconnected, now is the time to take action! Take the time to talk to your family about how they are feeling, play a board game, dine at the dinner table all together, or simply cook together. Most importantly, sharing feelings and devising ways to remedy any problems that arise is an excellent way to bond and stay mentally healthy. Now is the time to be creative; think outside the box!

Another great idea to keep busy during this time is exercising. While the gym is no longer an option, but YouTube has a plethora of exercise videos you can try! (We suggest you to go retro and pullout old the Billy Blanks Tae Bo videos, "Thank you YouTube!") Exercise is crucial to help keep your mind and body in shape. Challenge yourself to begin an exercise routine. Start off small with easily obtainable goals. Recruiting a friend or family member to exercise with you, even if you are not physically together, it is a great way to ensure accountability. One way to exercise together without being in physical proximity of each other is to go for a walk while talking on the phone. This is a great way to exercise and catch up on your socialization at the same time!

For the parents out there, who are also balancing young children at home, try to download the free App GoNoodle (for the wiggles). This is an excellent way to get everybody up and moving! This App has fun songs that everybody can dance and sing along with and some of them are educational as well!

Another idea to incorporate into the new norm is to journal. Expressing feelings and emotions manually or digitally is highly cathartic. Adding this into a routine will provide unlimited benefits and insights into yourself that otherwise might have stayed in the subconscious and never made it to your radar. Another great ritual is starting a paper and pen method of the gratitude journal. Making sure to be cognizant of the blessings bestowed upon us is imperative to health and longevity. If feeling lost or uninspired, take the time to meditate and discover or realize your purpose. When we have purpose in our lives, we are much more productive and satisfied.

Before we end this discussion, we would like to add that if you or a person you know is experiencing significant depression and/or anxiety due to the new norms, there is more extensive help out there, and it is easily accessible. Therapy is now available online, by text, or video messaging. Please do not ignore the signs of severe depression or anxiety.

Every day we are working at being positive. Here at Active Aging 365, we hope that this information will allow you to survive and thrive the way it has allowed us to during this difficult time. Now, let us focus on all the positive ways we have provided you to improve your life. We hope this month's newsletter has validated any feelings and emotions you might be having, but more importantly, we hope it equipped you with some great ideas and skills that you can easily work into your daily routine.

Try something extra: Go online and order a grow-in-home herb garden. Once it arrives, you simply plant the seeds and wait for your herbs to grow. Once they have sprouted, look up new recipes to utilize the herbs you grew yourself! You could even start your own cookbook!

Signing off,

Stay strong and healthy with us at Active Aging 365.