

Some advice on maintaining your wellbeing during self-isolation.

Relevant to: Depression:  Anxiety:  Irritability/Anger:  General emotional control: 

1. Structure each day. Have a morning routine. Get up at pretty much the same time each day and “get ready” for the day. Shower and get into your “day” clothes. Come out of your bedroom area and into a regular morning routine.

- Have an afternoon routine, ideally different from your morning routine, even if you are working from home.
- Have an evening routine.

2. Pay attention to basic wellbeing factors.

- Regular meals, at regular times every day: the body likes a circadian rhythm.
- Regular sleep, with roughly the same bed-time and getting-up time each day, for the same reason.
- Have regular exercise – if the advice is to only go out once per day, try to be out for long enough to gain reasonable benefits. And choose something you enjoy: walking somewhere you enjoy walking (without being too close to people) is ‘the one to beat’.
- In particular, try not to be too ‘sedentary’: get up and move around frequently, even on the slightest pretext!

3. If you are working from home, have set “work” times, as well as set break times. Have a start and finish time for your work if you want to.

4. Whether or not you are working from home, give your brain plenty of variety and pleasurable activity. There’s no harm watching a lot of TV, but it’s often good to see a variety of programs. The same with reading, or listening to radio and podcasts or music. There is a great **List of Things to Do** at www.moodmaster.co.uk (go to ‘Open Resources’ at the bottom of the website).



5. Physical isolation without social isolation.

- Have set social contact time (phone, skype, Zoom etc) with friends and family, as often as you like: every day, more often or less often, but try to make it regular.
- You can have virtual contact as often as you like: coffee breaks, meal breaks, evening drinks meetings, whatever you like.



6. If you are working from home.

- Try to organise one or more “buddy systems” to have regular contact with named colleagues.
- You could also “buddy up” on some shared work tasks.
- It might be a good idea to have a named advocate who may be able to raise issues on your behalf with your manager or the office.
- Just as in the social section above, you might enjoy virtual coffee meetings and virtual drinks get togethers.

7. Celebs and local businesses.

- Some celebrities are doing great things like holding classes on Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. For example, Oti from Strictly and Joe Wicks’ PE workouts. And many local people with small businesses – for example local dance teachers - are trying out a different medium too.
- These can help consolidate a good routine if you find one that’s good and on regularly.

8. Our brains like to learn new things.

This is a new situation for most people, so we probably benefit from doing new things, which means we can learn new things. And the good news is that, generally, our brains like that, and we feel good. So be open to the idea of learning new recipes, new physical skills, being prompted by online book clubs to read books you’ve never read, and so on. The chances are you’ll feel better for it, especially if you choose things that suit your aptitudes.

9. Still having difficulty?

Everybody goes up and down in their mood, but if you know you need help then really don’t be shy of asking for it. Work out where you would get it from before you need it! Write down your ideas so you’ve got them to hand if ever you need them.

10. Give yourself credit.

- What you are doing in self-isolating is protection for you but it is also an altruistic unselfish action as well – it is good for those around you. You deserve credit for it, along with others who are doing the same; it’s good to see society pulling in the same direction.
- And finally, this period of self-isolation is allowed to be a really enjoyable time. You, and most of us, are doing a great thing and there’s no rule that says you have to be worried or miserable, so you can focus on making it a really rewarding time for yourself!

