

# Looking after your mental wellbeing if you have to self-isolate

Some ideas and suggestions based on the '[Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)'

Why not...

## Connect

- ...Call and message friends and family regularly
- ...Reach out to someone you've not seen in a while
- ...Set up video calls with friends over tea, a meal or even an online game
- ...Tell people if you're struggling\* - we're social beings & it's normal to find this hard

## Take Notice

- ...Pay attention to the present & to the small things that make you happy
- ...Try mindfulness - test different [apps](#) or podcasts to find one you like
- ...Grow a plant from seed
- ...Get creative - draw/paint/sew/make/write
- ...Take lots of breaks from screens

## Be active

- ...Head outside for a walk or a jog if you can whilst being at a safe distance from anyone else
- ...Take regular breaks from your desk
- ...Dance like no-one's watching!
- ...Try simple exercises (e.g. using the [NHS Fitness Studio](#)) or yoga or pilates using YouTube

## Give

- ...Talk to a charity with a voluntary befriending service about talking to someone who's feeling lonely by phone
- ...Check in with others who are affected
- ...Spend some time campaigning for a good cause (e.g. emailing/writing to your MP)

## Keep learning

- ...Start (or re-start) learning a language - give an app like [Duolingo](#) a try or use a book or online course
- ...Try a free online course (e.g. on [EdX](#), [Coursera](#) or [OpenLearn](#))
- ...Work on a personal project you've been putting off or can never find the time for

If you or your family are having to self-isolate, be sure to follow the latest [NHS guidance](#), which includes practical advice, including on managing work and other responsibilities. This document isn't meant to be prescriptive or a one-size-fits-all or exhaustive list, just ideas & suggestions to help people cope whilst self-isolating during the COVID-19 outbreak (many also apply to working from home). If you're not having to self-isolate, think about ways to help others in your community; is there an older person whose shopping you could help at this time for example, or other things you could do? (A [local mutual aid group](#) can be a good way to find people who may need a hand).

\* As well as reaching out to friends and family, if you're struggling you can contact your GP, NHS 111 or your local crisis mental health team (more details from MIND on crisis services [here](#)). MIND has a list of UK helplines [here](#), and some local areas, employers and universities have their own counselling and support services. If you're having trouble sleeping, check out [this advice](#) from NHS Every Mind Matters, and if you're having relationship difficulties related to being in self-isolation check out Relate's [self-help guides and support](#).

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