

As Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads across the UK, it will be harder for people to maintain their social connections.

Buckinghamshire Recovery College have created this pack on ideas for how we can all combat social isolation and look out for each other during the spread of the virus.

For many people there will be a tough, but necessary period of social isolation. Many of us will miss seeing family and friends and taking part in our usual hobbies, interests and activities.

It shows how important friendship and connection are in our lives, and how difficult it can be when they're missing.

During the Coronavirus outbreak it's especially important we can stay in touch with people who are alone.

- **E-Books** – There's little better than becoming absorbed in a good book from time to time. Ordering in an e-book reader, such as a kindle, can give you more than enough reading material. Alternatively, if money is tight - - or is likely to become tight download, free ebooks many can be found here: <http://www.gutenberg.org>
- **TV, Dongles and subscriptions** – To tackle boredom and family members occupied, you might want to consider expanding the range of television content on offer. A TV dongle such as Amazon Fire or Roku can give you access to more apps, music, television and films. Also, if you do have a subscription see if you can share with family members.
- **Simple methods of communication** – we are now in the days of email, social media, and texts, but perhaps it's time to return to a more traditional method of communication. Pick up the phone and give family and friends a call to check in. Or better still write them a letter letting them know how important they are to you.

Mental wellbeing is very important and whether you are being quarantined, self-isolating, ill or recovering from Coronavirus, it is important to pay attention to your own mental wellbeing and your family's.

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period of time can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you may feel low. Below is a list of activities in which you can try at home to help you focus.

But if you are struggling with your mental health please seek support from appropriate services:

If you are open to one of the mental health teams in Oxford Health NHS Trust, you can contact them to seek support.

If you are not under secondary mental health services, please contact your GP, who will be able to offer support as necessary.

Or the Samaritans on:116 123

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org>

APPS:



Thrive: Mental Wellbeing
FREE



Feeling Good Positive Mindset
FREE in app purchases

Activities you could try at home



- Try and sit less
- Chair-based exercises – NHS Website activity routines.
- If you have a Wii console, play the interactive games.
- Exercises or stretches at home, NHS website or DVD's or YouTube
- Household chores, like a hoovering, tidying or DIY.
- Adding more activity in your-day-day routines.
- Dance whilst cooking/Cleaning
- Listen to a selection of music/ there genres, then either write, draw or scribble a colour about what you feel after listening to the pieces of music.



Below are some instructions to get you started.

1. **Get comfortable.** Lying down is preferable, particularly if you're doing a body scan meditation before you fall asleep. If that's not possible or comfortable, sitting comfortably is also an option.
2. **Take a few deep breaths.** Let your breathing slow down and start breathing from your belly instead of from your chest, letting your abdomen expand and contract with each breath. If you find your shoulders rising and falling with each breath, focus more on breathing from your belly, as though a balloon is inflating and deflating in your abdomen with each breath. For more practice, try these [breathing exercises](#).
3. **Bring awareness to your feet.** Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. If you notice pain, acknowledge it and any thoughts or emotions that accompany it, and gently breathe through it.
4. **Breathe into the tension.** If you notice any uncomfortable sensations, focus your attention on them. Breathe into them and see what happens. Visualize the tension leaving your body through your breath and evaporating into the air. Move on when you feel ready.
5. **Scan your entire body.** Continue this practice with each area of your body, gradually moving up through your feet until you reach the top of your head. Notice how you feel and where you're holding your stress. If there's any tightness, pain, or pressure, continue to breathe into any tightness, pain, or pressure you're feeling. This can help you release tension in your body now and be more aware of it in the future so you can release it then, too.

Counted Breathing

Counting your breaths can be helpful, both for pacing and as a form of meditation. This technique helps with pacing—it enables you to elongate your breath and stretch out your exhales. There are a few ways to do this.

- As you inhale, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth right behind your teeth, then breathe through your nose and slowly count down from five; on the exhale, let the air escape through your mouth and count back up to eight. Then repeat. This helps you to really empty your lungs and relax into each breath.
- A variation of this is known as "4-7-8 breathing," and is recommended by wellness expert Dr. Andrew Weil. With this option, you inhale for a count of four, wait for a count of seven, and exhale for a count of eight. This allows you to pause between breaths and slow things down.

Visualization Breathing: Inflating the Balloon

Get into a comfortable position, close your eyes, and begin breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you inhale, imagine that your abdomen is inflating with air like a balloon. As you exhale, imagine that the air is escaping the balloon slowly. Remember, you do not have to force the air out; it simply escapes on its own, in its own time. You may want to imagine the balloon as your favorite color, or that you are floating higher in the sky with each breath if this is relaxing for you. Regardless, the "inflating balloon" visualization can help you to breathe deeply from your diaphragm rather than engaging in shallow breathing that can come from stress.

Action Calendars



COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share 🙌

1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact	2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!	3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why	4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system	5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch	6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them	7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help
8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly	9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them	10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up	11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you	12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast	13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with	14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger
15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you	16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits	17 Learn something new or do something creative	18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity	19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small	20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself	21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with
22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others	23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news	24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths	26 Take a small step towards an important goal	27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year
29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing	30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time	 <p style="margin: 0;">“Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances” ~ Viktor Frankl</p>				

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www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys



ACTION CALENDAR: MINDFUL MARCH 2020



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2 Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful	3 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	4 Start today by appreciating that you're alive and have a body	5 Every hour simply take three calm breaths in and out	6 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture & smell of your food	7 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
8 No plans day. Slow down and let spontaneity take over	9 When someone is speaking, take a full breath before you reply	10 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	11 Notice how you speak to yourself. Try to use kind words	12 Feel the cool of a breeze or warmth of the sun on your face	13 Stop, breathe and just notice. Repeat regularly during the day	14 Enjoy doing any chores or tasks more mindfully today
15 Stop to just watch the sky or clouds for ten minutes today	16 Do something creative that absorbs your attention	17 Look around and spot 3 things you find unusual or pleasant	18 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	19 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	20 Happy International Day of Happiness! dayofhappiness.net	21 Notice the joy to be found in the simple things of life
22 Have a device-free day and enjoy the space it offers	23 Take an unusual route and notice what looks different	24 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible	25 Make a list of amazing things that you take for granted	26 Tune in to your feelings, without judging or trying to change	27 Stop work earlier and use the time to be still and relax	28 Bring to mind all the people you love and care about
29 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	30 Mentally scan down your body and notice what it is feeling	31 Go nature spotting today. Even in a city, life is all around	<p>"Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing" - Jon Kabat-Zinn</p> 			

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- Make a Mind Map or Vision Board.
- Draw things you can see in your garden.
- Knitting, finger knitting and crochet.
- Card Making
- Painting