

30th March, 2020

Dear students,

Life as you know it has been disrupted. For now. So how do you manage, and how do you thrive in these circumstances?

You have a well-earned break ahead of you. Use it! Relax, and spend hours doing what you like, as you like. You have met this challenge, and you should be very proud of yourself for your resilience. We expect to resume online studies on 12th April, so use your break to refresh yourself.

However, even though it's a study break, all of us have been asked to stay home. Spending so much time at home can be very difficult! At times, your parents may annoy you, your siblings and your situation in general may stress you out. And then how do you escape?

Here's a list of self-care ideas. They'll help you feel a bit better and give you a sense of control during a very uncertain time.

1. Stay active

It's pretty well known that exercise is really good for both our physical and mental health. There are heaps of different types of exercise you can do from home, thanks to YouTube and apps. I've listed a few free ones (share your tips for others on Tutor C Teams) or continue doing whatever works for you.

- [Yoga with Adrienne](#) is a well-loved yoga channel, with over six million subscribers. She's quirky and down-to-earth, and offers yoga classes lasting from five minutes through to an hour.
- [Nike Training Club](#) can help you stay active during this time by offering heaps of free workouts you can do from home. It also features wellness and nutrition guidance from experts.
- [Seven – 7 Minute Workout app \(iOS and Android\)](#). These seven-minute workouts are based on scientific studies and are designed to provide the maximum benefit in the shortest amount of time. You can also link up with friends in the app to encourage each other (or, let's be honest, compete!) – it's a great way to stay connected. If you play sport and your games and training have been cancelled, you could consider linking up with your team on this app.

These are just three ideas, do whatever works for you!

2. Take 10 to be zen

When we're stressed about something (such as coronavirus), our thoughts tend to speed up. Taking 10 minutes or so to practice mindfulness can help produce a sense of calmness. If you don't get what mindfulness is all about, check an intro to the practice [here](#).

Here are some suggestions for free mindfulness apps to try:

- [Insight Timer](#) has over 25,000 free guided meditations, from 1 to 90+ minutes. Try searching by a topic that interests you (e.g. stress, learning to meditate, sleep).
- [Smiling Mind](#) might be a good option if you don't want to be overwhelmed by choice. The meditations are organised by structured programs, such as Mindful Foundations, Sleep, Relationships, etc.

- If meditation isn't for you, try doing an everyday activity in a mindful way – in other words, put aside distractions and focus fully on one small task. For example, while you're having a cup of tea, pay attention to your senses (the smell of the tea, the warmth of the cup in your hand, the taste...). Some simple mindfulness techniques are introduced by the Doha Mindfulness Community [here](#).

3. Chat with your mates

Even if an in-person meet-up is off the table, try to stay in touch with your mates via text, Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, or a good ol' fashioned phone call. Ask them how they're feeling and share your own experience if you feel like it.

Check out this article on [5 steps to talking to someone you trust](#). You could even start a group chat where each person shares one good thing that happened in their day.

4. Make a homemade meal

Good nutrition is always important, but during stressful times there's nothing better than a tasty, healthy homemade meal – especially if you made it yourself. You could ask a friend or family member for their favourite recipe, or check out [Taste's easy recipes section](#). See this article on [how to make healthy food choices for some tips](#).

For many people it may be challenging to get some ingredients at the moment. If you're running low or not able to get certain things, it's totally fine to keep it really simple. You could also get creative with substitutions or search '[ingredient] substitute' for ideas.

5. Take a break from the news

Between the news and social media, we're all feeling saturated by coronavirus updates right now. It's important to stay informed, but try to limit your media intake to a couple of times a day and use [trusted news sources](#). If you catch yourself turning to social media because you're feeling isolated, take a break and spend time on another activity, such as those we've suggested here.

6. Make a music playlist

Music can make us feel so much better. Hop on Spotify and make a playlist with your favourite songs. You could make a group playlist and ask your friends to add five of their favourite songs as well. If you want to get fancy, you could make several playlists for different moods/vibes (e.g. lazy day, feeling happy, etc.).

7. Declutter for five minutes

If you're suddenly spending a lot more time at home, it can help to have an environment that feels good to you. Instead of getting all Marie Kondo and trying to overhaul your whole space in a day, try decluttering for five mins a day. Pick a shelf to start with, or pick up five things and find a home for them. For more five-minute decluttering tips, [check out this article](#).

8. Watch or read something uplifting

Distraction can be a good thing. Watch something that you find uplifting and allow yourself to zone out from what's going on in the world. YouTube is a great option too. Check [this collection of different relaxing videos](#) that are sure to help you chill out.

If reading is more your thing, go to your bookshelf and choose an old favourite or something you've been meaning to get to for a while, or if you don't have physical books then e-books are a great option. [QNL](#) has a huge selection! Ask friends, teachers, and family members for title recommendations.

9. Learn something new

Have you wanted to get into drawing or learning a musical instrument? Now's a great time to make a start. If you want to learn a new language, [Duolingo](#) is an awesome free language learning program you can access from your computer or phone. YouTube has great free online tutorials for pretty much everything.

10. Reach out if it's all getting a bit much

Sometimes things can get overwhelming, even if you've been practicing self-care. You could talk to me or another trusted adult about it. See your GP or mental health professional for extra help. You could also ask a mental health professional if they could chat over Skype/FaceTime to respect social-distancing measures.

You should be really impressed with your efforts during this unprecedented time. I'm sure it's not always been an easy task, but well done.

All the best,

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