

Coronavirus and looking after your mental wellbeing

It's really important for people who are self-isolating because of coronavirus to look after their mental health and wellbeing as well their physical health.

Staying at home and avoiding contact with others as much as possible is essential to limit the risk of catching the virus or spreading it to others.

But for many people, especially if you live alone, social isolation can be a lonely, anxious, scary or depressing time. This leaflet has a few simple tips to help look after our mental well-being. It's written for people who are self-isolating, or are maybe just feeling isolated, and who don't have access to the internet and online entertainment or 'distraction' options. If you can get online, you can download a copy of this information and get lots more ideas at learn.4mentalhealth.com/wellbeing

The 30-3-30 approach

The suggestions below are grouped into things that take about 30 seconds, things that you can do in about 3 minutes, and things that might take 30 minutes or longer. The 30 second ones are quick fix 'emergency' actions you can do if you suddenly feel panicky, scared or unable to cope.

30 seconds	3 minutes	30 minutes
Take a few slow deep breaths. Breathe in, count to 3, breathe out, count to 3.	Phone a loved one or friend for a quick chat. Leave a message if they don't answer.	Pamper yourself with a luxurious bath, and maybe have scented candles and soothing music.
Close your eyes, hold one hand in the other, squeeze gently and repeat 'I can get through this'.	Do a household task, like a quick bit of washing up, cleaning the bathroom mirror or making a bed.	Do 'proper sort-out' of a cluttered kitchen cupboard, drawer, wardrobe or bookcase. Feel the satisfaction of having done something!
Sit on a chair and focus on the sensation of the chair pressing onto your back and bottom.	Make a hot drink in a mug and sip it slowly, feeling the warmth of the mug in both hands.	Enjoy a TV or radio programme, either a recording of an old favourite or something new.
Take a few sips of cold water, focusing on the cooling feeling as you swallow it. Even better if very cold or if you can add ice.	Quick brain workout, such as 3 minutes doing a wordsearch, crossword, sudoku. Try the 'Alphabet Game' choose a category, then using the alphabet in order, list as many as you can.	Do something 'mindful'. This means just focusing on the one thing you are doing: such as bit of gardening, spending time on an indoor hobby, doing a jigsaw puzzle, listening to a recorded book.
Look out of a window or doorway. What can you see and hear? Anything new or unusual?	Listen to a favourite piece of music, something soothing or uplifting depending how you feel.	Prepare a tasty meal or snack, perhaps a new recipe, and eat it slowly, savouring every mouthful.
Pick up a special photo or object that evokes happy memories and focus on what it means to you.	Brush your teeth and brush or comb your hair. (even if you don't really need to!)	Sing. At the top of your voice, sing all the songs you know, or just your favourites several times.
Learn a favourite, inspiring quote by heart, or keep a written version handy to read.	Write a worry list. Getting things down on paper can help stop them going around in your head. Now tackle them one by one.	Go out for some fresh air, if it's safe and allowed. If not, are there any indoor exercises, yoga or stretches you can do?
Think of 2 things that are 'Just about OK'.	Phone someone for a quick 'hello'	Phone a helpline. Ask the person who sent you this leaflet to recommend a couple of helplines if you can't think of any yourself.

• Keep busy • Keep up a routine • Keep in touch • Do things you enjoy • Stay safe