

Fueling Your Mental Wellness



Some advice from

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MAIN COURSE

Nourish your overall mental wellness by understanding and filling your plate with these main sources of fuel.

Stay Positive

It's normal to feel anxious and confused, to have negative thoughts and emotions, and to experience tension and unrest at any time, but especially now. However, fixating on those thoughts and feelings is not helpful. Accept that there will be situations out of your control, and instead recognize your ability to shift your attention and employ coping tools to help you relax and refocus.



QUICK SNACKS

Time-efficient techniques to manage feelings of anxiety or stress that may surface during the day.

1. Practice Gratitude: 1-2 minutes

Take a minute to list 3 things you're grateful for – say it out loud, write it down in a gratitude journal, or share it in a group text with your family or friends.

2. Practice Altruism: 1 minute to any length of time

Helping or supporting others during a crisis creates feelings of happiness and control. Take a minute to check in or call an elderly neighbour or offer to drop off supplies to someone who has more barriers than you in procuring necessities.

3. Practice Breathing: 1-10 minutes

Intentional breathing can help offset the higher rate of breathing and heart rate that anxiety generates.

- Close your eyes, take deep full breaths, breathing in for 5 seconds and out for 10.
- For children, try “rainbow breathing” – get them to breathe in for 5 seconds while raising their arms above their head, then breathe out for 10 seconds as they bring their arms down.

Stay Connected

Physical distancing and social distancing are not analogous. Staying connected with and leaning on your social support network is just as important now as it was before isolation. Many are leveraging digital channels to do this, but don't forget about other ways we can maintain connectedness.



1. Collective Public Appreciation: 1-5 minutes

Residents in many jurisdictions are coming together through shows of appreciation for essential workers. Participating in nightly applause, creating window displays or being a part of drive-by parades are individual actions that, when done collectively, create connectedness to your community.

2. Virtual Coffee Date: 10-15 minutes

Schedule a short standing coffee date over video chat or a phone call in the morning to stay connected to loved ones while apart, just like having your regular coffee break.

3. Intentional Family Time: 5-10 minutes

With the pressures of juggling everyone's responsibilities and activities now all taking place at home, we may be "managing" our children more than engaging with them. Set aside 5-10 minutes at the beginning, in the middle of and at the end of your day to unplug and have quality time with the people in your home.

Stay Active

Getting the body moving and your heart rate up is a proven way to increase your endorphins and improve your mood. Physical movement and activity is scientifically proven to decrease symptoms of both depression and anxiety. Other psychological benefits include improved sleep and cognitive functioning.



1. Body Break: 5-10 minutes

Feeling groggy? Kid flying off the walls? Time for a quick body break – just move! Try a quick family dance party where you each pick a song, or check out [GoNoodle](#), an easy activity website for children, for ideas.

2. Stretch: 5-10 minutes

Movement doesn't need to always be vigorous. Sometimes just getting the kinks out feels good. Make it easy by finding something gentle and easy online to follow, and always listen to your body.

3. Move: 5 minutes

Being at home still means being busy or even busier for some. Fitting in exercise shouldn't add to your stress. Try 5 minutes whenever you can fit it in. A Google search for "5-minute workouts" will help you find some options suitable for every level that can be done with little or no equipment.

Please keep in mind that these are only general recommendations. If you feel you might benefit from additional support, reach out to the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#). For youth, mental well-being supports are available at [Jack.org](#) and [Kids Help Phone](#).

