

Staying Well when social distancing

Some top tips from Occupational Therapists

As we undertake social distancing to help save lives during the corona outbreak, not to be able to go about your daily routine or undertake the activities you can normally do, can seem challenging. We know that during this period it's really important that you look after your mental and emotional wellbeing as well as your physical health over this time. We've put together some tips, ideas for activities and ways you can best plan your time while you are at home to support you with this.

Stay focussed on what is in your control

It is easy to get lost in worrying about all sorts of things that are out with your control. Whilst this is natural, it is not helpful for you or others. Here are some tips for focussing on what you can control.



❖ Develop an at home daily routine:

Try to include a mix of activities you enjoy, that give you a sense of achievement and help you connect with others. Avoid sitting on the couch for too long. Staying occupied can really help! **We've attached guidance for how to find that balance, and plan a routine for a day.**

❖ Focus on an activity you enjoy

Think about an activity that is important to you, can you adapt this to do at home? **We've attached a list of suggestions for many activities you can do at home.**



❖ Set a goal/s for yourself each day

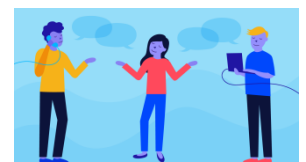
This could include working through a list of things you've been meaning to do or contacting somebody you haven't been in touch with for a while.

Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

We are all going to face challenges as a result of Covid-19 and it is normal to feel a range of emotions. Try to identify how you are feeling. Write these thoughts and feelings down if you find this helpful or talk to somebody you trust about how you are feeling.

Communicate and Stay in touch

- ❖ Keep contact with friends, family and neighbours over the phone, social media platforms and Skype.
- ❖ Talk to them about how you can support each other.



Take care of yourself



Try to take care of your health and wellbeing whilst at home.

- ❖ **Drink lots of water and try to eat fruit and vegetables to boost your immune system. Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions. If you are feeling overwhelmed talk to somebody you can trust.**

- ❖ **Draw on skills and coping strategies that have helped you to manage your mental health in the past.**

- ❖ **Develop a good sleep routine:**
 - Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
 - Don't spend the day in bed.
 - Limit the amount of tea and coffee you drink in the afternoon
 - If you're having difficulty sleeping try some of the suggested relaxation activities to help you rest.

- ❖ **Limit the amount of time you spend watching or listening to the news:**
 - Staying up to date can be important but try not to get too bogged down in news and updates
 - Try watching the news or reading the paper for only 30-60mins a day
 - It's easy to get caught up in rumours so use a reliable source for updates such as NHS inform:
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

- ❖ **Take a deep breath and practice relaxation**

Try this simple mindfulness activity; notice each of your senses in this moment by counting:

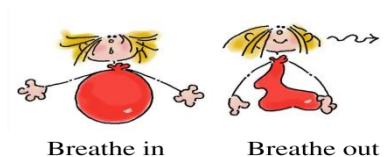
5 things you can see

4 things you can hear

3 things you can smell

2 things you can touch

Take **1** deep breath

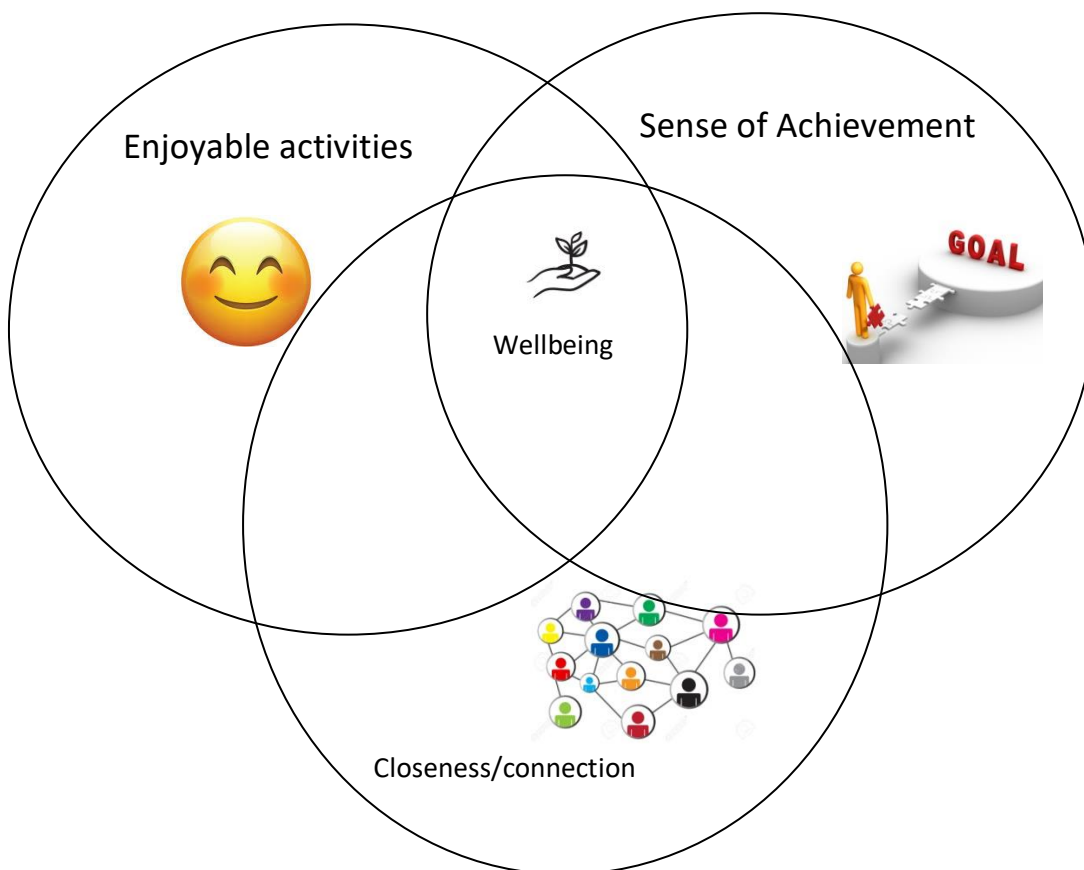


See below for on-line resources to include relaxation exercises.

Finding a Balance

Look after your wellbeing by finding a balance between enjoyable activities that make you feel good, activities that give you a sense of achievement and those that help you to feel connected to others.

- ❖ When we are struggling with our mental health and wellbeing we can lose touch with things that we used to find enjoyable.
- ❖ Plan to do some activities each day that you enjoy or have enjoyed in the past
- ❖ For example, watching a comedy, or listen to music that makes you feel good.
- ❖ We feel good when we have achieved or accomplished something.
- ❖ Try doing something each day that gives you a sense of achievement.
- ❖ For example, do some housework, decorate, exercise or cook a meal from scratch.



- ❖ We are social beings so we naturally crave connection with other people. With the current crisis many of us may be isolated or distant from others, so it's important that we consider creative ways to connect.
- ❖ Try connecting with family and friends through phone and video calls or social media.
- ❖ Check-in with neighbours – ask if there's any way you can support each other or check local face book pages to find out about supports in your community.

My Planner

My Routine

Example: 8:00 – 9:00am: wake up and have a hot drink, 9:00 – 09:30am: do some light exercise.

- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..
- ❖ Breakfast
- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..
- ❖ Lunch
- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..
- ❖ Dinner
- ❖ ..
- ❖ ..

My Goals

Example: I will start reading a new book this week or I will de-clutter and clean the cupboard by the end of the week.

- ❖ ..

- ❖ ..

- ❖ ..

- ❖ ..

Self Care Plan

- ❖ Activities I enjoy:

- ❖ What I'll do to stay in touch with people:

- ❖ Activities that give me a sense of achievement:

Reflect

Check in with yourself at the end of each day.

What went well today?

What changes could you make tomorrow?

Use An Activity Menu To Give You Some Ideas To Stay Occupied



Animals

Pet an animal
Walk a dog
Listen to the birds



Be active

Go for a walk
Go for a run
Go for a swim
Go cycling
Use an exercise video at home



Clean

Clean the house
Clean the yard
Clean the bathroom
Clean the toilet
Clean your bedroom
Clean the fridge
Clean the oven
Clean your shoes
Do the washing up
Fill / empty the dishwasher
Do laundry
Do some chores
Organise your workspace
Clean a cupboard



Connect with people

Contact a friend
Join a new group
Join a political party
Join a dating website
Send a message to a friend
Write a letter to a friend
Reconnect with an old friend



Cook

Cook a meal for yourself
Cook a meal for someone else
Bake a cake / cookies
Roast marshmallows
Find a new recipe



Create

Draw a picture
Paint a portrait
Take a photograph
Doodle / sketch
Organise photographs
Make a photograph album
Start a scrapbook
Finish a project
Do some sewing / knitting



Expression

Laugh
Cry
Sing
Shout
Scream



Kindness

Help a friend / neighbour / stranger
Make a gift for someone
Try a random act of kindness
Do someone a favour
Teach somebody a skill
Do something nice for someone
Plan a surprise for someone
Make a list of your good points
Make a list of things or people you are grateful for



Learn

Learn something new
Learn a new skill
Learn a new fact
Watch a tutorial video



Mend

Repair something in the house
Repair your bike / car / scooter
Make something new
Change a lightbulb
Decorate a room



Mind

Daydream
Meditate
Pray
Reflect
Think
Try relaxation exercises
Practise yoga



Music

Listen to music you like
Find some new music to listen to
Turn on the radio
Make some music
Sing a song
Play an instrument
Listen to a podcast



Nature

Try some gardening
Plant something
Do some pruning
Mow the lawn
Pick flowers
Buy flowers
Go for a walk in nature
Sit in the sun



Plan

Set a goal
Create a budget
Make a 5 year plan
Make a 'to do' list
Make a 'bucket list'
Make a shopping list



Read

Read a favourite book
Read a new book
Read the newspaper
Read your favourite website



Schedule

Get up extra early
Stay up late
Sleep in late
Tick something off your 'to do' list



Self care

Take a bath
Take a shower
Wash your hair
Give yourself a facial
Trim your nails
Sunbathe (wear sunscreen!)
Take a nap



Try something new

Try a new food
Listen to some new music
Watch a new TV show or movie
Wear some new clothes
Read a new book
Do something spontaneous
Express yourself



Watch

Watch a movie
Watch a TV show
Watch a YouTube video



Write

Write a letter with compliments
Write a letter to your politician
Write an angry letter
Write a grateful letter
Write a 'thank you' card
Write a journal / diary
Write your CV
Start writing a book

On-line Resources

Ideas for on-line activities you can do at home including exercise, relaxation and learning opportunities and local community resources





- ❖ **Chatter Pack: An excellent list of resources covering self-help; on-line learning; arts & culture; music & entertainment**

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

Exercise – (please respect social distancing guidelines if walking & exercising outside)

- ❖ **Midlothian Active Choices Face Book page:**

The team are posting daily exercise and activity videos as well as holistic wellbeing hints and tips. The Facebook page is a closed group but if you have a MAC card they will accept your request.


- ❖ Try an at home exercise programme: try an exercise app, you tube video or DVD.
 - ❖ Useful Apps that you could try: Couch to 5K  Walking for weight Loss  7 minute workout  Daily workouts – exercise fitness workout trainer 
 - ❖ Keep moving – even doing household tasks or DIY can also help you stay active.
-

Relax and Restore

- ❖ **Thinking of starting a mindfulness/meditation practice?**

<https://soundstrue.lpages.co/mindfulness-daily/>

This is a free 40 day mindfulness course, including 15minute practices each day.

Useful Apps to try: **Relaxation: Stop, breathe and think**  **Feeling Good** (The Feeling Good App uses relaxation, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and resilience building techniques from sport to help improve positive feelings, self-esteem and selfconfidence. This app is for anyone who feels worried or stressed, and those who want to improve their mental wellbeing (You will need to use this username: lothianwifef1 & password: positive)

Local Community

- ❖ **Join local Face Book pages including ‘What’s on in Dalkeith’; Residents Info Forum – Bonnyrigg & Lasswade; Penicuik Residents Forum; ’ or ‘The Gorebridge Community Fridge’ to see what’s going on in your community.**
- ❖ **Midlothian Volunteer Centre: <https://www.volunteermidlothian.org.uk/news-events/coronavirus-response-in-midlothian-how-to-get-involved/>**

