

Look after yourself whilst staying at home



Plan

As tempting as it might be to stay in your pyjamas all day, regular routines keep us going. Try to start your day at about the same time you usually would. Aim to set aside time each day for movement, relaxation, connection and reflection. Plan the practical things that could cause you to worry such as picking up essential supplies, getting your prescriptions on time, your finances and any caring responsibilities. Let the Worcestershire Association of Carers know if you provide care or support someone you don't live with. Find out more information at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/carers.



Stay connected

Whilst you may feel isolated right now, you're never alone because we're all in this together. Find creative ways to keep in touch with co-workers, friends, family and others to help you all feel more connected and supported.

This could be by post, over the phone, social media or video-chat. Why not share a cup of tea over video, play an online game together or simply send a supportive text message?



Get a little 'me time' in a busy home

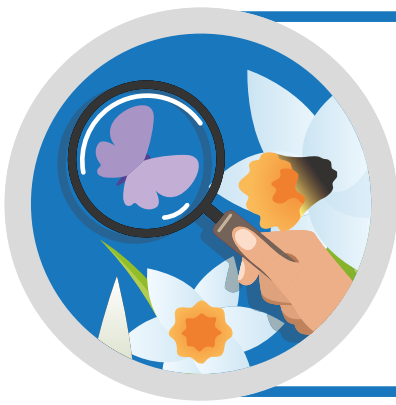
If you are in a busy household, you all need to respect each other's space and let each other have some downtime. Enjoy a bath, read a book in peace or whatever you like to do to relax. If you are in a household with children and more than one adult, take it in turns with childcare to give each other some space.



Keep your mind active

Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, jigsaws, drawing or painting. Find something that works for you. Learning something new is a great way to stimulate the brain and tune out any anxious thoughts.

There's lots of free online courses including the Open University website. Perhaps you could pick up that musical instrument that's been gathering dust. There's lots of downloadable books, magazines and audiobooks through Worcestershire libraries.



Take notice of things around you

There's no rush hour at the moment so slow down and take notice of everything you normally miss. There's lots to see if you look closely, Spring is a beautiful time of year. Taking notice and staying in the moment stops us focusing too much on past events and worrying about the future. Practising mindfulness is a great way of focusing on being fully present in the moment.



Enjoy yourself

Setting aside time in your day to do the things you enjoy is a good way to distract yourself. You could read a book, watch a comedy programme, play board games or get out in the fresh air - just do whatever you enjoy!

If you can't do the things you normally enjoy, think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. Many people are coming up with innovative online solutions like online pub quizzes and streamed live music concerts.



Be active

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. It can also improve your mental wellbeing by causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood. It also raises your self-esteem.

You could try cycling or running. If you have never run before you could start with Couch to 5K. Please keep to the recommended two metres away from other people. If you can't get out of the house, there's plenty of workouts available online.



Eat well

Eat three nutritional meals a day, not forgetting your five portions of fruit and vegetables. With a little more time on your hands you could experiment with new recipes. If you need help getting food, ask a neighbour or a loved one to help. If you are alone without anyone to help you get food, please contact Here2Help.

Don't forget to stay hydrated. Drinking lots of water helps keep you healthy.



Improve your sleep

There is a lot you can do to help you sleep. Aim to get up at the same time each day and go to bed at the same time, even at the weekend. Try to get some natural sunlight. This helps to regulate your body clock which can help you sleep better.

Avoid using your phone, tablet, computer or TV for an hour before bedtime to help you wind down.



Stay informed but not too much

Stay aware of what's going on in the world but avoid speculation and use reliable sources such as [worcestershireshire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk), [gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or www.nhs.uk. Watch the news regularly but don't stay glued to it.



Help and support others

It's true, giving is better than receiving. Since the Coronavirus Covid 19 England has seen overwhelming numbers of acts of kindness. Can you volunteer your time? You could help someone who is self-isolating on your street with their shopping. You can volunteer through the County Council's Here 2 Help website or volunteer with the NHS. Please remember to do this in line with guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep yourself and everyone safe.



Pay attention to your feelings

It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless at the moment. This is a difficult time for everyone. It is OK to share your fears with others you trust - doing so could help them too. If you are feeling anxious try to focus upon what you can control, including where you get information from and what you can do to make yourself feel better prepared. If you have panic attacks or flashbacks, it might help to plan a 'safe space' in your home to go to. Find ways to comfort yourself when feeling anxious. This could include games and puzzles or breathing exercises.

Sources

We have taken these tips from the following sources, which you may find useful to look at in more detail:

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19
- www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
- <https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/staying-at-home?bblinkid=211101862&bbemailid=19989179&bbemailid=1415736964>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- <https://www.rethink.org/news-and-stories/blogs/2020/03/managing-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>
- <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>