

covid-calm.

Ideas for looking after yourself in uncertain times

mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a practice that can help with your outlook on everyday life.

Follow our tips to help you find calm in an uncertain world.

Maria Hancock



We hope this guide provides you with some useful tips for looking after yourself.

Please remember if you're still struggling these tips are not a replacement for speaking to your GP.

active.

With gyms and other sports facilities being closed it may seem increasingly difficult to get our daily exercise in. Fear not, as we have some helpful tips for staying active while staying at home!

Natasha McGowan



nutrition.

Eating well will boost your mood and power you through the day. Read on for ideas on how to fuel yourself through isolation.

Julia Craggs



sleep.

Getting a good night sleep will improve mood and reduce the risk of developing long term health problems. Read our top tips for improving your sleep hygiene!

Stephanie Thebault



ideas to fill your days.

30 tips to maintaining a healthy body and during isolation.

Frankie Wightman



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mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a practice that can help with your outlook on everyday life, especially the challenging moments.

It can be practised by anyone and at any time. It's free, requires no resources and with practice can make a huge difference to your emotional wellbeing .

how to meditate.

You will need:

- A space
- As much time as you have
- Your breathing

Set a timer for how long you want to spend, even 5-10 minutes can be helpful.

Sit with a straight back - an active, but relaxed posture.

It can help to close your eyes.

Take a deep breath in and out.

Notice how this feels as the breath enters and leaves.

Keep focusing on the breath throughout the practice.

Continue like this, breathing normally. If it helps, count 1 as you breathe in, and 2 as you breathe out.

Once you feel comfortable noticing your breath, try making your out-breath longer than your in-breath. This activates the calming part of your nervous system.

It is totally normal for other thoughts to come to mind. The aim of meditation is not to get rid of those thoughts. It is to notice them, and to gently bring your attention back to your breath - without judging or evaluating how "well" you are doing.

mindfulness vs meditation.

Mindfulness means being aware of the present moment - noticing how you are feeling, and the details in the environment around you.

Mindfulness can be built by a process called meditation, though meditation isn't the only way to build mindfulness. You can do just about anything mindfully, including going for a walk, eating and drawing / painting.

resources to try.

YouTube: search "guided meditation"
Oxford Mindfulness Centre website

Apps:

- Calm
- Insight Timer
- Headspace

Or you can take things at your own pace and just do it freestyle!
if you try mindful walking, some people like to listen to sounds of nature - you can easily find these on YouTube.



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nutrition.

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It might seem a challenge to cook and eat well during isolation, follow our top tips for some simple suggestions!

eating well.

Fill up with the right stuff:

Fill your kitchen with filling, nutrient dense foods. They help keep you full and satisfied for longer and prevent the hunger pangs for chips and sugary treats.

Batch cook:

Make a large portion of something healthy, so when you come across a time you're too lazy to make something and are tempted to have a takeaway, there's your alternative.

Canned food can be good for you!

Stock up on canned legumes and beans - An excellent source of protein and vitamins. They can also be the base of many delicious recipes.

Canned tomato sauce - a great base for many dishes, and packed full of nutrients and flavour too

get creative.

Find an old recipe book, phone your grandma, sieve through Pinterest to find some interesting, delicious and healthy recipes

Get your family and friends involved.

Share ideas with each other or take it in turns to choose.

Try flavours you haven't tried before, or fruits and vegetables you've never used. You may be surprised.

the temptation to snack.

It's hard to avoid and we all do it! Here are some tips:

Have 3 filling and nutrient-dense meals a day.

Check in with yourself, are you eating when you feel worried or down? Understand why it's happening in the first place. When you get the urge, pause for a moment and assess if it's genuine hunger, or emotional hunger.

Don't mistake thirst for hunger, so have a glass of water before reaching for the bag of crisps.

If you need to snack, try some healthier options like a banana, a bowl of blueberries, a handful of nuts, or some yogurt.

indulge every now and then.

This is a stressful period, and it's ok to give yourself a break and to treat yourself to something nice that you will enjoy.

For that moment don't think about the calories or contents, rather, focus instead on just enjoying it.



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Fear not, as we have some helpful tips for staying active while staying at home!

yoga.

Yoga is a great way to get some exercise in as well as helping you to destress.

Many yoga companies have started running free online classes, as well as other yoga accounts that can be found online.

Look up 'Yoga with Adriene' on YouTube for a great 30-day program.

get creative.

If you normally use gym weights but don't own any at home, try lifting with something else instead like a backpack full of books or other heavy household objects such as full milk cartons.

Just as you would in the gym, be careful to stick within your weight limits when doing this to avoid injury.

going digital.

A lot of Instagram and YouTube accounts have been making free workout videos. Some stream them live in the morning - a great way to get your day going!

A few accounts to follow include:

@aliveliveing

@thebodycoach - PE with Joe is aimed at children but is great for all ages!

@thefoodmedic - Dr Hazel Wallace also gives regular COVID-19 updates on her Instagram story.

getting outside.

Under our current social distancing restrictions, we can leave our house for exercise once a day, either alone or with members of our household.

Try to vary up your outdoor activities running, cycling or walking are all great forms of exercise.

Just keep at least two metres from anyone else you see and wash your hands when you get home.



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sleep.

Sleep is important for our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Whilst asleep, the body is able to conserve its energy whilst working hard to promote both physical and mental recovery.

sleep hygiene.

You may have heard about sleep hygiene, this is a way to optimise the quality of sleep and remove distractors which may be negatively impacting our ability to sleep

Set a time - go to bed and wake up each morning at the same time, ensuring enough time for 7-9hrs sleep

Prepare your room - remove possible distractions from sleep, a dark slightly cool room is best so try to avoid artificial light and noise

Expose yourself to as much natural light as possible in the morning to feel awake

Relax before bedtime - take time away from screens and bright lights, instead why not take a bath, or read a book?

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine or alcohol before bedtime

Stay active: Try to exercise in the day and not too close to bedtime

Eat healthily and not too soon before bed

getting a good night sleep.

It is important to get enough sleep in order to benefit from its restorative properties

The amount of sleep varies depending on your age, it is recommended that people over the age of 18 should aim for 7-9hrs a night

Although napping in the day may help you feel less tired, it does not have the same beneficial effects of night-time sleep

Sometimes even with a routine, it can be difficult to get a good sleep, especially if we are feeling anxious, some tips to tackle this

Write down your worries before bed so you can try and take your mind off them

If you're lying awake at night, get out of bed do something else until you feel tired

Make a sleep diary - this way you can link activities in the day which are affecting your sleep

Practice meditation or deep breathing exercises before sleep

Missing out on a few nights of quality sleep is ok, this happens to us all, especially when we're stressed but our bodies can catch up!

Importantly, if you are struggling to sleep you can talk to your doctor



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ideas to fill your days.

1. Make the most of technology and **stay connected** with friends and family via videocalls.
2. Try and get yourself into a **daily routine** that helps structure your days, whether that be via a timetable or simply thinking through what you hope to achieve that day before you get out of bed.
3. Capitalise on the permitted 1 hour of outdoor **activity a everyday** - be it a run, cycle or walk, don't punish yourself if it's not always intense exercise, just enjoy the fresh air and simply stretching your legs!
4. **Listen to podcasts** It can be soothing to listen to people's voices in these times of isolation
5. Use catch-up apps to get your teeth into a series, now is the opportunity to **binge-watch guilt free**
6. Run a **pub quiz** via a group video call with your friends or family.
7. **Download TikTok** and get the family involved!
8. Try out **yoga** or a different form of meditation.
9. Do your bit to slow the fast fashion culture by **repairing or recycling old clothes**
10. Try out a **crossword or sudoku** from a newspaper or online, to stimulate the mind!
11. Ignite the family's competitive spirit with **board game tournaments**
12. Do a **book swap** with the friends or family members you're in isolation with.
13. Experiment with **new hairstyles** (or haircuts if you're brave!).
14. Try a **jigsaw**.
15. Download the **COVID-19 symptom tracker app** to do your part and report your daily symptom
16. Create **store-cupboard concoctions** in the kitchen with the ingredients you have, to avoid supermarket trips!
17. Use the spare time to **organise** your wardrobe, desk, bookshelf, academic notes or entire bedroom.
18. Stay up to date with **government advice**, but restrict how much time you spend to prevent getting overwhelmed
19. Walk up and down your **stairs** as a form of exercise
20. **Ring elderly relatives & neighbours**, to check up on them during these isolating times.
21. Be creative and express yourself with **paint or pencils**.
22. Try out **home workouts** - there's copious free videos online for all abilities!
23. Technology is a saviour amidst this social distancing, but take **regular screen time breaks**
24. Be inspired by the GBBO technical challenges and try to **bake something** you've not tried before
25. Start a **diary** to record thoughts & daily achievements, so you can look back on it in the future.
26. **Plant seeds** to give yourself something to nurture during the quarantine.
27. Check out all the **virtual tours** that many museums, art galleries and zoos are offering online
28. Learn a **new language** using apps such as Duolingo, with daily linguistic tutorials and quizzes.
29. Get out your screwdriver and take on those **DIY** challenges you may have been putting off.
30. Time is precious in today's fast-paced world, so take a moment each day to appreciate the slowing of its tempo, rather than resent it, and **reflect** on all the things you are grateful for but may ordinarily take for granted.