

# COVID-19 Remote Working Health & Well-Being Guide

The outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 has impacted the way we work. It is understandable that during times like this, people may be feeling overwhelmed by the media coverage and constantly changing advice regarding the spread of the virus.

While it is important to stay informed, the following text outlines some health and wellbeing strategies to help look after yourself whilst you work from home during these uncertain times.

Please see The Council's [pages](#) for the latest information on COVID-19.



If you have any questions, queries or are looking for further advice, then please do not hesitate to get in touch at [edinburghworkplaces@stantec.com](mailto:edinburghworkplaces@stantec.com)

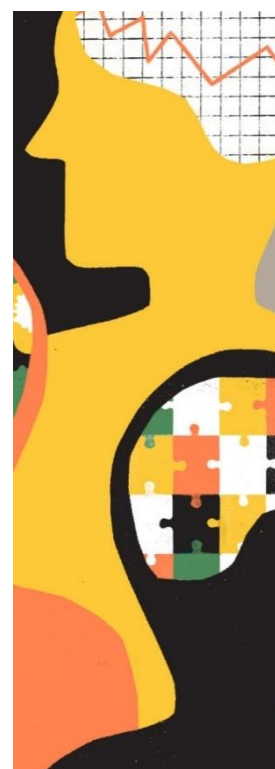
## General Mental Health Tips for Working from Home

### Developing a Routine

Keeping a routine is a vital way to maintain positive & healthy mental well-being. Follow these tips to create a healthy routine during this time:

- **Plan how you'll spend your time** – It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall.
- **Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible** – Get up at your regular time, follow your normal morning routines, and go to bed at your usual time. Set alarms to remind you of your new schedule if that helps. Working at home with children may mean your normal routine may change or constantly alter – talk with your manager and explain your situation to remedy a solution.
- **If you aren't happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently** – For example, you could go to bed earlier, spend more time cooking or do other things you don't usually have time for.

More information on how to develop a working from home routine can be found on our COVID-19 Remote Working Technical Resource Guide document located on the Council's homepage.



The following can be used to supplement your daily routine:

- **Manage your exposure to media coverage** – this can increase feelings of fear and anxiety. Be mindful of sources of information and ensure you are accessing good quality and accurate information.
- **Follow a "calm yet cautious" approach** – do your best to remain calm and be mindful not to contribute to the widespread panic that can hinder efforts to positively manage the outbreak. Ensure you are following directives issued by the government, medical advice and observe good hygiene habits.

## Getting Out & About During COVID-19

Getting outside of your home is vital in maintaining good mental health. Use these tips to ensure you don't suffer from cabin fever during lockdown:

- **Don't pen yourself in** – If you are feeling claustrophobic or trapped, open the windows to let in fresh air. Alternatively, sit on your doorstep / look out your window to gaze at the sky to give you a sense of space. Be sure to regularly change the rooms you spend time in.
- **Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as possible** – Bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make you feel more relaxed.
- **Keep Physically Active** – Keeping physically active is vital to both your mental and physical well-being, see the latest advice from the Government regarding outdoor access.
- **Follow Government Guidelines** – Be sure to follow guidelines regarding staying at home / exercise and guidance on using outdoor parks and spaces.



## Isolation & Communication

Being in this period of social distancing or self-isolation may feel daunting, but we encourage you to consider the following whilst working from home:

- **Perspective** – try to see this time as unique and different, not necessarily bad, even if it is something you didn't necessarily choose.
- **Connection** – think of creative ways to stay connected with others, including social media, email and phone.
- **Stay connected with your values** – don't let fear or anxiety drive your interactions with others. We are all in this together!

Try to see this as a new and unusual period that might even have some benefits.



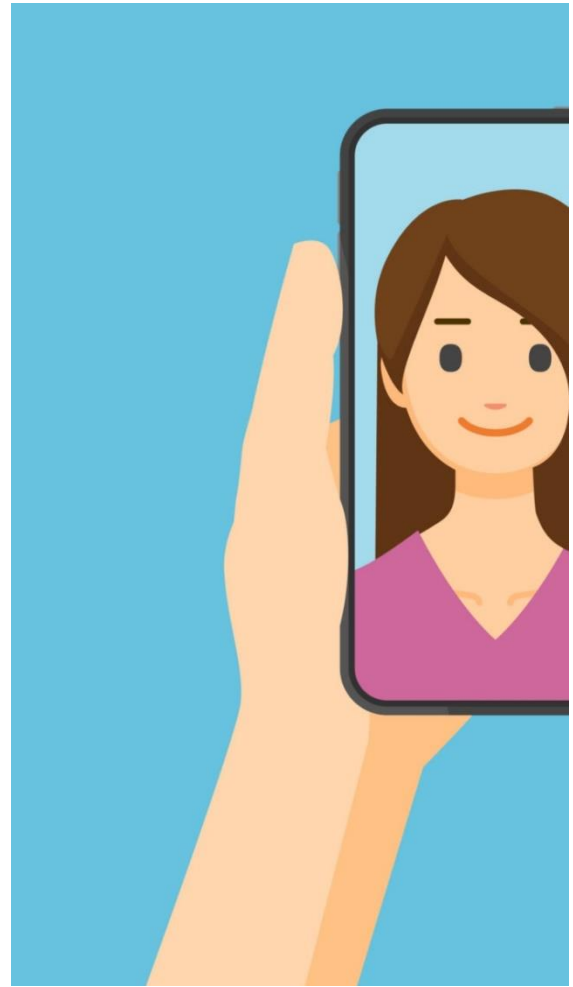
If you're worried about loneliness:

- **Think about things you can do to connect with people.** – For example, putting extra pictures up of the people you care about might be a nice reminder of the people in your life.
- **Listen to a chatty radio station or podcast** if your home feels too quiet.
- **Try and laugh!** It doesn't matter what is funny – laughter is a huge releaser of endorphins. Silly memes, silly jokes, stand-up, playing with your kids, videos on YouTube. Sharing humour and experiences via social media can also be very good for bonding with friends, which will also help you feel less alone.

**Stay Connected!** Research after the SARS pandemic in Hong Kong in 2008, provides evidence of the significance of connection through epidemics. It found that residents in Hong Kong experienced increased social connectedness, which offset the negative mental health impacts of the pandemic.

Try and get creative with how you interact, here are some ways you could connect with people outside of work hours:

- Find a buddy, or group of, to set daily challenges with. These could include a healthy habit, a mindful practice, a creative pursuit. Be sure to encourage and check in daily to stay motivated.
- Set dates and times to watch the same TV shows/movies with someone and message each other your thoughts along the way... kind of like Goggle Box but you're not sharing the sofa!
- If your local community has one, join its social media group! This will keep you up to date with what's going on directly around you. It may also include ways you can perhaps reach out and connect with someone less fortunate than you and ways to assist them.



## Physical Health

Your physical and mental health are intrinsically linked, so make sure to take care of both during this time:

### Breathe

- It's so basic, but breathing exercises are basically magic. They work in minutes and you can do them anywhere. Control your breathing and you are basically telling your body: it's OK. See the [NHS website](#) for some tips on breathing exercises.

### Eat Well and stay hydrated

- Think about your diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels. See MIND's tips on [food and mood](#) for more information.
- Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your mental and physical health. Changing your routine might affect when you drink or what fluids you drink. It could help to set an alarm or use an app to remind you. See the NHS website for more information about [water, drinks and your health](#).



### Take care of your immediate environment

- If you are spending a lot of time at home, you may find it helpful to keep things clean and tidy, although this is different for different people.
- If you live with other people, keeping things tidy might feel more important if you're all at home together. But you might have different ideas about what counts as 'tidy' or how much it matters. It could help to decide together how you'll use different spaces. And you could discuss what each person needs to feel comfortable.
- Cleaning your house, doing laundry and washing yourself are important ways to help stop germs spreading, including when there are warnings about particular diseases. The NHS website has [advice about how to stop germs from spreading](#). And the UK Government website has [advice about self-isolation](#) which includes information about household cleaning.

### Stimulating your Mind Outside of Work

It is important to switch off from work after your day in the 'office' is complete:

- Try having a clear out. You could sort through your possessions and put them away tidily or have a spring clean.
- You could also have a digital clear out. Delete any old files and apps you don't use, upgrade your software, update all your passwords or clear out your inboxes.
- Keep your brain occupied and challenged. Set aside time in your routine for this. Read books, magazines and articles. Listen to podcasts, watch films and do puzzles.
- Interested in swotting up on a subject? [FutureLearn](#) and [OpenLearn](#) have free online courses you could try.
- MIND also have top [Relaxation](#) & [Mindfulness](#) Tips.

### External Links

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/>

<https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/staying-at-home>

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

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