

# LOOKING AFTER OUR MENTAL WELLBEING

It is normal to feel worried and anxious during this difficult time. You may feel stressed or your mood may be low. It is really important that we all continue to look after our mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. This will help build our resilience and make it easier to cope with the challenges we are all facing.

## **Everyday Tips**

During the coronavirus outbreak there are simple steps we can take to help make day to day life more manageable.

### **Everyday Tips...**

Rethink “I am stuck inside” to “I have more time to focus of myself and my home”.

Try to work out and plan a daily routine and keep some structure to your days.

Limit the time you watch the news or read about the coronavirus, only choosing credible websites and sources.

Set up zones for daily activities, for example try not to eat in bed or work on the sofa.

If your worry or anxiety becomes unmanageable use online or telephone sources of support.



Breathing Space – <https://breathingspace.scot>

Samaritans – <https://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland>

NHS 24 – <https://www.nhs24.scot>

## 10 ways to improve our mental health & wellbeing

Below are some of the things we know help to support good mental health & wellbeing. Try to build them in to your daily or weekly routine where possible. Consider making a list of ones you would like to try and do more each day or each week. For further information on each please visit [www.nhsaaa.net/better-health](http://www.nhsaaa.net/better-health)



## Self help tools

Below are some practical self help tools you can try out during the weeks of social distancing to support your mental health & wellbeing during these challenging times.

### Daily Wellbeing Tools

In the same way we look after our physical health every day, we should look after our mental health and wellbeing every day. Little and often is best. Try to think of some activities that you enjoy. This can be anything at all whether it is a hobby, an activity or a task.

During this time, when we are social distancing, we may not be able to do some of the things that we usually enjoy doing. You could use this time to try some new 'Daily Wellbeing Tools' from our suggestions below:

Online

exercise class

Play a board game

Baking or Cooking

Walking

Create a daily 'TO DO' list

Learn a new skill  
online

Gardening

Colouring or Craft

Yoga

Have a 'clear out'

Look through old photos

Start a journal

Spend time

outdoors

Read a book or magazine

Mindfulness

Video call friends or family

Make a 'feel good'  
playlist

**You can use the table below if it helps. Remember to review your 'Daily Wellbeing Tools' regularly...**

My Daily Wellbeing tools	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### Relaxation

It is important to balance your time while at home between work, looking after children or other dependants, everyday tasks and leisure activities. Try to do something you are good at or that you enjoy every day. Relaxation doesn't have to take up lots of time. Simply taking a few minutes away from your normal routines and thoughts can give you enough space to feel calmer. Try to make a plan for your day or your week...and remember to build in some form of relaxation!

Relaxation exercises are a good way of taking some time out. Click the links below for simple strategies and exercises you can try

[NHS Inform Relaxation Exercises](#)

[MIND Relaxation exercises](#)

### Apps & Websites

There are many Apps & Websites that can help us to look after our mental health and wellbeing. Many of them have self-help tools to support you if you are feeling worried or low at this time. Click on the link below for a selection that you may like to explore.



### Mindfulness...and focussing on our breath...

Simply breathing and paying attention to the moment for a few minutes every day can help build healthy coping skills and calm anxiety. This is particularly important in these challenging times. Try to take a little time to breathe, focus on the present moment and be thoughtful about the small details of where you are and how you are feeling.

- Box breathing or four square breathing involves exhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs empty for a count of four, inhaling for four, holding for four, exhaling and beginning the pattern again. [Click here to try Box Breathing.](#)
- Body Scan meditation involves paying attention to your body. It is a good way of releasing tension you might not even realise you are experiencing. Click here to try a [Body Scan.](#)
- Belly breathing is when we put one hand on our stomach and one on our chest. Slowly breathe in and feel your stomach expand like a balloon. Slowly breathe out and deflate the balloon.
- Mindful cup of tea or coffee...simply sit and just be in the moment. Take five minutes before the day begins...this is even more important just now because we are out of our usual routines.

The Smiling Mind App <https://www.smilingmind.com.au> has a wide range of meditations and relaxation tracks for all ages from young children to adults. There is now a special **THRIVE INSIDE** programme to help support your mental wellbeing while you are spending extended periods at home. This can be found in the Adult meditation section.

### Gratitude & positivity

Research has shown that thinking about three things that went well or made us smile can improve our mood, help us feel more positive and able to cope. This is particularly useful when things are tough. **Small things are best.** It can be anything from a smell, sound or touch. It can be something you have done or something someone has done for you.

There are gratitude Apps eg [Happyfeed](#) in the Apps & Websites list above, or you can use the template below to write down your **#3 Good Things** if that helps.

Three Good Things	
Three things that went <b>well</b> .	<b>Why</b> did they happen?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

### Supporting children & young people who are worried about COVID19.

It is normal for children and young people to be worried during this COVID-19 pandemic. There are simple things the people around children can do to help them cope

- Acknowledge that it is ok to be concerned
- Don't dismiss questions or concerns, instead listen and try to reassure
- Try to maintain a positive attitude and offer safety
- Check in with them regularly

Click on the links below for some practical advice on how you can support your child's mental health & wellbeing

[\*\*Improving children & young people's mental health & wellbeing\*\*](#) (information for parents and carers leaflet)

[\*\*Cool Heads\*\*](#)

[\*\*Ru worried\*\*](#)

[\*\*Ru sad\*\*](#)

[\*\*Phrases for calming anxious children\*\*](#) (YouTube video by Dr Pooky Knightsmith)

[\*\*Young Minds parent's helpline\*\*](#)

### **Additional links you may find helpful for further information**

<https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-and-your-mental-wellbeing>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse41e09>

<https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/>

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/advice-support/sleep-advice/7-steps-to-a-better-nights-sleep/>

**If you are worried or need someone to talk to below are some telephone helplines that offer confidential support**

Breathing Space  
Call free - 800 83 85 87  
<https://breathingspace.scot>

Samaritans  
Free call – 116 123  
<https://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland>

NHS 24 –  
Free call - 111  
<https://www.nhs24.scot>