

How to take care of your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak

MindWell

There's a lot in the news and on social media about the coronavirus and many people are feeling worried or anxious in these challenging times.



Find a moment of calm

Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight, feet flat on the floor. Put one hand just above your stomach and one on the chest. Breathe in through your nose. Your lower hand should move outwards as you breathe in to the count of two. Hold it for two and then slowly breathe out to the count of four, as your lower hand moves inwards. Repeat twice and then relax.



Follow official guidance

Avoid false reports and speculation about the coronavirus on social media. Follow guidance from trusted sources such as www.nhs.uk or www.gov.uk.

Follow [@NHSEngland](https://twitter.com/NHSEngland); [@PHE_uk](https://twitter.com/PHE_uk); [@GOVUK](https://twitter.com/GOVUK) and [@NHSLeeds](https://twitter.com/NHSLeeds) on Twitter.



Try to limit time watching the news or on social media

If watching the news is affecting your mood - limit yourself by only checking it at a set time each day. If there are social media accounts that you find upsetting or make you feel anxious, then try muting or unfollowing them. Consider taking some time away and having a digital or news detox if this supports your mental health.



Keep to a routine

While staying at home, it's important to create a new daily routine. Set a regular time to get up and write a plan for your day or week. Build in time for exercise, self-care, shopping for food, contacting friends, relaxing and doing things you enjoy. Set yourself some goals you can achieve at home. Whether that's reading a book, learning something new or starting a home project.



Eat healthy

Continue to eat a balanced diet including five types of fruit and vegetables a day. Plan your meals in advance and keep to regular meal times. Stay hydrated - the NHS recommends drinking 6 to 8 glasses per day. If you have the symptoms of coronavirus organise a contact-free delivery service from a supermarket or a friend.



Keep moving

Build in some time for movement each day. Get up to stretch, walk the stairs, skip in the backyard, or gardening can be good exercise too. You could also try a fitness video for home work-outs or yoga sessions.



Stay connected with your support network

It's important to stay in contact with your friends, family, colleagues or the people who support you. Make regular phone calls, post a letter (if you are able) or use services like Whatsapp, Zoom or Skype, or other online platforms, to stay connected.



Try to get enough sleep

It's a worrying and unsettling time and many people are finding it hard to sleep. Creating a dark, quiet and peaceful place to sleep and a regular bedtime routine can help us to get a good night's sleep.



Keep taking any prescribed medication

You may be able to order a repeat prescription using an app or website if your GP surgery offers this. You could also ask your pharmacy about getting it delivered. Call NHS 111 if you're worried about getting your medication.



Keep doing things you enjoy and stay busy

With more free time at home this could be a good time to catch up on life admin, tackle a job in the house, do some decluttering or have a spring clean. It's also important to spend some time each day doing things you enjoy. Read a book, start crafting, do a puzzle, try baking, learn a new skill or do an online course.



Be creative

Creativity is relaxing and can calm the mind, focussing thoughts away from worry or stress. There are lots of ways to be creative - painting, drawing, dancing, writing, reading or photography in your garden - the list is endless. MindWell has lots of ideas you can try at home.



Be mindful

Mindfulness can help refocus your thoughts from worrying back to the present moment. Mindfulness is about being aware and paying attention to what you're doing and what's going on around you. If your thoughts are wandering during the day try doing **an everyday task mindfully**, like brushing your teeth or washing up. Instead of letting your mind drift, focus completely on the task. Experience the sensation of water on your hands, notice the scent of the washing up liquid, listen to the trickle of water, feel the smoothness of the plates.

For more ideas, resources and videos visit the **MindWell Coronavirus Mental Health Information Hub**: www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/coronavirus

Follow [@MindWellLeeds](https://twitter.com/MindWellLeeds) on Twitter for self-care ideas and useful information.