Looking after yourself during lockdown

Nutrition

What we eat affects the way we feel as well as our physical health. By improving your diet, you can potentially improve your mood, have more energy, and be able to think more clearly.

- If possible eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day
- Try to include dairy or dairy alternatives every day
- Eat beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other forms of protein
- Have small amounts of oils and spreads and where possible choose unsaturated forms.
- Drink plenty of fluids - guidelines suggest at least 6-8 glasses per day

Useful links
1 The Eatwell Guide - NHS
2 How to manage your mood with food | 8 tips
3 18 meals you can make for under £1

Exercise

Each one of us should do some form of physical activity every day, following the government guidelines. Whether that be running, walking, gardening, dancing at home, or simply cleaning the house, it all adds up to better health. Many people find that physical activity helps them maintain positive mental health. Choose an activity that you enjoy, and that will fit into your daily life.

Useful links
5 ways to get moving and feel better - Mind
10-minute workouts - NHS

Relaxation and mindfulness

Just taking some time away from your normal routines and thoughts can give you the space you need to feel calmer.

Paying more attention to the present moment, including your thoughts, feelings, your body and the world around you can improve your mental wellbeing. This awareness is sometimes called 'Mindfulness' and can help you understand yourself better.

Mindfulness and relaxation links
Abide
3 minute breathing meditation
How to relax | 8 relaxation tips for your mental health

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Additional helpful links on mental health

[Coronavirus and your mental health – Mind](#)

[Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people](#)

[Additional information about taking care of your mental health if you live in Northern Ireland](#)

[Additional information about taking care of your mental health if you live in Wales](#)

[Additional information about coronavirus and your mental wellbeing from the Scottish Association for Mental Health](#)

Sleep

Even though our life's routine has changed a lot right now, it is best to try and keep a good routine for our sleep. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time each day, and visit the [NHS sleep tips webpage for useful advice.](#)

Anxiety and worry

It's normal for you to feel more anxious or worried right now. Here are some ways you can try to manage and process those feelings. If your anxiety becomes overwhelming, you should speak to your GP.

- Talk to someone you trust about what's making you anxious
- Set aside a specific time to focus on your worries so you can reassure yourself you haven't forgotten to think about them
- Write down your worries and keep them in a particular place
- Try to get enough sleep, eat regularly and exercise. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences.
- Make a note of what happens when you get anxious or have a panic attack. This could help you spot patterns in what triggers these experiences for you, or notice early signs that they are beginning to happen.
- Make a note of what's going well. Living with anxiety can mean you think a lot about things that worry you or are hard to do. It's important to be kind to yourself and notice the good things too.
- Be careful what you watch. Limit how much you watch the news or look at programmes/articles about COVID-19 as they often cause more worry.
- Pray - you can ask God to help you deal with challenges and problems that you face. Ask for him to give you peace. Philippians 4:6-8 says, 'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.'

For more information about anxiety, visit '[About anxiety' - Mind](#)

If you're supporting someone with Anxiety:
[For friends & family | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)

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Grief and loss

There are many types of loss that can cause us to feel grief (loss of a loved one or pet, loss of health, friendships, a job, or even our freedom), and there are practical steps we can take to grieve well when this happens.

- No matter how much pain you may feel, you will survive your loss.
- Turn to someone you trust, who cares for you, tell them how you feel
- Anger, guilt, fear, anxiety and sorrow are all normal feelings when grieving.
- Drawing comfort from God, praying and meditating can help. Find an online church – there are many during this lockdown period.
- Join a reputable on-line support group.
- Talk to a counsellor if you need to.
- Face your feelings rather than ignoring them
- Express your feelings in a tangible creative way. Write a journal about your loss. Write poems, make a scrapbook or photo album celebrating your loved ones life, draw/paint pictures to express your feelings.
- Look after your physical health. Eat healthy regular meals, get enough sleep and exercise. Don't use drugs, alcohol etc to lift your mood artificially.
- Listen to music that has good memories or comforts your soul.

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