

## How to Protect Your Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During this difficult time, it is not only your physical health that can become compromised, but also your mental health that can take a toll.

Below are some simple measures you can follow to lessen your mental load and decrease anxiety and stress that you may be feeling.

### Cut back news and social media intake:

Whilst it is important to stay up to date with regular news regarding measures and laws around COVID-19, a lot of negative information exists which may increase your anxiety around health symptoms and the pandemic in general.

Constant monitoring of news and social media feeds can quickly turn compulsive and counterproductive—fuelling anxiety rather than easing it. The limit is different for everyone, so pay attention to how you're feeling and adjust accordingly.

Credible and Reliable information from government and health authorities include:

[Victorian Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\)](#), [Australian Government](#) and [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#)

### Stay connected with your family and friends:

It can make a huge difference when we share our worries with others and connect with other people who are supportive. Try to stay connected to people in your life through technological means so you feel less isolated and lonely. Find a buddy to set daily challenges with. These could include a healthy habit, a mindful practice, a creative pursuit. Be sure to encourage and check in daily to stay motivated. If there is someone you think may struggle through social isolation, it is important to reach out to them and let them know you care. Don't underestimate the power you have to offer hope to another person.

Popular apps and platforms for communication include:

[Houseparty](#), [Skype](#), [Facebook](#) and [WhatsApp](#)

### Practise relaxation techniques:

Do your best to remain calm and be mindful not to contribute to the widespread panic that can hinder efforts to positively manage the outbreak. Practises like yoga, meditation and breathing exercises can reduce anxiety and ground you in the present moment.

Great websites and apps with a host of information on practicing relaxation techniques during this time include:

[Smiling Mind](#), [Headspace](#) and [1 Giant Mind](#)

## Keep yourself busy and make time for self-care:

Aim to get plenty of sleep, maintain physical activity, eat healthy foods and allocate specific work hours and breaks. Stay curious about your new experience and how you can use it to develop healthy habits. Gyms have adapted accordingly, uploading online exercises and workouts so you can stay fit and mentally strong during this time.

Free fitness apps available include:

[Nike Training Club](#), [Peleton](#), [Asana Rebel](#) and [Daily Workouts Fitness Trainer](#)

If the symptoms of stress and anxiety worsen and you feel it is impairing your ability to function, please speak to an experienced mental health professional at the earliest. It's ok to ask for help. Psychological therapies can be done online, or remotely via phone or video conferencing, and are an excellent option if you're in self-isolation, or worried about going to a clinic.

## Where to go for support?

<https://www.incolink.org.au/wellbeing-support-services/>

<https://mensline.org.au/phone-and-online-counselling/>

<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support>

## Further Information

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/mental-health-coronavirus>

<https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support>

<https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/news/news-detail/2020/03/20/10-tips-for-managing-anxiety-during-covid-19>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>