

# 10 Ways to Mind Your Mental Health During Lockdown

## 1. Start Your Morning Right

A positive morning routine is the most important first step you can take to improve your mood and productivity each day during lockdown. What that routine includes will look different for everyone.

Some morning mindfulness activities include:

- Drink a glass of water as soon as you wake up
- Have a shower first thing, even though you don't have to go to school at the moment.
- Do a 10 minute yoga session to stretch out your body
- Do a 5 minute mindfulness meditation - focus on your thoughts and how you're feeling in your body and mind at that moment. Try to turn your mind to positive actions for the day.

## 2. Focus On Small Positives

With so much going on in the world and most of our lives changed drastically due to Coronavirus, it's easy to focus on big problems. And with less happening in our day-to-day routines, we have fewer goals, events and less news to keep ourselves motivated.

The trick is to find smaller things to be grateful for every day and to give more focus to the simple pleasures and developments in our lives and relationships.

For example:

- Did you get out for fresh air today?
- Did you have a catch up with a loved one/friend?
- Did you make a meal you like?
- Have you started a new hobby?

## 3. Keep To A Routine

Don't get me wrong - there are some days where a lie-in and comfy house clothes are a must. Just make sure you try to keep a semi-regular routine, which for me means:

- Shower at the start of your day
- Dressing yourself
- Have a proper breakfast
- Take a proper lunch break like you were in school
- Try to get outside at least once (when it's safe to do so)

## 4. Remember To Keep Moving

- Setting an hourly alarm to get up and stretch
- Get up for a water every 2 hours
- Go for a 5 minute walk around the house in the morning and/or evening
- Do some at-home yoga or fitness workouts on your phone or TV
- Do a Couch To 5K running program on your phone
- If you're already a runner or cyclist, set yourself a new distance or speed goal to conquer

## 5. Start A Manageable Project Or Learn Something New

Some of our favourite ideas for new hobbies or skills you can take on are:

- Learn a new language - Duolingo is a great app for this!
- Try journaling/take pictures (you'll appreciate a record of your Coronavirus life in years to come)
- Try some craft projects

## 6. Contact A Loved One Every Day

Keeping in touch with those you love is a small but important piece of maintaining your mental health and wellbeing during the lockdown and in normal everyday life.

Pick 1 person each day and video call, voice call or simply send them a text. Ask them how they are, tell them how you are and try to have a laugh. The loneliness that can come with the lockdown sometimes makes us feel like we want to retreat

- Learn a musical instrument: oaim.ie is an Irish website that teaches traditional Irish instruments online
- Start a book club with your friends and family
- Start a podcast
- Become a runner or cyclist (if you're not already)
- Learn how to draw or paint (maybe try a paint by numbers first)
- Learn to cook a new cuisine
- Learn to bake
- Learn to knit and make a gift for someone!

Be kind to yourself and remember that you won't always have the energy each day to be a superhuman and master 10 new skills in 10 hours. But it's a healthy idea to keep a small project ticking over every few days or to learn small parts of a new hobby or skill slowly over a few days, weeks or months.

but it's reaching out to our closest friends and family that helps pull us out of those feelings



### 7. Do Something For Others

It can be hard to find the inner strength to pick yourself up and create positive thoughts in your own mind. Maybe you've tried everything on this list and it's just not coming from within yourself today. That's completely okay!

One of the most sure-fire ways we know of to lighten your inner load is to do something kind for someone else. The act of giving boosts your natural endorphins and can give you the lift you need whilst improving someone else's day.

You can go big with a gesture of some sort:

- Send flowers
- Buy a digital voucher for someone
- Record a funny or silly video and send it to a loved one
- Write a letter to an elderly relative, neighbour or friend
- Ask a neighbour if they need any help (groceries, walking a dog or just a chat through the fence)
- Bake something as a gift for someone (keeping social distancing in mind when you deliver it)
- Plan a group video call for someone's birthday

### 8. Be Kind To Yourself And Practice Self Care

Life at home can make the days all blur into each other after a few weeks. Besides the tips in this guide, you should also create a special moment in each day to practice self-love, compassion or fun. Being kind to yourself during the lockdown doesn't just mean you shouldn't judge yourself, it also means you should treat yourself with small acts that make you happy.

These are some ideas for how you can treat yourself:

- Make a special meal
- Buy a new eBook or online film
- Run a hot bath
- Make a tasty dessert or have something sweet
- Listen to your favourite album
- Listen to a good podcast
- Read a good book
- Hug your dog or cat
- Do some yoga
- Meditate
- Rearrange a space in your home
- Watch one of your favourite movies
- Make a fancy coffee
- Try a new tea
- Light some incense or scented candle

- Do a chore around the house that someone in your family hates doing
- Make a family member breakfast in bed
- Donate old clothes to clothing bank
- Make someone a homemade gift

Or you can keep it super simple:

- Ask someone how they're doing, particularly if you know they're struggling
- Send a funny picture or gif to someone
- Post on social media asking your circle to reply with something positive - e.g. a good piece of news, something funny or a favourite quote
- Thank an employee for their hard work at a supermarket, hospital or police checkpoint
- Place a note in a neighbour's mailbox with a positive thought
- Reach out to a friend you've lost touch with
- Let someone go in front of you in a queue
- Make your loved one's favourite meal
- Send a message to a friend or family member telling them what you love about them
- Let someone in your household pick a show or film they love to watch in the evening



### FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING



INTRODUCE THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS. Mental Health Foundation

### 9. Have a digital detox

Be sure to put down your phone, put away the device, game console or laptop and do something else. Too much screen time is not only bad for your eyes, but also your ability to fall asleep. Make sure that you put away your phone and dim the lighting in your home one hour before bed. Most phones have sleep settings that stop notifications interfering at night-time as well as reminders to go to bed or alternatively, leave your phone in another room at night and set a traditional alarm clock.

### 10. Get To Bed On Time

If you don't have to be anywhere in the morning or if your commute now consists of a walk from the bedroom to your desk, then you might find your bedtime is creeping later and later. However, getting a good night's sleep is one of the most important things you can do to support your mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Maybe set an alarm an hour before you'd like to be in bed each night to remind yourself to wind down?