

Part 1 – Routine and Daily Balance

Now is the time, more than ever that we need to be looking after our mental health and wellbeing.

As we begin to emerge out of the Coronavirus crisis, the 'rules' of the lockdown become more uncertain and potentially may cause us greater anxiety. We also have time to reflect on the past weeks and the journey we have been through - both positive and negative.



We may be trying to make sense of what has just happened and what it has meant to us personally and how we plan for a changed future.



It will affect us all in different ways. Most of us will come through fine and be able to start getting back to normal easily. But for some of us it may be more challenging. We have all experienced some type of loss - either the loss of freedom, structure, social contacts, loved ones.

It's normal to feel unsettled and we need to give ourselves time to adjust to the current and changing circumstances and to continue looking after ourselves.

Here are all things we know we should be doing and can be really helpful when life gets a bit challenging:

1. Set a routine
2. Stay mentally and physically active ... you can find lots of exercise workout plans and videos on the DSAuk website news pages - click [HERE](#)



3. Eat healthy - lots of vegetables, protein, and water. Whilst the weather has been nice, we may have enjoyed a glass or two in the garden ...but it's important to regulate those tipples, chocolate bars and coffee!



4. Sleep well.
5. Stay connected with others.
6. Be kind to yourself and others.



As lockdown lessens, continue to set a routine, maintaining a regular time for waking up and going to bed, eating at regular times, getting ready and dressed each morning.

Lots of us are still socially distancing, staying at home or shielding, so one way we can look after our wellbeing is by 'finding balance'. At the moment, many of our usual activities are changing, which naturally can be unsettling, as we lose some of the things we did before to look after our wellbeing.

So, whether you are home schooling, working from home, physically isolating or distancing put together a daily routine that involves a balance between activities that:

- ✓ give you a sense of achievement
- ✓ you can just do for pleasure
- ✓ help you feel close and connected with others



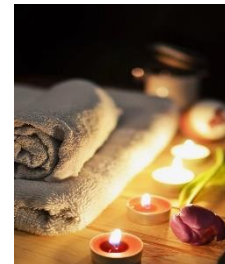
We feel good when we have achieved or accomplished something e.g.

- seeing our tomato or vegetable seeds growing into plants
- cooking a new recipe
- juggling three balls
- learning to ride a bike
- completing an exercise routine
- finishing a work project or homework!



Pleasurable activities give us a sense of wellbeing thus plan to do some activities that make you feel happy e.g.

- reading a good book
- playing with the dog
- watching your favourite TV programme
- singing and dancing to your favourite songs
- finger painting
- taking a relaxing bath



We are social animals and love that connection with other people. This can be challenging when we are physically isolated or distant from others. So, continue to connect with family and friends in a virtual way e.g.

- join a virtual film / book club
- watch free music / theatre productions
- zoom/facetime etc with your friends
- And we all still love to receive post send a thank you card to a friend or family member.



What is important is that we have a balance between all three. So, write a list of activities that you are doing now or could do that are; achieving something, are pleasurable and are connecting with others. At the end of the day check in with yourself /your children ...'What did I do today that helped to give me a sense of achievement, made me feel happy and made me close to others?'

But most of all be kind to yourself. When lockdown first started, I had numerous ideas of the things I could do ...play the ukulele, learn French, decorate the whole house. Naturally, I haven't been able to do all these things, as I've just been getting on with life the best I can and that's ok!



Dwarf Sports Association UK Mental Health and Wellbeing



If you want further self-help information or support, have a look at the following web sites, apps, or organisations

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus-update>

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

If you are feeling anxious or worried you should speak to your GP who can advise you on your local phone helplines and organisations.

Author - Dr. Donna Walters, Consultant Psychologist in the NHS and DSAuk member