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Looking after ourselves in stressful times

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected us all in different ways. This is a general guide aimed at helping us to maintain or build up our physical, emotional and mental resilience when we need it most.



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Look after your body

Our diet, water intake and exercise hugely impact how we feel. Frequent unhealthy choices can have a negative affect on our mood. Try to keep a healthy diet and drink plenty of water.

- Make sure you are getting lots of fruit and veg
- Challenge yourself to try new recipes
- Limit takeaways, snacks and sugary sweets
- Keep a track of how much water you drink (we all need 6-8 glasses of fluid each day (tea & coffee count... alcohol doesn't!))
- Keep active
- Limit alcohol to recommended weekly amount (men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis)

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Keep active

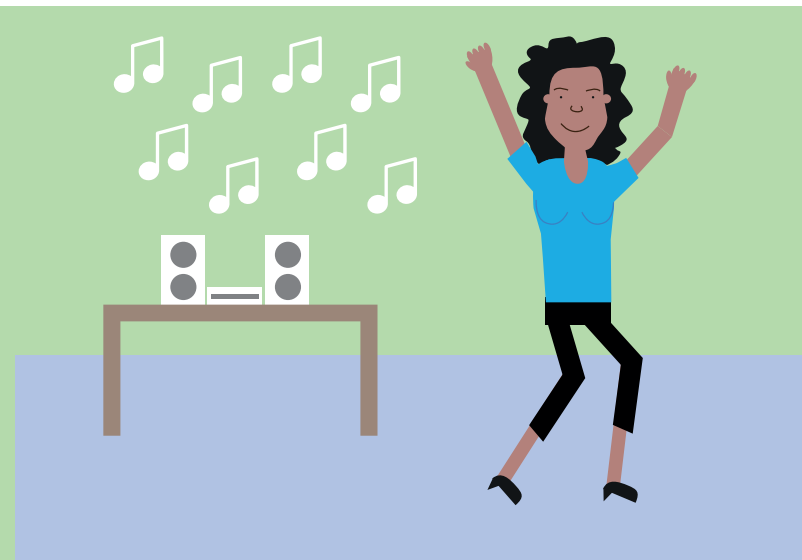
You may not have any gym equipment but there are some simple ways to exercise at home or out and about for free. Getting active each day helps boost mood and can be fun!

Dancing, housework, online workouts e.g. yoga

Going for a walk, going for a bike ride

Keep a track of your exercise and challenge yourself daily to do a bit more

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How can I keep active?

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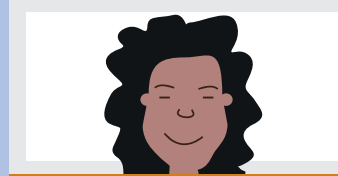


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Sleep

Sleep has significant impact on how we feel physically, mentally and emotionally. A good night's sleep can improve your mood and resilience. Try to cut back on caffeine and screen time, have a wind down routine and try to keep to a regular bed and wake up time.

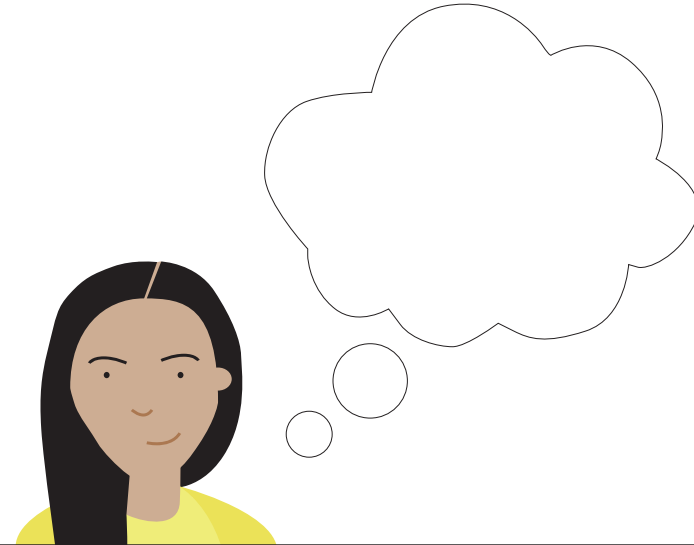
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What changes might improve my sleep?

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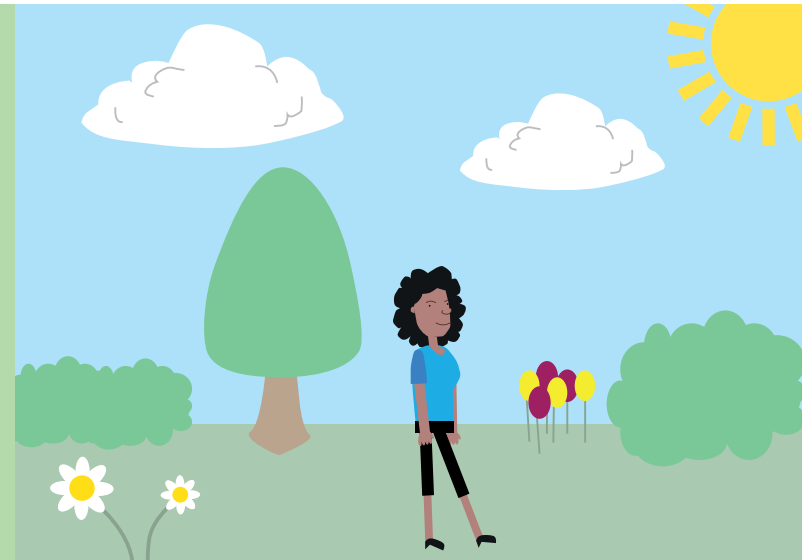
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Get back to nature

Getting enough fresh air, sunlight and connecting with the natural world can have a positive effect on mood. Getting out and being in nature can relax you and relieve stress.

Go for walks in different weathers, sit in the garden, visit a park or go to the beach.

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What can I do that will help me connect with nature?

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Keep your mind active

Do things you enjoy
Focus on what you are doing in the present moment; this can really help if you tend to get caught up in worry

Take time to indulge in your favourite hobby. Challenge yourself by learning something new or get engrossed in a good book. Having something to keep your mind active can help with anxious thoughts and feelings. Doing something you enjoy can also improve your mood. Be creative with what you can do at home and look online for inspiration.

Arts and crafts
Music
A puzzle
A book

Listen to radio or podcasts
Watch a film
Learn a foreign language
Try a new recipe

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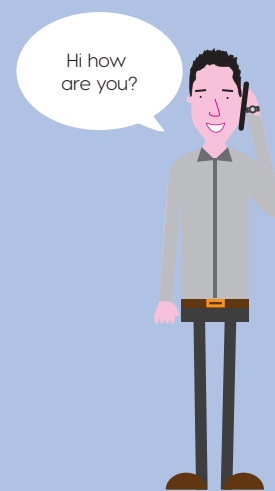
What can I do to occupy my mind?



Stay connected

Talking and connecting with people you know well, old friends you've lost touch with, or perhaps distant relatives from overseas can improve our well-being. They may be really pleased to receive a call; talking might help them too!

Think of ways to keep in contact: video calls, phone calls, a letter or online. If you are struggling to find things to say you could suggest a quiz, talk about a TV programme you've both seen or both read a book and then compare notes.



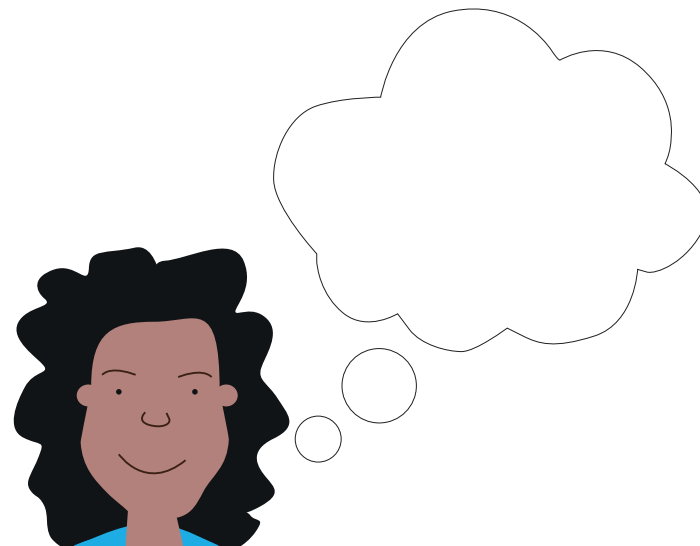
Talk about worries

In times of stress we worry. Fear and anxiety is a completely normal response to stressful situations; it can really help to share your feelings with someone you trust.

- Phone a friend and have a chat about how you're feeling
- Talk to family members if you can
- Use helplines
- Seek help through charities or support groups
- Talk to health professionals if you feel overwhelmed by your worries and are struggling to cope



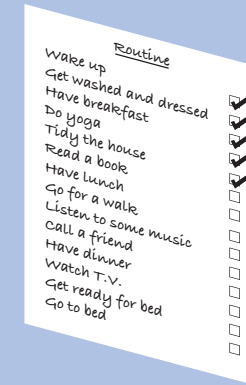
People, professionals, groups and helplines that I can contact



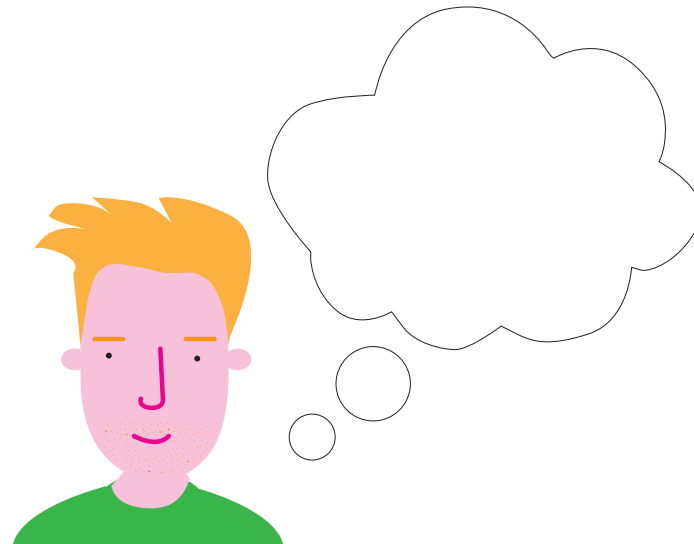
Think about daily routine

Think about your daily routine; does it work for you? Plan your day/ week, there may be things you want to achieve each day; try to keep a balance between work, rest and leisure. If working from home try to keep to normal working hours. Try to go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day.

Having a good routine helps you achieve your goals and helps you have a sense purpose. If your routine isn't working for you; can you shake it up and try something new?



Do I have a routine?
What routine do I want?



Plan time to relax

It's important to plan time to relax. This could simply be taking notice of the present moment or being creative with how you spend your time.

Ways to relax

- Mindfulness
- Gardening/ DIY
- Listening to music, playing music or singing along
- Doing some creative writing
- Meditation or yoga
- Pamper yourself
- Have a bath
- Watch a film
- Listen to podcast/ audio books



What can I do to relax?



Take care with news and information

When frightening global, national or local events occur the intense coverage and frequent news updates can add to our anxiety. Try and limit the time you spend reading, watching and listening to the news and be mindful of your time on social media if you feel it is adding to your anxiety and stress levels.

Set a time for getting up to date information e.g. set time aside for one update per day from a source that you feel is credible; consider taking breaks from the news and social media.

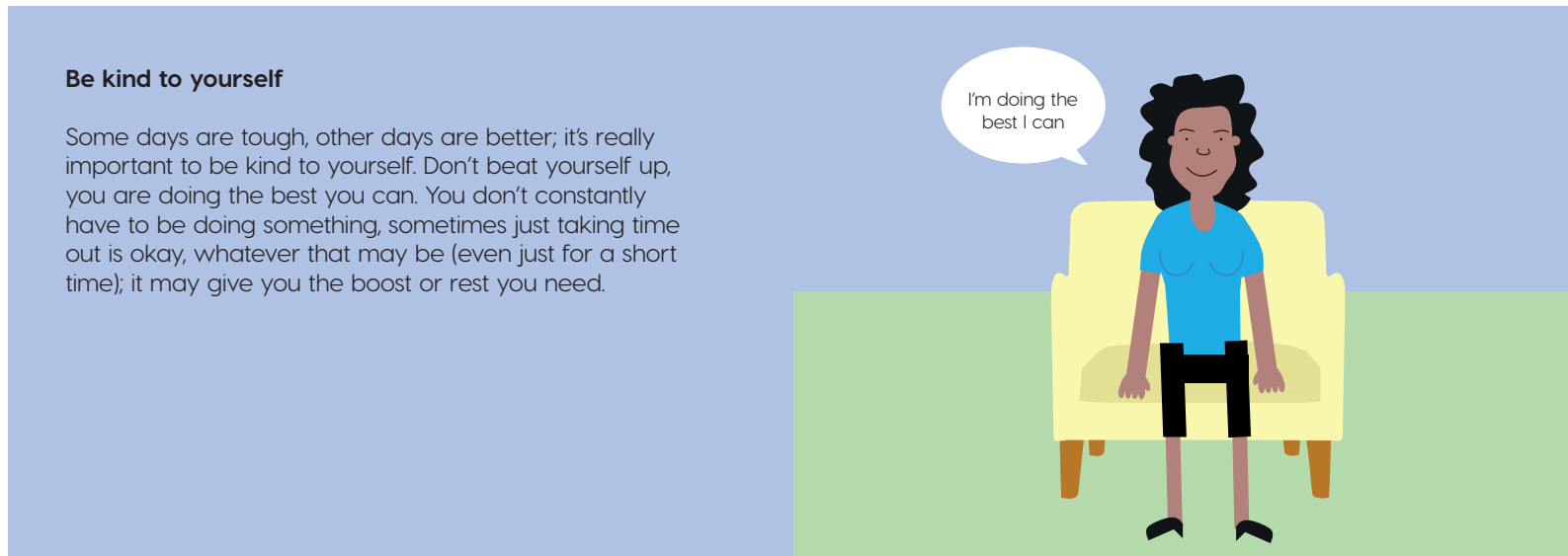


How can I manage news and information?



Be kind to yourself

Some days are tough, other days are better; it's really important to be kind to yourself. Don't beat yourself up, you are doing the best you can. You don't constantly have to be doing something, sometimes just taking time out is okay, whatever that may be (even just for a short time); it may give you the boost or rest you need.

**Wellbeing Resources & Helplines**

World Health Organisation; Doing What Matter in Times of Stress

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003927>

Mental Wellbeing While Staying at Home

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

Eating Well

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Sleep Advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

Exercising at Home

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-workouts/>

Nature & Mental Health

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/nature-and-mental-health/how-nature-benefits-mental-health/>

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<p>Relaxation https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation/relaxation-tips/</p> <p>Helplines</p> <p>Solent Mind – 023 8017 9049 https://www.solentmind.org.uk/support-for-you/our-services/coronavirus-wellbeing-helpline/</p> <p>Samaritans – 116 123</p> <p>Rethink Mental Health Charity https://www.rethink.org/aboutus/what-we-do/advice-and-information-service/get-help-now/</p>

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<p>YouTube</p> <p>Solent NHS Mindfulness Resources https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFbeQITqQPGLAmNgKs0srX9Vau7mctFf</p> <p>Dealing with Anxiety & Stress During the Pandemic https://youtu.be/xzNMABRELPg</p> <p>Apps</p> <p>Solent Mind Wellbeing App https://www.solentmind.org.uk/news-events/news/download-the-new-solent-mind-wellbeing-app/</p>
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<p>Mental Health Apps Library https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/</p>

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<p>Notes</p>



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