

# COVID-19

## Combatting side effects of social isolation



### Tips to reduce boredom, loneliness and more

As the COVID-19 outbreak has prompted recommendations to stay at home and avoid non-essential outings, you may be feeling increasingly lonely, restless, bored, or frustrated from being cooped up. Getting outside for a walk, hike, or bike ride (keeping a safe distance from others) is a great antidote for these feelings.

And aside from binge-watching your favorite shows, watching funny animal videos, or escaping into a favorite novel, here are some additional tips that could help lift your spirits, calm your fears and feel more closely connected with others, when that feeling of “the four walls closing in” starts to set in.

### Stay informed – but be selective.

Follow up-to-date guidance and information from reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local health officials.

- ✓ **Stick to a time limit** for viewing news
- ✗ **Avoid watching endless news segments** or scrolling through tons of news articles
- ✗ **Avoid hearsay** and information from untrustworthy sources



Stay informed! Follow the guidelines and information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Visit: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html)

See more a lot more tips 

**HealthAdvocate**<sup>SM</sup>

## Keep Connected to Others

### Missing your friends and family?

Use social media to chat often and regularly, and to set up or attend a virtual meeting or group call via Zoom, Google Hangouts, or FaceTime. Here are some engaging and entertaining examples others have found useful:

- **Far-flung siblings have regularly scheduled virtual games** where the “leader” posts quizzes during the chat, like, “if brother Eric was an animal, which one would it be?” --the sillier, the better. Other friends play a simple drawing game, where they have to guess what movie a person’s drawing represents.
- Yoga students keep up with their teacher’s instruction through her **weekly Zoom sessions**.
- A daughter whose mother is in an assisted living facility arranges with a staff member with a smartphone to set up a **FaceTime session** so the mother can interact with her new great-grandson.

### Consider virtual volunteering.

There are online organizations through which you can offer your skills and assistance to others in a number of ways. You also can send food, supplies, books, music, and any type of little memento to help someone without leaving your house. Helping others helps improve our own sense of well-being and purpose.

### Craving attending an event?

Check out BroadwayHD.com, a theater streaming service that offers free trials of musicals and Geffen Playhouse productions during the COVID-19 quarantine.



See even more tips 

## Focus on what you can control

### Stay mindful.

While walking outdoors, slow down and observe the details of the trees, for example. Focus on the pattern of the bark, how the branches form, and the new spring growth near the trunk—things you might miss if you're just whizzing by. This is the essence of mindfulness, the practice of focusing on—and accepting—things as they are in the present moment. Being mindful is a wonderful way to calm fears and anxiety. Carry mindfulness into all aspects of your everyday life. Try peeling an orange slowly, savoring the texture and juice on your tongue, and so on.

### Working at home?

Build in a transition activity. Make it routine to have a restorative activity at the end of your work day, whether it's sketching, taking a bubble bath, brushing the dog, or playing a game with the kids.



## Expand your horizons

### Try something you were afraid you couldn't do.

This can expand your world when it feels so narrow right now. It can be thrilling to master a new social media skill, or make hollandaise sauce, for example, giving you a sense of control when it feels like things are out of control.

### Get deeply into armchair travel.

Where would you like to go someday? Some travel documentaries are truly captivating, offering not just a change of scenery, but can transport you to a different mindset about our global connectedness. Viewing these may even spark you to plan an exploratory trip of your own.

### Tap into podcasts and YouTube.

You may be familiar with YouTube workouts, cooking lessons, and dog training, but what about classes teaching design elements, for example? You could learn how to style your living space with items you already have, which could change your perspective and help you feel more comfortable in your home space.



**If the distress of isolation is making you feel highly anxious or overwhelmed,** consider reaching out to a licensed behavioral health clinician—many are offering tele-therapy.