

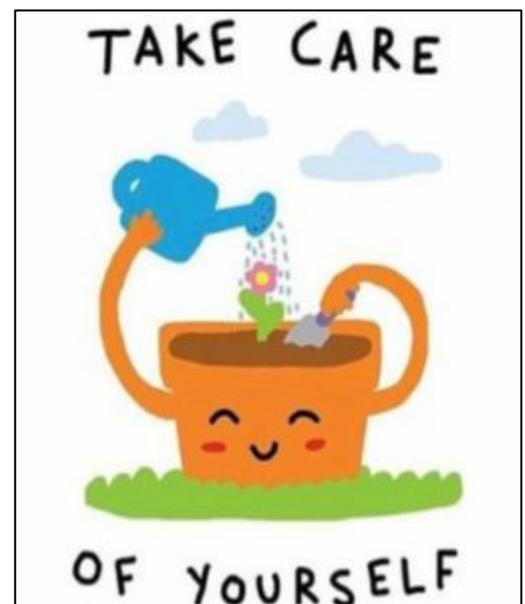
Coping with self-isolation

As you are now preparing for some time at home, it is crucial that you think carefully about how you will spend your time and understand how to protect your mental health and emotional well-being in the coming weeks.

Remember – it is important that you avoid socialising with friends or time in public places in order to limit the spread of coronavirus. Although the impact on your personal health may not be serious, the repercussions for those you come into contact with who are elderly, pregnant or have compromised immune systems due to an underlying health condition could be very severe. You can also ‘carry’ the disease without necessarily exhibiting the symptoms yourself.



Therefore, you should be at home wherever possible. Here are some ideas for staying healthy, physically, mentally and emotionally, when in isolation.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Exercise

Exercise is a crucial aspect of staying in good physical health.

This advice is from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51933762>:

If you are under 70 with no underlying conditions, you can still be active outside as long as you stay at least two metres (three paces) away from other people. So walking the dog (or even your neighbour's dog), going for a run or going for a bike ride are all fine - provided you keep your distance.

Public spaces such as swimming pools and gyms are not banned - but if you use them, be sure their equipment and surfaces have been thoroughly cleaned. And of course you can do your bit by cleaning any equipment you use.

You could also use YouTube to exercise at home. The Body Coach, also known as Joe Wicks, has announced he will run a free 30-minute web-based exercise class via YouTube every Monday to Friday at 9am which is suitable for children and young adults. You could make this a regular part of your schedule to help stay fit and healthy.



His YouTube channel can be found via the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

Diet

Whilst at home, it is easy to snack and over-eat compared to your usual habits.

The NHS advise that we:

- eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day (see [5 A Day](#))
- base meals on higher fibre starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta
- have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks)
- eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein
- choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts
- [drink plenty of fluids](#) (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day)

If you're having foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar, have these less often and in small amounts. Try to choose a variety of different foods from the 5 main food groups to get a wide range of nutrients.

One idea is to create a 'lunch box' in a similar style to what you would have for school. You should fill up on fresh fruit or vegetable and water when possible, rather than crisps or fizzy drinks.

You could also try cooking some recipes for yourself and your families. The websites below may give you some ideas for simple recipes:



- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/healthy-lunch>
- <https://tasty.co/article/candacelowry/dinners-even-the-worst-cook-couldnt-mess-up>
- <https://realfood.tesco.com/recipes/courses/dinner-recipes.html>
- <https://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/collections/student-recipes/>
- <https://www.goodtoknow.co.uk/food/recipe-collections/50-recipes-everyone-should-know-how-to-cook-31760>

You could also follow @thebodycoach or @buzzfeedtasty on Instagram for simple and free video recipes.

MENTAL HEALTH

Stay connected



It is normal to feel lonely and low when spending a lot of time alone.

Imagine what your grandparents and other vulnerable elderly people may be feeling. You could FaceTime or call a member of your family or friend to bring a smile to their face – and to yours too.

Send a message to someone to show that you care – other people may be feeling just as worried, bored or frustrated as you are and they will be grateful to hear from you.

Use social media responsibly – avoid spreading rumours or fake news that could be misinterpreted and use your platforms to spread positivity instead.

Some uplifting news can be found on @upworthy via Instagram or <https://www.upworthy.com/> or @PositiveNewsUK on Twitter.

Stay calm

Spend a few minutes being mindful. There are many free apps you can use for breathing and meditating to help ease stress and clear your mind of anxious thoughts. Some examples are Headspace, Calm, Aura, Stop, Breathe and Think and Insight Timer.

Take a break from the news – and from your phone

It can be tempting to constantly check the news for updates but this can have a negative impact on your mental health. Instead, try to limit screen time and news to certain times of the day.

Remember – no-one’s life is as perfect as their Instagram feed.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Read a book

Reading is a great way to spend your time productively. Some recommended reads can be found below; you can also use BookFinder from Book Trust to find a book that you would enjoy. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/bookfinder/>



Plan your time – maintain a sense of routine

If you consistently wake up late and therefore stay up late, you may end up feeling listless and lonely. Try to keep to some sense of normality, such as by being awake by 08.3 on weekdays or sticking to your usual bed time.

You should also plan out how to spend your time. A possible routine which you could adapt is below:

	08.30 – 10:00	10:00 – 11:00	11:00 – 12:30	12:30 – 14:30	14:30 – 16:00
Monday	Breakfast and exercise	School work	Lunch and down-time	School work	School work
Tuesday	Breakfast and exercise	School work	Lunch and down-time	School work	School work
Wednesday	Breakfast and school work	Go for a walk	Lunch and reading	School work	School work
Thursday	Breakfast and school work	Go for a walk	Lunch and TV	School work	Play a game with a friend
Friday	Breakfast and reading	School work	Lunch and TV	Exercise	School work

Some apps that could be helpful in keeping routines and good habits include:

- Loop Habit Tracker – track how long you spend on each activity to check you stay focused
- Todoist – help in creating a to do list
- Streaks – track how long you spend on each activity to check you stay focused
- Alarmy – a very annoying alarm app in case you struggle to wake up

Be productive

Set some goals for what you want to achieve in your time in isolation. It could as simple as sorting out your wardrobe, gardening or re-arranging your bedroom but completing jobs give you a sense of accomplishment that can help combat low thoughts. You could also learn a language using apps like *Duo Lingo*.

Online games

Play a game with a friend – a lot of board games (like Monopoly or Chess) are available via apps or online. You could also play *Words with Friends* or similar puzzle games to stay connected to an elderly family member whilst you cannot visit them regularly.

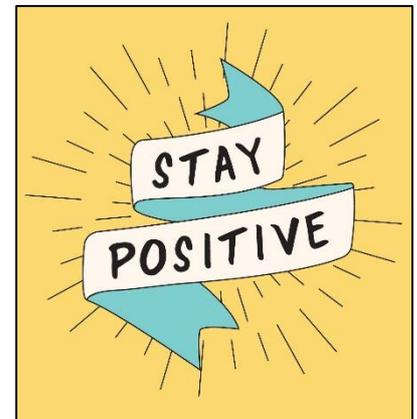
Defusing tension

It is normal to feel stressed or anxious when you are 'cooped up', which can result in tension between you and those you live with. Some ideas for defusing tense situations:

- Walk away calmly. *A bit of space can sometimes help in a confrontational situation.*
- State what has upset you calmly. *Try not to snap about a problem – instead, calmly state the problem in a de-personal way. For example, instead of saying “You were rude!”, you could say “It upset me when...” or “I would like it if we...”*
- Create a rota. *It may be that you are having to share equipment, space or chores. Create a rota so that everyone has their fair share and to avoid arguments. If you are sharing with siblings who are also at home, you could design your ‘timetables’ so that you have down-time at a different time.*
- Reach out for help. *If you are struggling, speak to someone you trust or call a friend. Please don’t keep problems to yourself.*

Remember:

- You are not alone.
- You are important and special.
- Use your time well and stay positive.



HOW TO STAY POSITIVE IN A NEGATIVE SITUATION

Questions to ask yourself

- 1 IS THIS WORTH GETTING UPSET OVER?
- 2 WHAT IS THE LESSON HERE? WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS?
- 3 AM I OVERREACTING OR OVERTHINKING THE SITUATION?
- 4 WHAT IS THE POSITIVE I CAN TAKE AWAY FROM THIS?
- 5 HOW IS THIS MAKING ME A BETTER PERSON?
- 6 CAN I CONTROL THE SITUATION?
- 7 WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL BETTER?
- 8 HOW CAN I SEE THE SITUATION WITH LOVE?

THE HEART THINKER