

10 tips to help if you are worried about coronavirus



The impact that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is still having on our lives may cause us to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated.

Everyone feels different sometimes. It's important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently – for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

There are simple things we can do to help take care of our mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty. Doing so will help us think clearly, and make sure we can look after ourselves and those we care about.

These tips can help improve your mental health and wellbeing if you are worried about the coronavirus outbreak. You can also read our advice on [maintaining your mental wellbeing if you are staying at home](#).

It is important to always follow the latest [official guidance on social distancing](#) to keep everyone safe.

1. Stay connected with people

Maintaining healthy relationships with people we trust is important for our mental wellbeing.

If you can, visit or meet up with friends and family in person, but [follow the latest government guidance on social distancing](#) when you do.

If you cannot meet up in person, because one of you needs to stay home, stay in touch by phone, video calls or social media.

We all need to feel connected still, so keep in touch – whether it's with people you normally saw often or reconnecting with old friends.

2. Talk about your worries

It's normal to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember: it's OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too.

If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead.

- [NHS-recommended helplines](#)

3. Support and help others

Helping someone else can benefit you as well as them, so try to be a little more understanding of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours at this time.

Try to think of things you can do to help those around you. Is there a friend or family member nearby you could now meet up with? If you cannot meet up, you could phone or message them.

Are there any community groups you could join to support others locally?

If you do go out to offer support or help to others, always follow social distancing guidelines when you are outside your home.

- [Helping others](#)

4. Feel prepared

As the outbreak continues, it can help to work through what changes to government guidelines mean for you so you feel more prepared and less concerned.

It can help to think through a typical week: how will you continue to be affected and what will you need to do to solve any problems?

If you have not already, you might want to talk with your employer. Find out about [government support for businesses and self-employed people](#) and [understand your sick pay and benefits rights](#).

- [GOV.UK: Coronavirus support](#)

5. Look after your body

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.

Going for a walk, run or bike ride can really help lift your mood and clear your mind – just remember to follow social distancing guidelines. Or you could try one of our easy 10-minute home workouts.

- [Try a home workout](#)

6. Stick to the facts

Find a credible source you can trust – such as [GOV.UK](#) or the [NHS website](#) – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people.

You could also use the GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp. This automated chatbot covers the most common questions about coronavirus. [Message the coronavirus chatbot](#) to get started.

Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too. Try not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources.

You might also want to consider limiting the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

You could set yourself a specific time to read updates or limit yourself to a couple of checks a day.

- [NHS information on coronavirus](#)

7. Stay on top of difficult feelings

Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their daily life.

Try to focus on the things you can control, such as your behaviour, who you speak to, and where and how often you get information.

It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about coronavirus are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, try some [ideas to help manage your anxiety](#) or listening to an audio guide.

- [NHS audio guides](#)

8. Do things you enjoy

Feeling worried, anxious or low might stop us doing things we usually enjoy. Focusing on your favourite hobby, relaxing or connecting with others can help with anxious thoughts and feelings. If some of the things you enjoy doing involve meeting up with others, are there ways you can now do these that follow social distancing guidelines? For instance, playing tennis or football? If you cannot do the things you normally enjoy, perhaps because you are staying home, think about how you could adapt them, or try something new.

There are lots of free tutorials and courses online, or try online pub quizzes and music concerts.

- [Watch: Keep learning](#)

9. Focus on the present

Focusing on the present, rather than worrying about the future, can help with difficult emotions and improve our wellbeing.

[Relaxation techniques](#) can also help some people deal with feelings of anxiety, or you could try our mindful breathing video.

- [Watch: Mindful breathing](#)

10. Look after your sleep

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.

Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep up good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. See our sleep page for more advice.

- [How to sleep better](#)

Further support and advice

There are plenty of things you can do and more help and support is available if you're struggling with your mental health. Our pages on [stress](#), [anxiety](#), [sleep](#) and [low mood](#) have lots more tips and specific advice. If you're a parent or caregiver for a child or young person, Young Minds has guidance on [talking to your child about coronavirus](#).

The [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice](#) pages also have a self-assessment, as well as audio guides and other tools you can use.

We also have [guidance and information to help others](#) if someone you know is struggling with their mental health.

Remember, it's quite common to experience short-lived physical symptoms when you are feeling low or anxious. Some of these, like feeling hot or short of breath, could be confused with symptoms of coronavirus.

If this happens, try to distract yourself. When you feel less anxious, see if you still have the symptoms that worried you. If you're still concerned, visit the NHS website.