

Introduction

Is this ever going to end we keep asking ourselves! We know it will, but until then we are all trying to keep find new ways to manage how things are at the moment.

Some days will go better than others but pay attention to the things you need to help you get by and keep doing them. Share your ideas with friends and try things they suggest. Sometimes your parents may come up with good ideas too! Can you tick off each of the following every day?

1. Exercise

Exercise is the number one way to help the endorphins in our body get going and stop us from overthinking. What works for you?

- ◆ A walk, run or cycle outside.
- ◆ An exercise class/app. Browse YouTube and try a different one each day until you find one that suits you.
- ◆ Dancing – stick your favourite tunes on in your room and go for it (silent disco style if you have to because of other house members). Get practising your favourite dance steps for your own TikTok video.

Exercise and being outside can help you sleep better and stop you turning into a night owl!

2. Connect with someone

As a teenager it is normal to get frustrated with

the adults in your life, especially if you are stuck with them for long periods of time without a break! However – remember that the adults around will want to help you. What's the best way for you to check in with each other at least once a day?

- ◆ Try and have at least one meal together
- ◆ Have tea and biscuits at a set time
- ◆ A quick game (Jenga, Boggle) for twenty minutes
- ◆ Share funny videos on social media

Check in with family members who don't live with you too such as a grandparent who you may be worrying about – write them a letter or agree to watch a TV show at the same time and then ring each other to chat. Link up with friends over homework to make it less daunting and contact your teachers; they can still help and will be missing you!



4. Eat as well as you can

Eating well doesn't mean not having fun - can you all suggest your favourite meals or maybe have a themed night e.g. Mexican fajitas and nachos? If your favourite takeaways are closed, maybe you could try making their food (some restaurants are publishing recipes to follow). Can you surprise someone in the house by making them a snack?

How about preparing a surprise picnic– text everyone a picture of it as an invite to join you? What about making pancakes and inviting people for breakfast?

3. Do something you enjoy



Watch a movie, favourite TV show, play computer games, get creative, have a relaxing bath or refreshing shower - nice smells can help us feel calm so buy some new bubble bath or shower gel. Get dressed up as if you are going to go out or have a full on PJ day. Throw a virtual surprise party for a friend who has a birthday in lockdown!

Browse social media but use it wisely – set yourself a time limit and notice if the things you are looking at make you feel better or worse.

5. Achieve something every day

Most schools don't expect you to rigidly stick to a school timetable but avoiding all school/college work is likely to lead to guilty feelings.

Are you managing to do anything? Praise yourself – being self-motivated in a pandemic is tough!! You are learning great life skills for the way ahead. What are you not managing to do? Deep breathe, it's ok to be struggling – can you let your parent/teachers know what you are behind on?

Something is better than nothing, so spending five minutes on maths homework that you have been ignoring for 3 weeks is a massive step in the right direction. You are likely to have plenty of time to catch up so little and often should work well.

What else would help you feel that you had done something useful today? Tidied your room, sorted through your books or clothes? Why not get some photos from your phone printed and make a collage of happy memories or pictures with friends?

6. Help someone else

One great way to make ourselves feel good is to do something to help someone else, no matter how small. Can you help out at home with housework, DIY, cooking, shopping or gardening? If your parents are working at home, they may still be getting used to this too – surprise them with a cup of tea/snack/offer to help them work out technology if needed! Can you cheer up a friend who is having a down day?



7. Being outside (if you can)

Make sure you feel the sun on your face (or wind and rain on your cheek!) even if it's by sticking your head out of the window, standing on the front step, in the garden or walking round the block. Observe

the weather, trees, plants, clouds and animals - this will help you with number 8.

8. Staying in the now

Many of our most difficult feelings relate to anger and upset about things that have happened in the past or worries and fears about the future. Having too much time can make us think about things we have been trying to avoid or that upset us. You may be worrying about the future if you are relying on predicted grades and don't know what your next step will be.

Finding ways to stay focused on the present (mindfulness) can really calm us down. Like exercising, regularly practicing mindfulness in a variety of ways can make a real difference to our ability to manage stress. Try a grounding technique: *One way to do this is the 5,4,3,2,1 technique – stop, breathe deeply and notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch/feel, 3 things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.* Look at <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/> for inspiration.

Now have a go at filling in the diary (see other sheet) with this leaflet and see how you get on!

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Dr. Kate Bonser, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Adoption Psychology Service (with thanks to Manchester CAMHS-LAC)



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