

Health and wellbeing during Covid 19 working from home

Your physical health has a big impact on how you are feeling emotionally and mentally. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise inside where possible and outside once a day, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs.

If you are able to go outside, consider walking or gardening (keeping the recommended 2 metres from others as outlined in the [physical distancing guidance](#)). If you are staying at home, you can find free easy [10 minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or other exercise videos to try at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#), as well as [RLL wellbeing](#). Sport England also has good tips for keeping active at home. Renfrewshire Leisure are continuing to deliver support, advice and opportunities to keep you healthy and well. They have specialist staff to offer guidance and support via telephone, a variety of resources and online classes to help you get active or maintain your activity levels and advice on how to keep your mind as healthy as possible.

Drop in service

Specialist NHS funded staff are free between 2:30-3:30 every Tuesday to give you advice and support on getting or maintaining your activity and how to eat as healthy as we can throughout these unprecedented times. Please call our specialist advisor within the time slot above and let them know you work for Renfrewshire Council for some free advice and support on physical activity and diet:

Lyn Hay	07985 705057
Alan McRae	07813 530383

For general enquires about this service, please email liveactive@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Feeling stressed or anxious?

It is important to follow government advice on helping to avoid the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), but if you find you are going beyond the recommendations, if this is making you feel stressed or anxious, or if you are having intrusive thoughts here are some things you could try:

- don't keep re-reading the same advice if this is unhelpful for you
- let other people know you're struggling, for example, you could ask them not to discuss the news with you
- breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control. You can find a [simple breathing exercise on the NHS website](#) and Mind's pages on [relaxation](#) have some relaxation tips and exercises you can try
- set limits, like washing your hands for the recommended 20 seconds

- plan something to do after washing your hands, which could help distract you and change your focus

Additional advice and guidance on looking after your mental health and wellbeing is available in our [Mental Health and Wellbeing Guide](#).

Build Physical Activity: Into your daily routine, if possible.

Most of us don't have exercise equipment like treadmills where we live, but there are still activities you can do. Exercising at home can be simple and there are options for most ages and abilities, such as:

- Cleaning your home
- Dancing to music
- Going up and down stairs
- [Seated exercises](#)
- Online exercise workouts that you can follow [NHS Fitness Studio](#), [RLL workout](#)
- Sitting less – if you notice you've been sitting down for an hour, just getting up or changing position can help
- 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
- Although library branches are closed, some libraries have apps you can use online. These allow you to borrow eBooks, audiobooks or magazines from home for free, if you're a library member here is the [Library Link](#) or you could join [Here](#)
- [FutureLearn](#) and [OpenLearn](#) have free online courses you could try
- There are lots of apps that can help you learn things, such as a foreign language or other new skills.

Rest, Refuel and Hydrate

- Drinking water often throughout the day will help to keep you hydrated.
- Life isn't easy at the moment but eating well and as healthily as you can will help your body cope better with the demands placed on you during busy shifts. Focussing your meals and snacks around starchy food such as pasta and rice and filling up on fruit and vegetables will help keep your energy levels maintained.
- Where possible, set aside some time to plan your meals and shopping to help you eat healthily when you are busy.

You can find some good advice on what to eat and [eating well](#) in the attached NHS guidance, you might also find that downloading and keeping a [Food Diary](#) like this could help. Advice on portion sizes can be found [Here](#). You may find looking at this [questionnaire](#) on eating etc and comparing to the [supporting information](#) of interest as well.

For the younger generation, the joy of school closures and early holidays is tempered by the fear of exam cancellations and the impact on their future. Here again, schools and universities have been busy setting up course work on platforms like Office 365 and Microsoft teams - allowing teachers and students to carry on schooling remotely.

Even socialising has gone virtual. Globalisation has bred a generation of grandparents used to connecting with family on different continents on Facetime or WhatsApp. With COVID-19 posing a serious threat to the elderly, online family time is a safe option even if they are just down the road. Social engagements are being replaced by online choirs like the Sofa Singers or Zoom virtual catch ups.

WORKING FROM HOME

If you are working from home, it may feel like a juggling motion keeping the kids occupied and meeting work commitments. Speak to your employer about flexible hours so that you can take time out to be with the kids, especially if they are younger children. Establish a routine that helps you and your children have positive structure for the day. Allow for flexibility, as your child may want to do something else. If you live with your partner, it is important to share the workload with each other, if they are too working from home. Try to work alongside each other and perhaps sharing the load when home schooling the children. If you have young children who are still resting or napping through the day, use that time to do the more complex work tasks so that you have time to focus.

Build in self-care and if you feel you need some time, take a break. As this is a very isolating time, looking after your wellbeing and emotional health is necessary. Mindfulness apps or a 5-minute yoga or meditation session can be helpful, and the children can join in too.

Create a suitable and comfortable workspace; it does not have to be its own room but just some space that works for you. With the abundance of technology, use this to your advantage to help keep your child occupied. If you have a garden, encourage them to get some fresh air with you. Read these [tips for working from home](#) from the Future of Education. Please [see some advice on work life balance](#) for more tips.

Planning the children's day

Most secondary and primary aged children may have set work provided by their school or they may be accessing work online from their school. It is important to ensure that they are not doing work all day and that they have plenty of breaks and time to relax in-between. Educators say a couple of hours spread out throughout the day is ample. Becoming your child's teacher is a daunting prospect but leaning on other parents who are going through similar experiences can be helpful.

When planning the day, think about when they work best and work out a schedule with them. You may want to start the day with something active and then perhaps a break and then onto the next activity. Some children thrive with a solid schedule whereas others prefer flexibility. If the work has not been set, there are plenty of helpful resources available. [BBC Bitesize](#) will be bringing fresh new content every

day during this period to help support families with education. [BBC Teach](#) will be hosting live lessons for primary aged children for numeracy and literacy.

Ensure that your children have active time too, there are many resources available perhaps you may want to find a [great yoga session](#) on YouTube that they can do. As long as it is 30 to 60 mins of active time and they enjoy the activity, this is the most essential thing. If you have a garden, let them have some time to run around and if you don't have access to a garden, open the windows for plenty of fresh air. The Woodland Trust have produced a list of [nature activities](#) you can do at home. You can also [download illustrated nature activity sheets](#) from Wildlife Watch.

Family Lives is a website that holds many things for families to do, encouraging your child's creativity can help break boredom blues. Spread the Happiness have great activity worksheets that your children can do indoors without costing the earth. Click [here](#) to download their activity sheet, visit here for [article on ideas and games](#) to keep children occupied. [Get cooking](#) with the kids and use up those store cupboard essentials to create a dish worthy of being on MasterChef.

If you have young children, singing songs can help ease anxieties and help with their cognitive development. [Authors and illustrators](#) are creating resources families can access from home. These include videos, live broadcasts on Instagram and Facebook and printable pages.

If your child has SEN or a disability

Managing change for children with additional needs or a disability can be very challenging. It may be that your child processes information in their way and you may need to talk to them about this daily including showing them the importance of handwashing. They may not fully grasp the seriousness of what we are going through but they most likely are feeling the change. Sensory Spectacle have produced some guidance called [Coronavirus and Sensory Processing Disorder](#). MomKind have written a blog about [Autism and the quarantine](#) to help manage the daily routine with specific pointers. [Sunshine Support](#) have many resources available including social stories, coping with isolation and more. [WellChild](#) have information on how to protect your child and staff working with your child during the Coronavirus pandemic. Autistic and unapologetic have written a [comprehensive blog](#) about talking to your child or young person about Covid-19.

Look after your sleep

Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.

Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.