

## Looking after yourself during the Lockdown

Over the coming weeks and months all of us will be spending a lot more time at home and apart from our family and friends. This will inevitably mean big changes to our normal activities and routines. As a result, looking after our mental and physical health is going to be very important.

### Stay in touch

Staying in touch with family and friends is very important. This is not just about making us feel good; staying in touch is good for our general health. Making time for regular phone calls and staying in touch online if possible are great ways to keep in contact when we can't meet face to face.

If you have a mobile phone or computer, now is the ideal time to set up Skype or video calling so you can still see each other. Consider signing up to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram if you haven't already – it can be a great way to stay in touch and find out what's happening in your local community.

Think about ways to get creative. Could some of your usual social activities move online or to phone calls? Can you 'meet up' with friends or family by arranging a video chat over a coffee or a meal?

### Keep busy

Try to keep up with your normal hobbies and activities as far as possible. Whether you're a keen knitter, a gardening enthusiast or crossword champion, make sure you have plenty of supplies to keep you going. You can order what you need online or ask someone to pick up what you need.

Explore options for online alternatives, such as digital subscriptions for papers and magazines, e-books or streaming services for music and films. There are also lots of ways to play group games online as well.

It's time to get creative. If you belong to clubs that can no longer meet face to face, can they still go ahead by phone or online? Now may also be a good time to set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a group challenge.

## Get active

Staying active is hugely important – as the saying goes, ‘use it or lose it’, and this is particularly important around physical activity.

If you haven’t been advised to self-isolate, you can still go out for a walk, jog or bike ride. Remember even if you are over 70 or are in one of the ‘at risk’ groups, you can still go out. Just take care to go at times and to places where you are unlikely to come into close contact with others. Team sports are sadly off the agenda for now.

But if you want or need to stay at home, the good news is there is plenty you can do in the house and garden (weather permitting, of course). Whether you’re a regular gym bunny or just getting started, advice and inspiration is available.

There is plenty advice on the internet and the following is a great resource for safe exercising whatever your ability!

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

## Look after yourself

It’s quite likely there will be times we all feel anxious or low in the days and weeks ahead. This is completely normal, so we’ve put together some top tips:

- If you are worried, talking really does help. Take time to chat about how you’re feeling with family and friends.
- Focus on the things you can control rather than the things you can’t. This might mean focusing on getting into a routine and taking small practical steps each day to do what you need to do.
- If you find the news is making you anxious and depressed, try limiting yourself to set times each day to check in on events. Also stick to trusted sources of information.
- The following website contains some useful resources

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

If you start to feel overwhelmed, some simple breathing exercises can help. Sit or lie down in a way that's comfortable for you. Take a deep breath in and hold it, at the same time raising and tightening your shoulders, and clenching your fists. Count slowly to 5 as you breathe out. Do this several times.

## Don't neglect your physical health

It's easy to neglect our physical health when we are worried or distracted, so keep an eye on how you're doing and follow these simple tips:

- Stay physically active around the house and garden.
- Eat a balanced diet and try to get your five fruit and vegetables a day (tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables are just as good as fresh).
- Avoid drinking too much or smoking.
- Try to get outside for some fresh air. Just sitting in the garden, or on the balcony, or opening a window can help. You may want to consider a short walk if that's possible (taking care to follow sensible precautions and official advice).
- Get plenty of rest and try to stick to your normal sleeping patterns.
- Carry on managing any other on-going health conditions. Make sure you keep taking your usual medications and keep doing any recommended exercises, even if it means changing your usual routine.

It can seem like coronavirus is the only issue which matters, but **remember your health needs are just as important as before.**

The NHS have put in place systems so that urgent and emergency care is still available. If you think you need help, you shouldn't delay asking.

Your GP is still available to support you if you feel unwell, although this may take place over the phone rather than face-to-face. Your GP practice can also give advice if you are struggling to cope with looking after yourself or getting provisions. Do not stop any prescribed medication without discussing with your doctor.

If you need urgent medical help, whether or not you have coronavirus symptoms, you should contact 111 or call 999 in an emergency.

### **Remember, the following is a list of other symptoms that still require urgent medical intervention**

- Loss of consciousness
- Acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- Chest pain

- Breathing difficulties
- Severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- Severe allergic reactions
- Severe burns or scalds
- Stroke

The list below contains some of the common medical complaints that also should not be ignored:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections
- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- feverish illness in adults
- feverish illness in children
- abdominal pain
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- emergency contraception

Coronavirus is affecting all of our lives. We will get through this if we follow government advice, look after ourselves physically and mentally and remember that hospitals and GP practices are still dealing with other important medical problems.

The following resources may be helpful.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/coronavirus/>