

# **Mental wellbeing while staying at home**

Taking care of your mind as well as your body is really important while staying at home because of coronavirus (COVID-19). You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you.

It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these feelings will pass. Staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.

The tips and advice here are things you can do now to help you keep on top of your mental wellbeing and cope with how you may feel while staying at home. Make sure you get further support if you feel you need it.

The government also has wider guidance on staying at home as a result of coronavirus.

## **1. Find out about your employment and benefits rights**

You may be worried about work and money while you have to stay home – these issues can have a big effect on your mental health.

If you have not already, talk with your employer about working from home, and learn about your sick pay and benefits rights. Knowing the details about what the coronavirus outbreak means for you (England and Wales only) can reduce worry and help you feel more in control.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

## **2. Plan practical things**

Work out how you can get any household supplies you need. You could try asking neighbours or family friends, or find a delivery service.

Continue accessing treatment and support for any existing physical or mental health problems where possible. Let services know you are staying at home, and discuss how to continue receiving support.

If you need regular medicine, you might be able to order repeat prescriptions by phone, or online via a website or app. Contact your GP and ask if they offer this. You can also ask your pharmacy about getting your medicine delivered, or ask someone else to collect it for you.

If you support or care for others, either in your home or by visiting them regularly, think about who can help out while you are staying at home. Let your local authority (England, Scotland and Wales only) know if you provide care or support someone you do not live with. Carers UK has further advice on creating a contingency plan.

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19?id=6268:coronavirus-guidance>

### **3. Stay connected with others**

Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while you are all staying at home – by phone, messaging, video calls or social media – whether it's people you usually see often, or connecting with old friends.

Lots of people are finding the current situation difficult, so staying in touch could help them too.

### **4. Talk about your worries**

It's normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember: it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too.

If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead.

NHS-recommended helplines

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

### **5. Look after your body**

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol.

You can leave your house, alone or with members of your household, for 1 form of exercise a day – like a walk, run or bike ride. But make you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others. Or you could try one of our easy 10-minute home workouts.

Try a 10-minute home workout

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>

### **6. Stay on top of difficult feelings**

Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their day-to-day life.

Try to focus on the things you can control, such as how you act, who you speak to and where you get information from.

It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about the situation are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, try some ideas to help manage your anxiety.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

## **7. Do not stay glued to the news**

Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

You could set yourself a specific time to read updates or limit yourself to checking a couple of times a day.

Use trustworthy sources – such as GOV.UK or the NHS website – and fact-check information from the news, social media or other people.

GOV.UK: Coronavirus response

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

## **8. Carry on doing things you enjoy**

If we are feeling worried, anxious, lonely or low, we may stop doing things we usually enjoy.

Make an effort to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. If not, picking something new to learn at home might help.

There are lots of free tutorials and courses online, and people are coming up with inventive ways to do things, like hosting online pub quizzes and music concerts.

## **9. Take time to relax**

This can help with difficult emotions and worries, and improve our wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help deal with feelings of anxiety.

Relaxation techniques

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

## **10. Think about your new daily routine**

Life is changing for a while and you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines and set yourself goals.

You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week. If you are working from home, try to get up and get ready in the same way as normal, keep to the same hours you would normally work and stick to the same sleeping schedule.

You could set a new time for a daily home workout, and pick a regular time to clean, read, watch a TV programme or film, or cook.

## 11. Look after your sleep

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough.

Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practices.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

## 12. Keep your mind active

Read, write, play games, do crosswords, complete sudoku puzzles, finish jigsaws, or try drawing and painting.

Whatever it is, find something that works for you.

### Further support and advice

There are plenty of things you can do and places to get more help and support if you are struggling with your mental health. <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/> pages on [stress](#), [anxiety](#), [sleep](#) and [low mood](#) have lots more tips and specific advice. If you are a parent or caregiver for a child or young person, [Young Minds has guidance on talking to your child about coronavirus](#).

[The NHS mental health and wellbeing](#) advice pages also have a self-assessment, as well as audio guides and other tools you can use while staying at home.

We also have [guidance and information](#) to help others if someone you know is struggling with their mental health.

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/>

Remember, it is quite common to experience short-lived physical symptoms when you are low or anxious. Some of these, like feeling hot or short of breath, could be confused with symptoms of coronavirus.

If this happens, try to distract yourself. When you feel less anxious, see if you still have the symptoms that worried you. If you are still concerned, visit the NHS website.

### If you do not live in England

Additional country-specific coronavirus guidance is available for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).