

Self- isolation

A guide to staying well

We've put together a helpful guide which includes tips for planning and preparing during self-isolation as well as how to keep fit, healthy and happy.

What is self-isolation?



Self-isolation is staying at home for a recommended amount of time. It's a precautionary method currently being used to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19). If you are self-isolating, you must:

- ♦ Only go outside for food, health reasons or for work, but only if you cannot work from home
- ♦ If you do go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- ♦ Wash your hands as soon as you get home and use hand sanitizers when out
- ♦ Do not meet other people, even friends or family.

Who should self-isolate and for how long?



Currently you're advised to self-isolate for 7 days if you have symptoms of coronavirus. The most common symptoms include a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature. You may also feel tired and have breathing difficulties.

Individuals with symptoms that may be due to coronavirus must stay at home as well as other members of their household. Staying at home will help control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community, and particularly the most vulnerable.

If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus, then household members must stay at home and not leave your house for 14 days. If possible, you should not go out even to buy food or other essentials, other than exercise, and in that case stay at a safe distance from others. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in your house became ill.

[Please click here for up-to-date government guidance.](#)

Self-isolation guide

If you need to stay at home for an extended amount of time, here are some useful tips, suggestions and things to consider, from stocking up and creating a routine, to staying active and keeping busy.

Remember to ask for help if you need it, but if you're having someone come over to bring you supplies, or getting online deliveries, you should avoid contact and get them to leave the items on your doorstep.

Food



It's a good idea to plan your meals ahead so you know whether you have enough food to last you, as well as any family members or pets.

If you run out of anything, see if friends, family or neighbours can bring them to you, or order a grocery delivery or meal box subscription. There's no need to stockpile certain items, just get what you need and there'll be enough for everyone else too.

Make sure you're getting a variety of healthy foods for a well-balanced diet so you can **boost your immune system**. And don't forget to drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.



Health



Make sure you have enough medication for you and anyone you live with. If you're running low, or you need to collect a prescription, ask a friend, family member or neighbour to pick it up and bring it to your house. Alternatively, order online in plenty of time.

If you're going to miss any appointments, call the organiser to discuss what this means for you, and find out if there's anything you can do.

Hygiene



Check you have enough soap, toiletries and cleaning products to get by. If you live with others, the whole household will need to work together to keep surfaces clean in communal areas.

Remember to **wash your hands** thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, and if you have symptoms, cough into a tissue. If you have dependants, make sure they are doing all of this too – it will help to avoid spreading or picking up the virus.

Exercise



Keeping fit is vital for staying healthy, but even more so in self-isolation. You can go outside for a run or walk once per day, as long as you keep away from others. Back in the house, there are plenty of ways you can exercise without needing any special equipment, from house walks to at-home yoga.

If you're not feeling well, or want something simple, here's an easy **workout you can do at home** with gentle stretches and movements to keep you flexible and mobile. If you want something more energetic, try this **high intensity interval training (HIIT) workout**. If you're pregnant, give this **prenatal mobility workout** a go.

Work



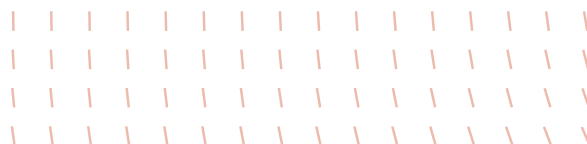
If you're working from home, check you have everything you need, such as equipment, devices and a good internet connection.

Remote working has its advantages. You can decide when, where and how you work. Plus, you'll have extra time in the day that you would have spent commuting. But you'll need to adapt to avoid any potential disadvantages.

Check in with your colleagues regularly to maintain a sense of community and teamwork. Perhaps have daily video calls in the morning or set up a virtual water cooler. And remember conversations don't always have to be about work.

If you don't already have one, set up a separate workspace at a desk or table with minimal distractions to help you focus and **protect your posture**. Working in bed or on the sofa can be tempting, but this can make it harder for you to create a boundary between work and relaxation.

Then, at the end of your working day, turn off and put away your laptop or work phone to signal it's time for you to switch off too.



Vulnerable people and dependants



If a friend or family member you live with is vulnerable, make sure they have everything they need and follow the hygiene advice extra vigilantly. Also make sure you keep your distance (at least 2 metres apart), and that they avoid using communal areas for too long.

If you have children, look after them as best you can. Think about how you'll keep them entertained, especially when you need to work. If they're school age, make sure their school sends work for them to do, and come up with a routine to find a balance of home-schooling and play. You may need to think creatively – what about a family crafting session or scheduling regular exercise to burn off physical energy? Why not use the Nuffield Health Wellbeing Journal, made up of activities and challenges to do at home. **[Click here for further info nuffieldhealth.com/kidswellbeing](https://www.nuffieldhealth.com/kidswellbeing)**.

Carry on taking care of any pets as usual – there's no evidence that animals are affected by coronavirus. If you have a dog, you can still walk it as long as you keep a safe distance from others, or you may want to enlist someone to take care of it for you.

Staying connected



As you won't be able to meet up with your friends and family, it's important you keep in touch with them. Text or call regularly to talk about the situation and how you're coping. Or why not schedule in a video chat so you can still 'see' each other?

Do keep yourself up to date on the evolving coronavirus situation through reliable sources, but don't watch the news constantly or spend all your time scrolling.

If you focus on the positives, social media can be a powerful tool for staying connected and feeling part of a community. Post your self-isolation successes, share good news stories from around the world, and get involved with live streams – many musicians are taking requests.



Free time



Self-isolation is the perfect opportunity to do all those things you don't usually have time for. You can rediscover your hobbies or even find new ones.

How many times have you said, "when I have time..."? Now is the time to complete those long over-due projects you have never got around to. From organising your books in alphabetical order to re-decorating your home, taking time to tick some things off your "to do list" can be satisfying and productive.

If you want to learn something new, what about learning a language or there are various online

courses you can enrol in via The Open University, FutureLearn, ClassCentral, Udemy, or why not take a virtual museum tour: [Virtual Museum Tours](#).

Get started on that tower of books that's been piling up, or finally get around to watching that TV series everyone's been talking about. You could even arrange to watch a film or episode at the same time as your friends, so you can chat about it as a group.

Think about creative projects you can do. Maybe dabble with some sketching or painting, redecorate or reorganise your house, or write that story or blog you've been putting off.

Nature



Try to get as much light and fresh air as you can. Open your windows every now and then or sit near a window so you can gaze out.

Get out in the garden if you have one – you could take your work or exercise outside or do some gardening. If not, make sure you go for daily walks to soak up some vitamin D.

Why not try growing some simple herbs, plants, salad or vegetables in the garden or on a windowsill, so you can enjoy your own fresh produce, while saving money?



Routine



Whether you're working or not, it's a good idea to stick to a routine to give your days structure and balance. Aim to wake up and go to bed at the same time and have three meals at the same time each day – not forgetting to weave in regular breaks for water, exercise and fresh air.

If you live with others, you may need to agree how the household will run with everyone at home all day, particularly if you need to keep your distance. Perhaps come up with a timetable for who can use which rooms and when.

Remember, it's only temporary



There are plenty of ways to plan and prepare for self-isolation, and so many things you can do to keep preoccupied and maintain your wellbeing while staying at home.

It can be tricky to begin with, but once you get into a good routine, it'll be easy to stick to healthy habits. It's about adapting, being creative and finding a balance. You may even find you carry on some of your new-found hobbies and habits once this is all over.

Above all, it's important to stay positive. Try to find some light relief and sources of laughter where you can. And do ask for help or offer support to those who need it – after all, we're all in this together.

To find out more about our emotional wellbeing services, visit nuffieldhealth.com/emotionalwellbeing or speak to your Nuffield Health Client Director. For more advice and articles on how to stay healthy during self-isolation visit nuffieldhealth.com/article/wellbeing-at-work.