

**Your Wellbeing update:**

**During prolonged periods of isolation, we may all experience higher levels of stress, (remember small amounts of this can be good for us!) but if it is affecting our lives and making us unhappy there are some things that we can do to try and reduce this.**

**In this guide there are some suggestions to help, choose as many that work for you, and also some activities to try.**

**Write things down**

Keep a diary of both positive and negative thoughts. See how you are improving and if there are any patterns, if hormones or other people’s reactions are affecting you. Just getting your thoughts down on paper can be therapeutic.

**Exercise**

ANY exercise is good as it releases endorphins that make you feel good; it distracts you, makes you feel less sluggish and can continue to you sleeping better. Doing this when isolated can be tricky, but there are lots of apps and YouTube channels that you can complete in your living rooms.

Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ) to go to Joe Wick’s YouTube channel and have a go!

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a powerful way to handle stress and to live life more fully. Mindfulness is about living fully in the PRESENT moment, without judgement, and with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. It’s about breathing, noticing what’s happening right HERE and NOW, sending a gentle smile to whatever you’re experiencing in this moment, then LETTING GO. You can be mindful anytime, no matter what you’re doing. It takes time to practice being mindful, especially if you are stressed, so keep at it.

**Do something you enjoy!**

You can’t work all the time; you need to ensure you have breaks to help relax you.

Read, do some mindful colouring, talk to your friends, cook, do some exercise, get some fresh air in the garden – whatever you enjoy.

You might find new things you enjoy during this time.

**Be organised**

Make lists of things that need to be done and prioritise them – give each day meaning. Make sure you write things down so you don’t forget and create a schedule to follow – having a routine will give you direction and purpose.

**Being Positive**

Don’t sit there and say, ‘I can’t’, say ‘I can!’. Don’t say ‘but…’ and make excuses. You have achieved things in the past and you WILL achieve things in the future, you have got through tough times in the past and you CAN get through this!

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| **Audio books**  [Audible](https://stories.audible.com/discovery) has made many books available for free including books by David Walliams | **Film club**  Watch movies with your friends on Google Hangouts/Zoom. Pick a different film each week – you could start a vlog of your reviews!  There’s also [Netflix Party](https://www.netflixparty.com/) which you can use to watch Netflix shows at the same time as your friends | **Art class**  Pick up our pain and learn to draw with [Rob](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPeyVoZyBzY) on YouTube |
| **Become a tech genius**  Check out [Geek Gurl Diaries](http://www.geekgurldiaries.co.uk/) for all stuff tech related | **See the universe**  Explore the world with a virtual tour of the [Great Wall](https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china) of China.  Or, go to another world and experience a virtual tour of [Mars](https://accessmars.withgoogle.com/) | **Learn a new language**  [Rosetta Stone](https://www.rosettastone.com/freeforstudents/) are offering three months free to learn a new language |
| **Become a rock star**  [Fender](https://try.fender.com/play/playthrough/) are offering three months free guitar, bass or ukulele lessons | **Become a DJ**  Become a DJ from your phone with these free [DJ](https://www.bestdjgear.net/best-free-dj-software/) apps | **Build your world**  [Minecraft](https://www.minecraft.net/en-us/article/free-educational-content-minecraft-marketplace-) are offering some free content to use |

**Shake it out!**

During the stress response, blood flows to the major muscles to allow them to act, but blood flow to the hands and feet can be decreased. The act of shaking a body part increases circulation (improves blood flow) and encourages tense muscles to release their hold. Hold your arm away from your body, make your hand and wrist limp, and shake your hand back and forth and all around. Do this for a few seconds. Now stop. See how much more relaxed that hand feels? To include the relaxation response, shake your hands.

**Yawn and stretch**

Have you ever noticed that dogs yawn when they’re nervous? There is good reason – yawning triggers relaxation. Dogs yawn to help calm themselves down in stressful situations. A yawn forces you to take a deep breath, slow down the breathing, and to exhale fully. This counteracts the fast-shallow breathing experienced as a symptom of stress and anxiety. Stretching is effective in lengthening the muscles – the opposite of short, tensed muscles – try it! Open your mouth wide, yawn loudly with a big sigh, and stretch your arms above your head and out to the sides. Make sure to stretch out the back and shoulder muscles – key places where tension can build up.

**Deep Breathing**

When we are stressed or anxious, our breathing becomes rapid. Often breathing gets shallow, which causes a feeling of being unable to catch your breath. Other times, breathing is too fast and deep, which can cause a lightheaded feeling and numbness or tingling of the extremities. Deep breathing not only helps to cure anxiety and stress but can trigger relaxation.

Slow down your breathing by inhaling slowly to the count of four, pause to the count of three, exhale slowly to the count of five.