

B E A T C O V I D
B R E A T H E E A T W E L L A C T I V I T Y T I M E C H A N G E O B S E R V E V I S U A L I S E I N T E R A C T D I S T A N C E

BEAT COVID aims to help you understand the exercises and practices that will enable you to gain awareness of your thoughts, feelings and emotions at this time of uncertainty. Being equipped with some quick and easy tips that promote wellbeing will also help you to get through each day so that you feel empowered to take control of the things you can control and not worry about the things that you cannot control.

It can be hard to stay focused on your goals, daily routine, sleep and health but these are important for when we will break-free from COVID. **And we will.**

Keeping things simple and easy is important for your wellbeing!

BREATHE

We often take our breath for granted and don't think about the impact of our breath on mind and body but the way we breathe can have a significant impact on our stress levels. To put simply, our breathing becomes rapid and shallow when we feel anxious, frustrated or angry and this can send signals to our brain that we are unsafe and under threat.

Breathing more slowly and steadily can tell our brain that we are safe and calm. Focusing on your breathing regularly by doing some simple breathing exercises or a 5 minute guided meditation can help to recognise unpleasant emotions, distract you from negative thoughts, improve health, concentration, sleep, decision making and increase levels of resilience and still make you feel better and in control. You can find some free guided meditations here → <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

EATWELL

Eating a balanced and healthy diet is important to maintaining energy levels, improving your mood and help you to think more clearly all of which can enable you to make good food choices. A nutritious diet will help you to stay healthy, boost your immune system and help to maintain your body weight even if you are stuck in the house.

ACTIVITY

Staying physically active will help to boost your energy levels, maintain or lose weight and reduce stress and anxiety. Activities such as walking, stretching, chair-based exercises, gentle yoga, moving around the house or gardening will also help to release the happy hormones and make you feel good.

Keeping your mind active and include activities such as reading, playing games, listening to your favourite music and podcasts will give you a sense of achievement and make you feel good. Engage in your hobbies or use the time to start a new hobby or start a new project or online course that you may not have had the time to do before.

TIME AND ROUTINE

Time may feel like it is going slowly now that you are indoors. Busy to stillness can feel overwhelming and lead to fearful thoughts related to money, health and concern for loved ones. Keeping a routine is important to keep a sense of normalcy and to keep us moving. Most of us have lost our normal external routines. Set your alarm to wake up at a certain time every day, take a shower, change your clothes, and plan your day. A good routine can provide you with a sense of purpose and lift your mood.

CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

It can take 18-66 days to form a new habit and to make a positive change. So it's no wonder that the current situation feels difficult, unsustainable and tiring. We are not operating on autopilot mode like we used to and every action is taking up a lot of energy because it is requiring us to be conscious of it e.g. social distancing, lining up outside the supermarket and the net effect is exhaustion. To re-boost motivation or create a new habit, focus on achieving one thing towards your long-term goals per day. Be kind to yourself and accept that you can only do your best.

OBSERVE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

It is not uncommon to have thoughts that lead to feelings of fear, anxiety and worry. Stress and boredom can lead to feelings of unpleasantness and the common response to these feelings is to alleviate them temporarily with something within our reach e.g. food, alcohol, gambling, all of which consumed excessively over a period can lead to further

health problems. Recognise them and distract them with an activity such as meditation or hobbies that will enable you to stay focused in the present moment.

Set some boundaries (e.g. 10 minutes per day) on the amount of news and information that you are accessing about COVID-19. Frequent exposure to the news or social media will increase your feelings of stress and anxiety.

VISUALISE PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Life events like COVID-19 can distract you from your goals. Continue to focus on things that you can do to continue moving in the direction you wanted to go in before COVID-19. The more vividly you see what you want, the more intensely you let yourself experience those feelings. Close your eyes and spend 5 minutes per day to visualise what it will look and feel like when you reach your goals and experience the joy of what you will create.

This is a good time to be grateful and focus on what is going well and see the positive side of this. For example, "I am grateful that I can be at home and be safe" or "I am grateful I can still stay connected with loved ones." "I am grateful to have the time to finish projects around the house", I am grateful to have the time to learn new things".

INTERACT AND STAY CONNECTED

Stay connected with others, social distancing does not mean social isolating. Call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while, stay in touch with family members, utilize technology to your advantage and reach out. via phone, email, facetime, social media, etc. "Social Distancing does not mean Social Disconnecting."

DISTANCE IS A MATTER OF TIME

Remember that this is temporary, and it will pass. Utilize this time to plan and prepare for what you'll want to do when this is over. We can come out stronger on the other side. Remember, we have gone through difficult times before, we will get through this one too.

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