

# How to take care of yourself during Covid-19 as a community leader

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# Practical ways to look after yourself whilst staying at home

- Eating well and staying hydrated
- Using apps to stay on top of food and fluid
- Plan how you are going to get supplies
- Manage your prescriptions (if needed) (NHS app)
- Looking after your home environment (managing different expectations if different people in the home!)
- Managing your utilities (priority service registers)  
<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register>

- If you are receiving any sort of medical care or treatment, how will this continue? Key contacts? Plan?
- Setting up “working from home” if you can
- Childcare; balance responsibilities, talk to employers, schedules, how to make children feel connected to peers (e.g. social media and screen time)
- Let people know how things are!
- Keeping busy- learning new skills and courses
- Supporting people with caring responsibilities- Carers UK website resources
- Understand what to do if you/a loved one become unwell (feeling prepared)

# Top Tips for looking after mental health and wellbeing

- Find ways to connect with others
- Find others who you identify with by being in the same situation as you (peer support communities, Elefriends app)
- Be aware of and acknowledge loneliness (radio, photos and pictures, podcasts...)
- Own routine and household routine (wall charts, goals, using alarms, what weren't you happy with in your old routine and can you try new things now?)
- If working from home, planning the working day (clothes, ID badge, breaks, start and finish times etc...)

- Staying active- be creative! (dancing, cleaning, running up the stairs, garden laps, scavenger hunts, online workouts... change position every hour)
- Access to fresh air and nature- can be done indoors! (open windows, views, pictures, music and sound, art projects, indoor plants...)
- Purposeful tasks for spare time (write letters, sort clothes, spring clean...)
- “Tech Checks”
- Embrace your creative side! (writing, learn to sing, learn a language...)

- Avoid negativity and upsetting news; access positive news! Think about sources to go to for information.
- How do you want to use social media at the moment?
- Keep a diary
- Keep your brain busy! Quizzes, riddles, puzzles, reading, learning... (distraction!)
- Planning safe spaces in the home; keeping things separate
- Have a plan for what to do on a bad/difficult day (try out things and write down what works)
- Move around different locations within the home
- Permission to relax (take a bath, light a candle...)
- Relaxation, mindfulness and breathing exercises

# Breathing Exercises and Relaxation

- NHS website and MIND website have more good examples
- Good video on relaxation:  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation/relaxation-tips/> (video is on webpage)

# Breathing Exercise: Lets have a go

- For now, sit in a chair, upright, with your back supported if you need it (can also be done lying on your back when not on Zoom!)
- Get comfortable e.g. loosen any tight clothing (remember your webcam!)
- Place your arms on the chair arms (if you have them) or comfortably by your side or in your lap)
- Place your feet firmly on the floor, hip width apart
- Let your breath flow as deep down in to your belly as feels comfortable; get used to what a deep breath feels like for you (breathing through the mouth)



- Now try the same, but breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth...
- Breath in for 1, breath out for 1
- Breath in for 2, breath out for 2
- Breath in for 3, breath out for 3
- Breath in for 4, breath out for 4
- Breath in for 5, breath out for 5
- Repeat for 3- 5 minutes

# Distraction Techniques

- For when you are feeling worried, anxious, stuck on a difficult thought...
  - Counting backward
  - Colouring/doodling
  - Counting challenge (how many pink things are in my room)
  - Puzzles (e.g. suduko)
  - Pamper session
  - Light hearted TV/Movie
  - Positive quotes, happy photos, positive messages etc
  - Do a chore
  - Speak to a friend
  - Write a letter
  - Short exercise challenge
  - Craft
  - Baking

# Self-Care

- Sleep
- Diet
- Feeling good about yourself, personal care
- Physical health; what do you like to do?
- Alcohol and non-prescribed drugs

# Getting involved in your local community (if you can!)

- GoodSAM
- Local community links
- Social media
- Families, friends and neighbours
- Contact your local council
- For the love of scrubs

# Supporting other areas of your life: work, benefits, housing...

- Be aware of areas that may be affected by current situation
- Take time to research what is happening and any actions you make need to take
- Permission to ask for help- reach out for advice (in the right places)
- Plan and schedule time for research and action

Good resource: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse0e3b6>