

Staying home ... and staying well



COVID-19: Taking care of yourself and your family

Keep your distance. Wash your hands. Work from home. Only go out for the essentials. We've all heard the many crucial precautions we need to take to protect our physical health during this time. But taking care of your stress level and mental health is just as important when our routines have been disrupted to help ensure social distancing doesn't become social isolation. **Here are some ideas for self-care and stress reduction:**



Stay with your regular routine

Is it Wednesday? Or maybe it's Friday? Whether you're used to going to work or school, the abrupt change in routine means you need to create a new one. So get up at the same time every day. Set a regular time for meals. Dress as you would if you were going out. Structure helps us organize our lives, and provides a sense of normalcy in these decidedly un-normal times.



Stay active

Exercise is always important, but now more than ever it can be a way to take care of yourself and de-stress. Take a walk, ride a bike, go for a run. If you're inside, you can exercise along with videos on YouTube, join an online fitness class or even have an impromptu dance party. Exercise can be as simple as doing heel raises while you're washing dishes or going up and down the stairs to get your blood pumping. What's important is to keep moving!



Stay healthy

When you're home a lot, it can be tempting to sit in front of the television with a snack – or lots of snacks. But it's important to keep to a healthy, balanced diet that includes good proteins, such as meats or legumes, fresh or canned fruit and vegetables, and plenty of water. Comfort foods can be high in sugar and saturated fats – it's better to opt for foods that are high in protein and potassium, which have been shown to help keep a calm mood.



Stay connected

It's important to stay informed with the latest news and ongoing developments. But sometimes you have to silence the notifications and the breaking headlines and connect with your loved ones. Take a break, turn off the news, and watch a rerun of your favorite old show. Download a funny movie. Listen to some music. Play board games, read that book you always meant to get to, reorganize your closet. Or just enjoy the silence.

And remember to reach out to your friends and family – especially those who live alone and may be isolated. Facetime, Skype, or call the people you'd ordinarily visit – and don't forget to check up on your older relatives to make sure they're doing OK!

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