



# Your health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis

As occupational therapists, we are experts in helping others to maintain health and wellbeing, but sometimes it's easier to advise than to practice what we preach. Now, during this COVID-19 crisis, we need more than ever to look after ourselves to ensure that we can keep helping the people we support.

Here are some useful things to remember:

- 1 Establish a daily routine.** If you're working from home or on your days off, stick to a routine of getting up, eating meals, exercising and going to bed at roughly the same time each day.
- 2 Eat well and drink plenty of water.** It's easy to eat and drink too much or too little during stressful times. Keep to regular mealtimes and make sure you have your 5-a-day.
- 3 Stay active.** Exercise and physical activity help reduce stress and increase energy levels. YouTube has lots of fitness and yoga videos for at-home exercise. Try and go outside everyday – just remember social distancing.
- 4 Practice good sleep hygiene:** avoid stimulants, such as coffee and electronic devices, especially in the evening; keep to a routine that allows you to unwind; and aim to go to sleep at roughly the same time each day.
- 5 Stay connected with friends and family** using phone, Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp or other video messaging apps. This is especially important as we can't have face-to-face conversations with loved ones outside of our households, and many are in self-isolation.
- 6 Focus on what you do have control over,** and limit your time reading the news or discussing the crisis.
- 7 Unwind and relax.** Make sure you find time each day to do activities that help you relax and take your mind off things. You could join an online laughter group or try a meditation app.
- 8 Slow down.** We still have to look after ourselves, each other and our homes. Use quiet moments to enjoy the normal, the small and the everyday, such as washing up, cooking or having a bath.
- 9 Create 'me time'.** When you have time off, make sure you have a balance of occupations. Make time for yourself and your leisure activities. Try new home-based hobbies such as yoga, crafts and cooking. Again, YouTube has lots of 'how to' videos to get you started.
- 10 Do something for someone else** outside of work. Helping others at any time is good for our wellbeing.
- 11 Meaning and purpose.** At times of crises we often rethink our meaning and purpose. Who and what is important to you? How do you normally spend your time? How would you like to be spending your time? What could you do to make this shift happen in the future?

Remember, by looking after our own health and wellbeing during these difficult times, we will be better able to support and look after other people.

