

Supporting staff during COVID-19

A large number of online resources have been developed during the pandemic to support people working in social care. In May the government produced guidance on the health and wellbeing of the social care workforce which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-health-and-wellbeing-of-the-adult-social-care-workforce/health-and-wellbeing-of-the-adult-social-care-workforce>

Below we have collected a range of resources and practical ideas to help you look after yourself and take time out, especially if your day is turning out to be quite intense or challenging.

Mental Health Support Resources

Our Frontline offers round the clock one-to-one support along with a collection of resources, tips and ideas to support your mental health: <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/ourfrontline-socialcare/>

The NHS England Coronavirus Staff Resilience hub has been created by NHS and Skills for Care using advice and tips from a range of international experts: <https://covid.minded.org.uk/>

Exercise

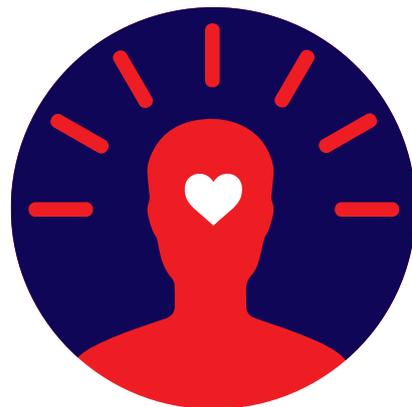
Exercise increases your body's production of endorphins which help trigger a sense of positivity. COVID-19 has made exercise difficult, however there are lots of ideas on YouTube to try that you can do from a seated position or require very little equipment or space.

To find a place to start, have a look at the NHS Fitness Studio <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/> and PHE's 10-minute workouts <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>.

Mindfulness techniques

Mindfulness simply means being aware of or bringing attention to experiences happening in that moment. Here are some basic tips you can try:

- 1 Pay attention** – for example when you shower in the morning pay attention to how the water feels on your skin
- 2 Notice** – when your mind wanders (which is normal) simply acknowledge where your thoughts have gone.
- 3 Choose to return** – come back to the present. Try focusing on your breathing or another sensation.
- 4 Be aware and accept** – be aware of your emotions. Observe them and try to accept these feelings without judging yourself.
- 5 Be kind to yourself** – our minds will always wander. Don't be critical if you are not always relaxed or focused. Gently bringing your mind back to focus can be very effective.



3-4-5 breathing

Having periods of calmness is key. By trying the simple technique of breathing in for 3 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds and breathe out for 5 seconds. This is really simple but being able to use this technique may help wellbeing and increase calmness.

If you have emails, check them at certain times

The more times you check your emails, the more likely anxiety levels will increase. Why not check emails at certain times instead of all the time?

Listen to music

Music has the capacity to promote relaxation and give us focus. There are lots of mindfulness playlists you can access to help you during times of stress. Taking a few minutes out to listen to some music and focus on the sounds that can give energy and lift your mood.

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Checklist ✓ ✗

Follow our simple Do and Don't checklist

Do

- *Acknowledge that it is ok to not always be ok. Try to find some effective ways of looking after yourself*
- *Turn off your phone for periods of the day if you can*
- *Think about having periods of time where emails and messages are off limits*
- *Practice a few simple mindfulness techniques*
- *Stay connected - Spend time with close friends and family – even if this is through video calling*

Don't

- *Sit down for long periods of time. Move about, walk when talking on the phone and regularly move your legs*
- *Think you are on your own. Talking to others is a vital way to manage during periods of stress*
- *Be afraid to take time out from checking your devices and apps, as well as emails. We all need a 'digital detox' at times!*