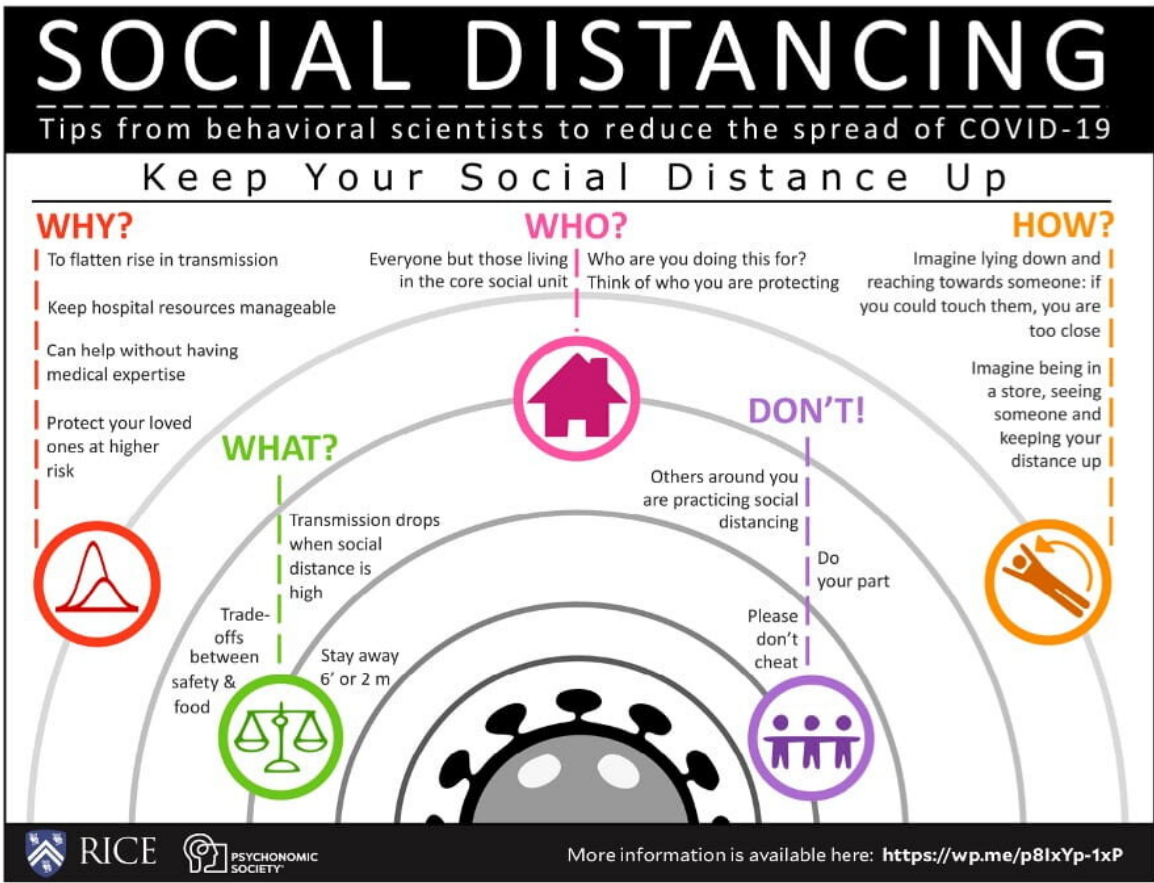


As some Americans head back to work, psychologists offer tips on proper social distancing

April 29 2020



SOCIAL DISTANCING
Tips from behavioral scientists to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Keep Your Social Distance Up

WHY?

- To flatten rise in transmission
- Keep hospital resources manageable
- Can help without having medical expertise
- Protect your loved ones at higher risk

WHO?

Everyone but those living in the core social unit | Who are you doing this for? Think of who you are protecting

HOW?

- Imagine lying down and reaching towards someone: if you could touch them, you are too close
- Imagine being in a store, seeing someone and keeping your distance up

WHAT?

- Transmission drops when social distance is high
- Trade-offs between safety & food
- Stay away 6' or 2 m

DON'T!

- Others around you are practicing social distancing
- Do your part
- Please don't cheat

RICE | PSYCHONOMIC SOCIETY

More information is available here: <https://wp.me/p8lxYp-1xP>

Credit: Psychonomic Society/Rice University

As some states reopen for business amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a Rice University psychologist and his colleagues have developed a chart of evidence-based tips on how to properly social distance.

Jim Pomerantz, a professor of psychological sciences at Rice University and chair of the Psychonomic Society Governing Board, has teamed up with fellow members of the society to develop the list of science-backed suggestions. The team previously developed a chart with recommendations on how to stop face-touching, a common [behavior](#) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends avoiding to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"A lot of media attention regarding COVID-19 continues to focus on [medical interventions](#), including specialized equipment and trained personnel dealing with people who are already infected and fighting for their lives," Pomerantz said. "But what we all have to keep in mind is that most of the people who are going to be infected by COVID-19 haven't been infected yet. Our group is trying to put some emphasis on preventing people from getting infected so that they don't end up on ventilators.

"What makes our group relevant to this is that we are experts on [human behavior](#), and we know that the disease is transmitted this way," Pomerantz continued. "When we fail to socially distance ourselves, we get virus on our hands and then we touch our faces and infect ourselves with the virus. Our recommendations offer guidance on how to properly social distance."

Absent a vaccine, which won't be ready for some time, Pomerantz said social distancing combined with not touching your face is more effective than medical interventions for stopping the spread of the virus.

"There's a lot of misinformation going around at this time," Pomerantz

said. "What we want to do is offer science-based steps that we all can take that are simple, proven to be effective and can stop the spread of COVID-19."

The recommendations are available online [here](#), and will be published in different languages.

"Many of us have taken a course in introductory psychology where we learned about conditioning and the laws of behavior, and how we can establish and change behavior," Pomerantz said. "We know that this works."

"Most of us know how we're supposed to behave in this new world, but often we slip up," he continued. "Just yesterday, an old friend I'd not seen in ages tried to shake my hand before turning beet-red with embarrassment and apologizing profusely. Psychologists can help people with fact-based recommendations on how to remember better."

Provided by Rice University

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