



BE KIND TO YOURSELF: LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY



The current situation means that life is changing for all of us for a while. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated. It's important to remember that it's ok to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. You might also have been feeling like this before the COVID-19 outbreak, and that's ok too.

There are some simple things you can do to help you take care of your mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty, and it's important that you take the time to do this to be kind to yourself. Doing so will help you think clearly, and make sure you are able to look after yourself and those you care about.

One way you can help to improve your mental health and wellbeing if you are feeling worried or anxious is to **look after your body**. We've shared some ideas below of ways you might like to do this.

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol. You can leave your house, alone or with members of your household, for exercise – like a walk, run or bike ride. But make you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others.



EXERCISE

Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and look and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy, and is also a significant benefit towards improving your mental health.

There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can help with your mental health with:

- **Better sleep:** by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- **Happier moods:** physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better and give you more energy
- **Managing stress and anxiety:** physical activity releases cortisol, which helps us manage stress. It also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times
- **Better self-esteem:** being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals
- **Reducing the risk of depression:** studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression

If you aren't quite so enthused about running in public, there are a variety of ways to access workout programmes in the comfort of your own home. Joe Wicks, the Body Coach, is currently working out with

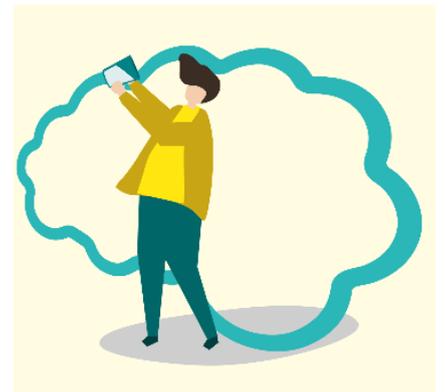
the UK on YouTube but if HIIT exercises are not your thing, YouTube also streams other workout programmes such as Yoga, Pilates, Zumba and as well as other Keep Fit sessions for all the family.

If you're not sure that any of these are the exercise for you, www.mind.org.uk have some great ideas on choosing an activity [here](#), and on how to get started [here](#). How much activity you decide to do is personal to you and will depend on your current level of activity and fitness, and what you can fit in with your day-to-day life. It's important that you understand what is right for you, and again mind.org can help you with this [here](#).

EAT WELL

What we eat may affect how we feel – for example, caffeine and sugar can have an immediate effect. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients in order to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health. A healthy, balanced diet includes:

- Lots of different types of fruit and vegetables
- Wholegrain cereals or bread
- Nuts and seeds
- Dairy products
- Oily fish
- Plenty of water



Three meals a day or five smaller snacks throughout the day, plus plenty of water, is ideal for maintaining good mental health. Try to limit how many high caffeine, sugary drinks or how much alcohol you have.

If you're stuck for inspiration, the NHS have some great content on their website, for example: [Healthy Breakfast Recipes](#), [Surprising 100-calorie snacks](#), [8 Tips for Healthy Eating](#), and [Healthy Food Swaps](#). Further information can be found [here](#).

We hope you've found this helpful and inspiring, remember there is never an obligation upon you, only ideas to help you!

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