

# **Coping with Social Distancing/Self Isolation: Bringing Structure to your Days**

Routines provide structure and purpose to our day. Below are some tips you can use to decide on and establish a routine that could help you to stay well during this time at the same time as putting some pain management strategies into use.

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## **Establish a sleep wake routine**

If you are someone who already has an established routine when you wake up and go to bed then it will be helpful to continue this routine. If your wake up and bed times vary greatly then perhaps now is a good time to consider if there may be anything you could change to bring more consistency to your sleep/wake routine.

**What time do you want to consistently try to wake up and go to bed?**



## **Set meal times**

When we do not have set commitments or responsibilities that require us to leave the home it can be easy for normal self care routines to slip. Especially in times of dealing with uncertainty, we can be prone to forget to eat or overindulge in eating.

**What time will you eat your meals?**



## **Get dressed**

It might be tempting to want to stay in pajamas all day. Staying in pajamas for long periods of time can be closely linked to a dip in mood. Getting dressed can be a motivator to be doing things in the day and help to regulate sleep/wake cycles.

**What time do you want to be dressed by each morning?**



## Stay connected with others

It is important to continue to connect with family and friends at this time. Giving someone a phone call, sending an email/text, taking part in a social media group discussion can all help to stay connected. Become aware to the extent your conversations are focused solely on discussing the virus. We would encourage you to see if you can consciously choose to discuss more than only the virus. You could watch a programme or read a book separately and discuss it over the phone.

**Who do you want to or need to stay socially connected with? When in the day would be best to contact them?**



## Focus on what matters

Ask yourself what and/or who matters most to me right now? What type of person do I want to be right now? These types of questions can help to identify life values. Start to consider how you could connect more closely with your values. If you identify that living out your life values involve being with people or being outside the home, then ask yourself if there is any other way you could live out this value in the home. Start to consider how you could create SMARTIES (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, independent, enjoyable/satisfying) goals to live out your values. Your goals might be immediate, short term, medium term and/or long term goals.

**What do you need to consider to do valued activities in the home? What immediate SMARTIES goal can you set today? What short term SMARTIES goal can you set to achieve within the next few days?**



## Be mindful

At times of stress and uncertainty, it is normal to feel increased anxiety or fear. We also know that usual worries can return or feel even worse at times of distress. These are normal reactions that any one of us can experience in distressing uncertain situations. Looking after your mental wellbeing at this time is particularly important.

Developing awareness skills through mindfulness practices can help you notice your physical, emotional and mental state which means you can then choose how you wish to act. Awareness practices involve learning and practicing how to purposely choose to direct your attention and be in the present moment in a non judging way. There are many apps you could try that could be helpful (Apps such as Headspace, Calm, Smiling Mind are a few examples). Why not consciously try out choosing to be mindful during the day.

**When could you set aside time to do a dropping anchor practice? What everyday activity could you do mindfully (for example showering, brushing teeth, making a hot drink, eating a meal)?**



## **Be physically active**

When we think of being physically active often we associate this with being outdoors or being social in community based settings. Being physically active in the home may have added challenges yet it is not impossible. Chair exercises, using tins of beans as arm weights, going up and down stairs, and movements on the spot are all physical activities that can raise the heart rate and strengthen muscles.

**What physical activities could you do inside your home?**



## **Start a new (or get back to an old) hobby**

Perhaps now may be a time you want to get back to an activity you once enjoyed or to start a new activity you have been considering for a while. Activities such as card making, learning a new language online, doing a jigsaw puzzle, listening to audiobooks, dancing to music, doing creative hobbies and crafts; can all be done in the home. Regardless of what activities you include into your routine, consider if it might be helpful to gradually build up these activities by breaking the activity into smaller bits or alternating doing sedentary and active activities throughout the day. It may be that when coming out of self-isolation in time to come that you have a sense of achievement of your accomplishments.

**What are your interests? What activities do you want to be doing regularly?**



## Bring nature to you

Although it may not be possible to go out for a walk to enjoy nature, you could see if it is possible to bring nature closer to you. Perhaps you could move a chair closer to the window, make a point of opening the blinds daily, take extra care of those houseplants, take a few breaths from an open window, or make good use of your own garden space if you have one.

**How could you bring yourself closer to nature from inside the home?**



## Create a Routine Time Table

After reflecting on the above questions, you may wish to create an activity time table for yourself. Planning out activities in advance and setting goals can help keep you motivated and help to keep your mood uplifted. You may wish to use an activity scheduling template to record what you will do and when you will do it in your days ahead.

**What activities will you schedule into your days for the next week? If you live with others, would a household schedule be helpful?**

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# Activities for the Week

Week Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

# Weekly Activity Schedule

Week Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
6 - 7 am							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							
12 - 1 pm							
1 - 2							
2 - 3							
3 - 4							
4 - 5							
5 - 6							
6 - 7							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							