TOP TIPS

Managing health conditions during social distancing

Here are tips for people to manage health conditions during social distancing or self-isolation. There may be other tips for specific conditions, so do speak to your occupational therapist and other healthcare professionals.

1 **Use digital resources.** The NHS App Library has many free online tools for managing different physical and mental health conditions. Health charities' websites often have self-management information for specific conditions.

2 **Set goals.** As you work towards them, listen to your body and how you're feeling. Be flexible; it's okay to adapt your goals. Keep a diary of your achievements for a reminder of your progress and for motivation, especially on not so good days.

3 **Pace your routine.** Spreading your activities throughout the day or week can help manage fatigue, breathlessness and chronic pain. Break your tasks and activities into small steps, plan when to do them and give yourself plenty of time with regular breaks.

4 **Problem solve.** Look at where you may have problems in your daily tasks. For each task, consider what you could stop or do differently to make it easier. Identify triggers that make you feel worse and ways to reduce or manage them.

5 **Take care of yourself.** Eat and drink healthily with plenty of fruit, vegetables and water. Even if you're not hungry, eat a little. This will help boost your immune system and energy levels.

6 **Get enough sleep.** Sleep is important in managing many health symptoms. If you're struggling to sleep, try going to bed at a regular time, practising relaxation techniques and cutting out alcohol and caffeine. Find more advice from NHS Every Mind Matters.

7 **Take time to relax.** Relaxation can help manage symptoms like fatigue, breathlessness and chronic pain. Find time in your day for relaxing activities you enjoy. Try a relaxation tool from the NHS App Library.

8 **Keep moving.** Exercise helps manage many physical and mental health conditions, but it's important to pace yourself and do activities suitable for your condition. Set a timer to move every 20 minutes and keep mobile. Look for videos on the NHS Fitness Studio to follow at home.

9 **Reduce effort and risk at home.** Organise your home so items you use most are easy to reach. Declutter and remove loose rugs and items you could trip or fall over. The Disabled Living Foundation has more information about equipment and adaptations.

10 **Seek support.** Talk to friends and family regularly and ask for help if you need it. Many health charities offer telephone support and online resources for specific health conditions. Samaritans and The Silver Line also offer telephone support.

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Make sure that you only take advice from trustworthy sources. If your health needs change, or you become unwell, please contact your GP or get NHS advice:

- **England:** NHS advice online or call 111

- **Northern Ireland:** GP Out of Hours or call 999 if an emergency or life threatening (111 calls are for coronavirus only)

- **Wales:** NHS Direct Wales online or call 111 or 0845 46 47 (depending on geographic locations)

- **Scotland:** NHS advice online or call 111

Website links

NHS Apps Library: www.nhs.uk/apps-library/

NHS Every Mind Matters: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/

NHS Fitness Studio: www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/

Disabled Living Foundation: www.dlf.org.uk

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/

The Silver Line: www.thesilverline.org.uk

NHS 111 online (England): www.111.nhs.uk

GP Out of Hours (Northern Ireland): www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/gp-out-hours-service

NHS Wales Direct online (Wales): www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/contactus/

NHS advice online (Scotland):
www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19

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