

10 Ways to Take Care of Yourself

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/10-ways-to-take-care-of-yourself-during-coronavirus>

This article has been taken from “ReachOut” - Australia's leading online mental health organisation for young people and their parents

The world is pretty topsy-turvy right now, because of the global panic around coronavirus (COVID-19). If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed by it all, be reassured that this is a very normal response. However, it's important to go easy on yourself and to take time for self-care.

1. Stay active

It's pretty well known that exercise is really good for both our physical and mental health. There's heaps of different types of exercise you can do from home, thanks to YouTube and apps.

We've listed a few free ones, or continue doing whatever works for you.

- Yoga with Adrienne is a well-loved yoga channel, with over six million subscribers. She's quirky and down-to-earth, and offers yoga classes lasting from five minutes through to an hour.
- Nike Training Club can help you stay active during this time by offering heaps of free workouts you can do from home. It also features wellness and nutrition guidance from experts.
- Seven – 7 Minute Workout app (iOS and Android). These seven-minute workouts are based on scientific studies and are designed to provide the maximum benefit in the shortest amount of time. You can also link up with friends in the app to encourage each other (or, let's be honest, compete!) – it's a great way to stay connected. If you play sport and your games and training have been cancelled, you could consider linking up with your team on this app.

These are just three ideas, do whatever works for you. If you can go outside, consider going for a walk or run while taking in your surroundings.

2. Take 10 to be Zen

When we're stressed about something (such as coronavirus), our thoughts tend to speed up. Taking 10 minutes or so to practise mindfulness can help produce a sense of calmness. If you don't get what mindfulness is all about, check out our WTF is mindfulness meditation.

Here are some suggestions for free mindfulness apps to try:

- Insight Timer has over 25,000 free guided meditations, from 1 to 90+ minutes. Try searching by a topic that interests you (e.g. stress, learning to meditate, sleep).
- Smiling Mind might be a good option if you don't want to be overwhelmed by choice. The meditations are organised by structured programs, such as Mindful Foundations, Sleep, Relationships, etc.
- If meditation isn't for you, try doing an everyday activity in a mindful way – in other words, put aside distractions and focus fully on one small task. For example, while you're having a cup of tea, pay attention to your senses (the smell of the tea, the warmth of the cup in your hand, the taste...).

3. Chat with your mates

Even if an in-person meet-up is off the table, try to stay in touch with your mates via text, Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, or (gasp!) a good ol' fashioned phone call. Ask them how they're feeling and share your own experience if you feel safe to do so.

Check out our article on [5 steps to talking to someone you trust](#). You could even start a group chat where each person shares one good thing that happened in their day.

5 STEPS TO TALKING TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST

STEP 1. Decide who to talk to. Figure out who's the best person that can give you the help that you need.

STEP 2. Work out what to say. Think about what's been bothering you and even write it down so it's clear in your mind.

STEP 3. Time it right. Try to find a time when you can have their undivided attention. It doesn't have to be face-to-face; you can call, message, or video chat.

STEP 4. How to have the conversation. When talking about a tough topic, focus on using 'I' statements and be specific. Let the person know if you want advice, practical support or just someone to listen.

STEP 5. Don't give up. If you're not getting the support that you need, don't give up. Keep going until you find someone that can help you.

4. Check out our forums

If you're feeling (or literally are) isolated, jump on to our [online forums](#). ReachOut Forums are a safe, supportive and anonymous space where you can chat to other young people. If you're struggling, check out the thread [Today I am having a tough time because...](#) Or share what you're doing for self-care in the thread [Today I practiced self care by...](#)

5. Make a homemade meal

Good nutrition is always important, but during stressful times there's nothing better than a tasty, healthy homemade meal – especially if you made it yourself. You could ask a friend or family member for their fave recipe, or check out [Taste's easy recipes section](#). See our article on [how to make healthy food choices for some tips](#).

For many people it may be challenging to get some ingredients at the moment. If you're running low or not able to get certain things, it's totally fine to keep it really simple. You could also get creative with substitutions or Google '[ingredient] substitute' for ideas.

6. Take a break from the news

Between the news and social media, we're all feeling saturated by coronavirus updates right now. It's important to stay informed, but try to limit your media intake to a couple of times a day and use [trusted news sources](#). If you catch yourself turning to social media because you're feeling isolated, take a break and spend time on another activity, such as those we've suggested here.

7. Make a music playlist

Music can make us feel so much better. Hop on Spotify and make a playlist with your fave songs. You could make a group playlist and ask your friends to add five of their favourite songs as well. If you want to get fancy, you could make several playlists for different moods/vibes (e.g. rainy day, feeling happy, etc.).

8. Declutter for five minutes

If you're suddenly spending a lot more time at home, it can help to have an environment that feels good to you. Instead of getting all Marie Kondo and trying to overhaul your whole space in a day, try decluttering for five mins a day. Pick a shelf to start with, or pick up five things and find a home for them. For more five-minute decluttering tips, [check out this article](#).

9. Watch or read something uplifting

Distraction can be a good thing. Watch something that you find uplifting and allow yourself to zone out from what's going on in the world. Some suggestions include The Good Place and Brooklyn 99 on Netflix, or The Bold Type and Family Guy on Stan.

YouTube is a great option too. If reading is more your thing, go to your bookshelf and choose an old favourite or something you've been meaning to get to for a while, or if you don't have physical books then e-books are a great option.

10. Learn something new

Have you wanted to get into drawing or learning a musical instrument? Now's a great time to make a start. If you want to learn a new language, [Duolingo](#) is an awesome free language learning program you can access from your computer or phone. YouTube has great free online tutorials for pretty much everything.

If it's all getting a bit much...

Sometimes things can get overwhelming, even if you've been practising self-care. As most people will be physically distancing or self-isolating a great option is telephone and online services. Lifeline (13 11 14) and Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) can be accessed for phone and online counselling, with Lifeline phone counsellors on call from 7 pm to midnight, and Kids Helpline available 24/7. [Eheadsace](#) also offers free online and telephone support and counselling.

If it's available to you, you could consider seeing your GP or mental health professional for extra help (but make sure to follow the advice of [Healthdirect](#) if you're showing symptoms or are in self-isolation). You could also ask your mental health professional if they could chat over Skype/FaceTime if you're in self-isolation.