

HOW TO STAY SANE WHEN RESTRICTED TO HOME

We humans are not always very good at looking after our wellbeing at the best of time, let alone under extreme pressure and uncertainty. How do we do this if we have to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus?

The '5-Ways to Wellbeing' introduces five simple and effective ways to improve your psychological and emotional health that are based on extensive international research.

This will help you live a happier and a longer life as well as help you to cope with stress.

Everyone can 'Try the 5' at home. It costs nothing and it's easier than you think!

Happier people can add 7.5 years to their life!

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING



These 5 ways have been shown to improve personal sense of wellbeing across the life span.

- » Choose a plant or seedling and visit it every day – notice it change and grow
- » When washing your hands, focus exclusively on the sensation
- » Do a mindfulness session on an app
- » Go for a slow walk every day exploring the parks and neighborhood (if permitted) – take photos to look at later

If you can do these little things each day, you will feel much calmer and build your skills for when you feel really stressed.

HELP OTHERS

Most people would agree that helping others is a good thing to do in itself. But research shows it can also improve your wellbeing. Helping others boosts happiness for us as well as the people we help, increases life satisfaction, provides a sense of meaning, increases feelings of competence and improves our mood and reduces stress. Plus it can help to take our minds off our own troubles too!

How can I help others when we are all stuck in our homes?

- » Check in with each person in your home at the end of each day
- » Phone a relative or friend who needs support or company
- » Offer to help someone with a project
- » Volunteer online in your local community
- » Actively be there - when someone you know is in need, sit with them, listen, and help out if you can
- » Pick up after yourself and do someone else's chores too!
- » Teach your children as many life skills as you can
- » Refill your neighbour's supplies, while you restock your own

People who give their time to others are rewarded with better physical health—including lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan.

CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Developing close relationships and socialising with friends, family and others, is important for good health and wellbeing. Broadening your social networks and range of relationships with others in the wider community, is also important for your wellbeing.

How can I stay connected even if I have to maintain physical distance?

- » Have dinner with your family without the TV on
- » Sit somewhere you can gaze at trees or plants
- » Spend time with pets and animals
- » Read stories out loud to each other
- » Invite a friend for a 'walk and talk' on the phone (even up and down the hallway – walking and talking really works!)
- » Have a virtual dinner party where you all eat together whilst on a video conference
- » Make a cup of tea at the same time as your friend/relative and talk to them on the phone whilst you have the cuppa
- » Write an email or a letter to a friend or relative

Humans are hard-wired to connect and belong.

BE ACTIVE

Being active can increase your good moods, keep you at a healthier weight, increase your muscle mass, increase your brain cells, improve your looks and prevent or delay the onset of many illnesses.

Generally being active isn't hard or costly but it's a challenge to get in the recommended 60 minutes a day of intensive activity or muscle strengthening if you can't go out of your home.

Ideas may include:

- » Go for a walk or run (if this is in line with health/government advice.) Don't forget to take the dog!
- » Dance your heart out!
- » Join an online physical challenge (e.g. push ups)
- » Go up and down stairs 20 times (even small flights)
- » Mow the lawn, rake leaves, or just pick up twigs that have fallen in the yard
- » Do 60 seconds of skipping
- » Do some stretching or strength exercises as a family
- » Use an online yoga/exercise video

If you are not big on exercise normally choose a small activity and do it a couple of times a day, building it up.

KEEP LEARNING

The human brain is capable of rewiring itself well into middle age, incorporating decades of experiences and behaviours. Learning new things can be fun, boost our self-confidence, self-esteem, help us to find meaning and purpose in life, and connect us with others.

What can be done from home?

- » Try a new recipe
- » Watch "How To" videos on the internet
- » Help someone with their homework

- » Visit a museum or art gallery online
- » Do a puzzle or quiz or crossword every day
- » Listen to podcasts on an interesting topic or read a book
- » Ask someone about their hobbies and interests and ask them to show you
- » Find some online professional development

We are never too young or too old to learn!

BE AWARE

Being mindful is an incredibly valuable skill to have because it increases your ability to keep calm, reduces stress, helps you think clearly, helps you cope better with difficult situations, improves mood and reduces worry, anxiety and depression.

Becoming regularly aware of our sensations, thoughts and feelings have been shown to boost a person's wellbeing for several years! And it's free with no chemical side effects. We can do this no matter how big or small the room is that we are spending our time in.

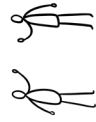
This is easier to do than it sounds!

- » Remind yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you
- » Notice the feel of air moving past your face and body as you walk
- » Eat slowly and notice the taste of the food
- » Keep a gratitude journal – write down the things you are grateful for on a daily basis

CHALLENGE

Tag @STREATMelbourne with your creative ways to stay sane

MY PERSONAL / FAMILY PLAN TO SURVIVE THE NEXT WEEK



	CONNECT WITH PEOPLE	BE ACTIVE	KEEP LEARNING	BE AWARE	HELP OTHERS
WHAT AM I DOING NOW?					
WHAT DO I WANT TO CHANGE OR DO MORE OF?					
WHAT IS ONE NEXT STEP I CAN TAKE IN EACH AREA TO GET STARTED?					

WHO TO CALL IF YOU NEED HELP

LIFELINE	13 11 14
KIDS HELPLINE	1800 551 800
MENSLINE	1300 789 978
BEYOND BLUE	1300 224 636
DIRECT LINE ALCOHOL & DRUG SUPPORT	1800 888 236
CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE	1800 675 398

REFERENCES

Evidence for '5-Ways to Wellbeing' draws on some of the best available international research about mental capital and mental wellbeing through life for the UK government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing, published in 2008 by the New Economics Foundation. It synthesised research from 400 international scientists and explored the challenges for improving mental wellbeing of the whole population. In 2012 North West Area Mental Health Services, a part of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, together with local organisations reviewed this evidence in the Australian context and local supporting research evidence. <https://5waystowellbeing.org.au/>