

## 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:

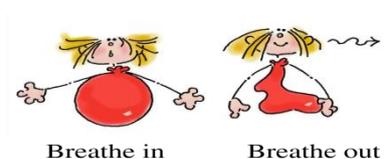
**5** things you can see

**4** things you can hear

**3** things you can smell

**2** things you can touch

Take **1** deep breath

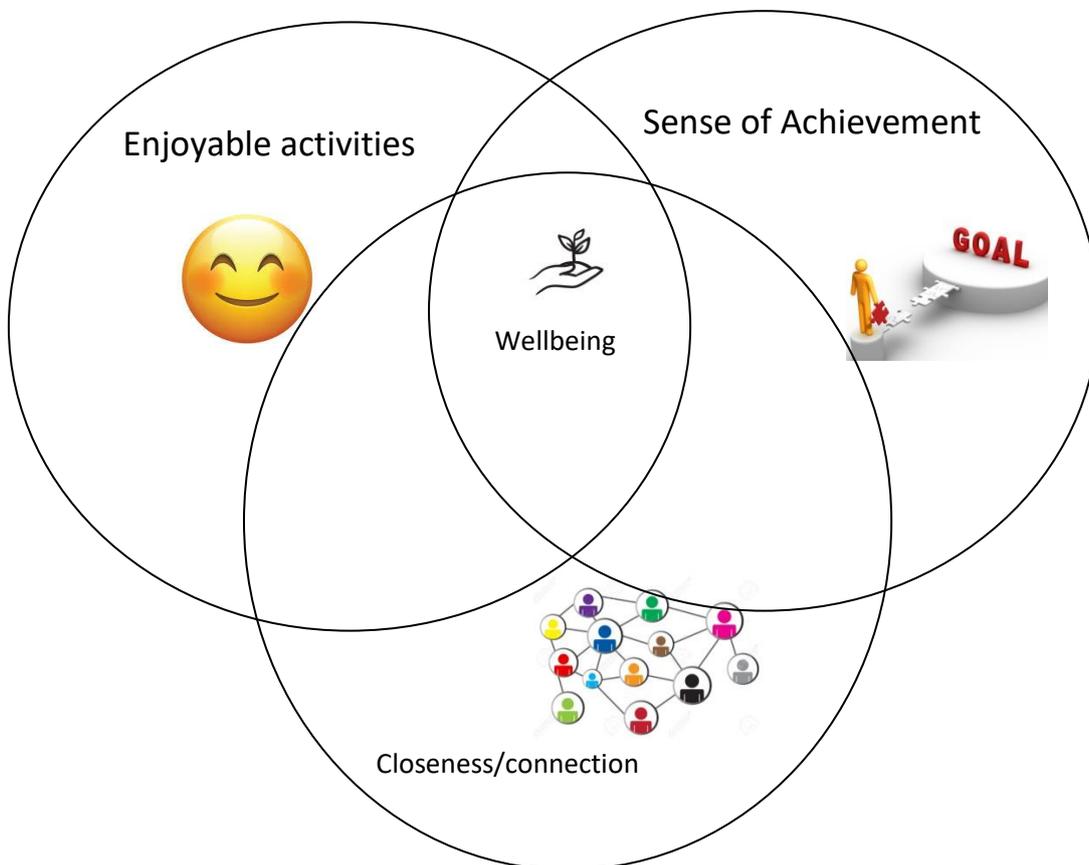


**See below for on-line resources to include relaxation exercises.**

## 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



## 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



## Read

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

## 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: lothianwidef1 & 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/>**

