



HAPPY CAFÉ

WORKING FROM HOME

LOOKING AFTER
YOURSELF WHILE
WORKING FROM HOME

A lot of staff are now working from home which prevents us from having our usual daily interactions. This is bound to have an impact on our mental health. So what can we do to help ourselves and look after others during this time? We've put together some tips and ideas.

Checking the news and social media about covid-19

The frequent news updates and stories on social media are making it near impossible to avoid news about coronavirus. If this is making you feel anxious, turn off notifications and delete apps if you can't help but check them throughout the day. Try to only check the news once in the morning and once in the evening – this is enough to keep you up to date, and safe. Any advice you read should come from reliable sources. Check the UK Government website or the NHS website for the most up-to-date advice when it comes to your physical health, travel and work.

Don't believe everything you see on social media! Be careful whose accounts you're getting information from. Avoid clicking on coronavirus hashtags or reading comments on news articles if you find the information triggering to scroll through. You can also mute Twitter accounts and WhatsApp groups – the people on the other end won't be able to tell.

Looking after your mental health while working from home

As many of us are now working from home, we've got to navigate this new way of working together. Try to treat your working day like any other, get up in good time before you start work, shower, get dressed, take regular breaks throughout the day and eat properly. Keep your workspace clear and clutter-free (as much as possible).

If you live in a shared house, discuss your boundaries with your housemates so that you all know when it's time to work vs play. Obviously, this is more difficult if you have children!

Organising teamwork while working from home long-term may be new territory for some businesses. Try to keep in regular contact with people in your team. Have regular video calls and phone calls to try to keep social interactions happening. You could even

organise a 15-minute virtual coffee break as a team. If you haven't heard from someone in your team for a while, check-in with them to see if there's anything they need, or if they fancy a chat.

If you manage a team, make sure that your team has lots of opportunities to tell you if this new way of working is going ok. Take all concerns seriously. Big changes to how we work can feel very stressful for people, and it's important your staff know that they can tell you if things aren't working for them and you can work through the problem together. If you are working on reduced staff numbers, think about making sure that the staff you do have at work have a manageable workload.

Outside of work hours, make time to do all the things you usually enjoy doing. Watch a funny film, call your friends and play games.

If you're not self-isolating, try and get outside during the day. Walking for 20 minutes can do wonders for your mental health.

Maintaining good mental health throughout this time may be difficult. Keep in contact with friends and family to keep up social interaction and to make sure the other person is coping. Offer to be an arm of support to those who need it. If you've got a lot of anxious thoughts, try writing them down in a journal. Sometimes getting it out on paper can help to clear your mind.

Keeping active at home during self-isolation

Our physical and mental health are undeniably linked, so it's important to stay active, even if we don't feel like it! When you're working from home it can be easy to sit on the sofa all day where it's comfortable, eat unbalanced meals and snack. However, it's important to keep a balanced lifestyle. For healthy meal ideas Google is a hugely useful resource!

If running outdoors isn't your thing, there are lots of ways you can stay active from the comfort of your own home. YouTube has plenty of yoga sessions and workout videos you can follow along to. Be sure to leave enough space for yourself to avoid injury!

Taken from <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/>

Mindfulness exercises to try

Here are a few exercises you could try. You don't need any special equipment:

- **Mindful eating.** This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea or coffee you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.
- **Mindful moving, walking or running.** Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.
- **Body scan.** This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.
- **Mindful colouring and drawing.** Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper, rather than trying to draw something in particular. You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download mindfulness colouring images.
- **Mindful meditation.** This involves sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing, your thoughts, sensations in your body and the things you can hear around you. Try to bring your focus back to the present if your mind starts to wander. Many people also find that yoga helps them to concentrate on their breathing and focus on the present moment. See our page on [types of alternative and complementary therapy](#) for more information meditation and yoga.

Different things work for different people, so if you don't find one exercise useful, try another. You can also try adapting them so that they suit you and are easier to fit in with your daily life.

Tips on getting the most from mindfulness exercises

When you do any mindfulness exercise, the key steps are:

- **Pay attention** – for example, when you shower in the morning, make a special effort to really pay attention to the feel of the water on your skin.
- **Notice** – when your mind wanders, which is just what minds do, simply notice where your thoughts have drifted to.
- **Choose and return** – choose to bring your attention back to the present moment, usually by focusing on your breathing or another sensation in your body.
- **Be aware and accept** – notice and be aware of emotions you are feeling or sensations in your body. Try to observe and accept these feelings with friendly curiosity and without judgement.
- **Be kind to yourself** – remember that mindfulness is difficult to do and our minds will always wander. Try not to be critical of yourself. When you notice your mind wandering, you can just gently bring yourself back to the exercise.

It can also help to:

- **Set aside regular time to practise.** Regular short periods of mindful meditation can work better than occasional long ones. If you struggle to find the time, you might want to decide on one or two routine activities which you will try to do mindfully each day.
- **Make yourself comfortable.** It can help to do mindfulness in a space where you feel safe and comfortable and won't be easily distracted.
- **Go slowly.** Try to build your practice slowly. Remember, you're learning a new skill so it'll take time to develop. Most people find it hard to sit and meditate for long periods of time at first, so try to do a few minutes and gradually build up to more.
- **Be patient.** There's no need to set ambitious goals or put pressure on yourself. Many people find it takes a while to feel comfortable doing mindfulness exercises.

Taken from mind.org.uk

MINDFULNESS TIPS FOR

working from home



MOVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Energise your body and mind

We often associate the benefits of movement with the physical body but we need it just as much for our minds. Nothing fancy is required!

Some gentle yoga stretches to release tension, a swift walk up and down the stairs to get the blood and endorphins pumping or a kitchen disco session can be a great mood boost!



REBOOT YOURSELF

Refresh yourself with the things you enjoy

You are no different from your devices, so switch off and nourish yourself with downtime. Mindful choices include podcasts, audiobooks, guided relaxation like 'yoga nidra', TV and movies that inspire you, or try your hand at a spot of gratitude journaling.

CREATE A HARMONIOUS ENVIRONMENTS

De-clutter your space and make it your own

Outer order helps to create inner harmony, so make your bed, straighten up your living space, throw the curtains open to maximise natural light and make your work area as clear as possible to help you concentrate. If you can, get outside and enjoy the soothing effects of being in nature.

MAKE TIME TO CONNECT

Reach out to others

Connection is like soul food, so make the time to talk on the phone, send a text to check in and just communicate with others.

BUILD A DAILY ROUTINE

Create a sense of rhythm to your day

Kick off your morning with a healthy breakfast and get dressed in an outfit that helps you feel put together. Take regular breaks to refresh, and have a cut-off time for when you down tools in the evening. Set aside time for relaxation so you're ready to hit the ground running for the next day.

ENJOY MICRO MOMENTS

Relax and switch off for a while

Dot your day with soothing practices to help you feel a sense of wellbeing. It can be as simple as massaging in some hand balm with a scent you love, a single piece of music or a minute of meditation to calm you. Keep yourself well fed and watered so you can think straight too.



FOCUS YOUR MIND

Free yourself from distractions

When your mind feels full or worries are looming large, bring it back to something constructive by thinking about what lies within your control. We can get caught in an endless spiral of 'what ifs', but 'what can I do' puts you back in the driver's seat.

BREATHE BETTER TO FEEL BETTER

Take a moment to ground yourself

Slowing down your breath can calm your mind and body, but if focusing on the breath alone feels difficult, move with the breath instead: find a comfortable place to rest your hands, palms facing upwards. As you breathe in, open your hands fully and as you breathe out, make a gentle fist. Keep focusing on the movement of your hands and notice how this relaxes your breathing – a great distraction from unhelpful thoughts.

TIPS TAKEN FROM:

WWW.BBCGOODFOOD.COM/HOWTO/GUIDE/MINDFULNESS-TIPS-WORKING-HOME

Available resources

Virtual Happy Café

The virtual happy café is an intranet page on the trust website that can provide you with some mindfulness exercises, tips on looking after your mental wellbeing, crafts, activities and games. This page is regularly updated, so check back for new videos, craft ideas etc.

<https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/virtual-happy-cafe?highlight=WyJ2aXJ0dWFsliwiJ3ZpcnR1YWwiXQ==>



Need someone to talk to?

A teal-colored graphic with a white border. In the top left corner, it says "Putting Patients First" above the "4ward" logo, which includes a stylized '4' with a cross and four colored squares (red, green, blue, yellow). In the top right corner, it features the NHS logo and "Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust". The main text in the center reads: "NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?" in bold white capital letters, followed by the cursive phrase "It's ok not to be ok". Below that, it states "Free, confidential counselling and mental health wellbeing support is available for all colleagues" and "Thank you for putting patients first – but please take care of yourself as well".

Putting Patients First
4ward

NHS
Worcestershire
Acute Hospitals
NHS Trust

NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

It's ok not to be ok

Free, confidential counselling and mental health wellbeing support is available for all colleagues

Thank you for putting patients first
– but please take care of yourself as well

[Click here to open Wellbeing Crisis Card](#)

GREAT DREAM

Ten keys to happier living

GIVING



Do things for others

RELATING



Connect with people

EXERCISING



Take care of your body

AWARENESS



Live life mindfully

TRYING OUT



Keep learning new things

DIRECTION



Have goals to look forward to

RESILIENCE



Find ways to bounce back

EMOTIONS



Look for what's good

ACCEPTANCE



Be comfortable with who you are

MEANING



Be part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

We hope that you found this booklet helpful.

Remember: we are all in this together. If you need help, ask for it. If you can help, give it. Talk to your colleagues, managers and use the resources available.

