

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survival Tips

- Focus on what you can control
  - For example, we can control our attention, our interpretation of events, how we manage our emotions and how we treat others. Decide who you want to be during this event and then choose to act in ways consistent with being that person.
- Lead with compassionate awareness
  - This is a time when we need to place our own well-being and that of others at the top of our priority list. When we're tempted to minimize concerns and symptoms, consider that the spread of the virus is dependent on us not making the needs of others a priority. If you have any cold-/flu-like symptoms, seek medical attention immediately. Caution is better than recklessness these days.
- Limit information exposure
  - There is a lot of confusing, contradictory and frustrating information available. To prevent information overload and reduce unnecessary panic, limit your information to legitimate sources such as the Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and state and local government websites.
- Connect with others
  - It's easy to focus only on those we love during this time. Resist that urge and check in on neighbors, co-workers, friends, the elderly and homeless persons. Seek to develop a co-op mentality where we share resources and information rather than hoard and isolate ourselves.
- Confirm virus information using legitimate sources
  - Resist accepting information based primarily on how it makes you feel. Seek to confirm any information you receive about the virus especially if it's about how it's spread or how it's treated through legitimate health organizations such as WHO, CDC and your state health department.
- Review your priorities
  - This is a time for both preparedness and reflection. Spend time identifying the needs of you and your family. Use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to provide a way of organizing priorities. Plan, along with family, how to best enact those priorities.
- Look for windows
  - We do not know the course and duration of COVID-19. So, we will need to look for windows of relief followed by windows of vigilance until the experts feel confident that COVID-19 has dissipated to negligible levels.
- Improve your tolerance of uncertainty
  - How do you deal with fear? Uncertainty? Seek to learn how to prevent both under-reacting and over-reacting so that you can best determine appropriate priorities for you and your loved ones.
- Balance busyness with beingness
  - Because you may be at home for a significant period of time, how are you going to manage your time? Strive for a balance between accomplishing tasks and

sitting with peace and quiet. This would be a good time to take up meditation, yoga or offer to help your neighbors.

- Learn something new
  - As I mentioned, we'll be spending a lot more time in doors. Maybe this would be a good time to work on home projects or learn a new skill. Udemy, Skillshare, YouTube, EdX, The Mighty, MasterClass, TED Talks, Coursera, and Khan Academy are all learning platforms available online. Try to find a fun or interesting course to take.
- Let fear guide but not dominate you
  - It is smart to feel afraid during this time of uncertainty. It's unproductive to allow fear to dominate us. This is not the Zombie Apocalypse, a conspiracy on the part of the Democrats nor is this situation likely to result in some other form of mass human extinction. It will be challenging though and the sooner we can take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, the sooner things may return to normal.
- Feel the fear and soothe the panic
  - So, let's say you've already moved into the panic zone; learn to trigger a relaxation response by using guided meditation, taking a comforting bath or shower, using aromatherapy, diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and/or grounding techniques.
- Counteract powerlessness with resourcefulness and self-compassion
  - We may feel helpless and paralyzed in the face of the effects COVID-19. To avoid spending too much time in that type of emotional state, focus on what you can do right now. Conduct a web search for ideas. If your answer is there's nothing you can do, then do nothing. Most importantly, practice being kind towards yourself by adjusting your self-talk. Berating and shaming yourself will not help you to be any more powerful - you'll only feel worse about yourself. Ask, "If a friend were speaking to themselves this way, what would I suggest they say differently?" And then apply your answer to yourself.
- If you're sick, seek medical attention
  - This needs to be emphasized. If you have a fever, definitely contact a medical professional. If you have any type of respiratory symptoms or believe you have been in the presence of someone who has, see a doctor. Make this your top priority so as to prevent others from possibly being infected. Vigilance is our best tool!
- Seek out naturopathic alternatives such as yoga, body weight exercises, massage therapy and acupuncture
  - To manage the emotional stress, try activities you might be able to do in the comfort of your own home or with a trained practitioner. Yes, it might involve leaving your home so you will need to weigh the risks of doing so when deciding.
- Continue routines and create new ones
  - Try to make this experience as normal as possible by continuing to follow through on routines that you were doing before this pandemic began. (Just modify them

according to CDC guidelines.) If you have few routines to rely on, create some new ones.

- Turn up the music, read that book, or watch that movie
  - Using your senses as a guide, look for ways to increase joy, hope, awe, fun, interest and other positive emotions. Music can speak to be auditory and tactile senses. Books can spark interest, hope and serve as a positive distraction. And develop that movie list. Similar to books, movies can transport us to other worlds and take us on an emotional journey.
- Spend time in nature and with animals/pets
  - One way to induce a sense of awe, wonder, playfulness and present moment focus is to spend time in nature and/or with animals. Go to a lake, park, on a hike or to a petting zoo. Volunteer to assist animal rescue organizations or walk the pets of elderly neighbors.
- Get enough sleep and physical activity
  - Make getting sufficient sleep a priority. Disrupted sleep can have a huge set of negative consequences limited our ability to effectively cope during this stressful time. If you're having sleep difficulties, see your doctor or a sleep specialist.
  - Obtain physical activity through exercise such as walking/running, swimming, body weight exercises, participating in solo or limited participant sports such as handball, tennis, batting cages, etc.
- Nurture a sense of gratitude
  - Identify what you're thankful for by making a list of the aspects in your life you appreciate such as your health, the weather, the absence of other problems, relationships, your home, etc. Pull out a piece of paper and write the list down on a daily basis.
- Don't forget to play
  - A great way to manage stress is to play a game. It can be a video or electronic game, an outdoor game, a board game, a card game, a game you play alone or with others. The point is that play has been shown to reduce stress and improve overall well-being. So, go out and play!