

Top tips to maintain a healthy routine while staying at home

April 2 2020

How to maintain a healthy routine while social distancing



Set up a daily routine



Get up at the same time everyday



Spend time outdoors where possible



Set times for regular activities



Make sure to exercise everyday



Have your meals at a regular time



Keep in touch with friends and family



Avoid napping during the day



Go to bed at a time that fits your natural rhythms

Recommendations from the International Society of Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) Task Force on Chronobiology and Chronotherapy

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious global health risk.

Governments have been implementing a variety of new regulations to try to stem the spread of COVID-19, including self-quarantine, self-isolation and social distancing. While medically necessary to limit the spread, these new policies are also disrupting many of the stabilizing factors in our lives that support mental health.

"One of the most important systems contributing to our daily wellbeing is the [body](#)'s internal biologic clock. This clock keeps our body and our behavior synchronized with the 24-hour cycle of light and dark," says Professor Greg Murray, Director of the Centre for Mental Health.

Predictable, daily schedules and regular routines help keep our [body clock](#) running smoothly. "Research shows that disrupted body clocks are associated with many physical and mental health conditions, including depression, diabetes, obesity and cancer" he adds.

Helping your body clock stay on track during major life disruptions such as the COVID 19 pandemic is important to maintaining positive physical and mental health.

Here are some tips for improving the regularity of your daily routines at a time where nothings feels regular. These recommendations have been co-developed by Professor Murray as part of the International Society of Bipolar Disorders Task Force on Chronobiology and Chronotherapy.

Set up a routine

Routines help stabilize your body clock, so whether you're working from home or in quarantine, it's important to set a daily routine for yourself.

Get up at the same time every day

Waking up and starting your day at the same time every day is the most important way to stabilize your body clock.

Spend some time outdoors

Your body clock needs to "see" light in the morning to know that it's daytime. If you can't go outside, try to spend some time next to a window to get sunlight and focus on being calm.

Set times for regular activities

Whether you are tutoring your kids, checking in with a friend or cooking making dinner, try to do these activities at the same time each day.

Exercise every day

It's easy to lose track of time when you're working from home. Make sure you set aside some time to exercise. This could be going for a walk around the block or doing an online exercise class.

Eat your meals at the same time every day

If you're not hungry, at least eat a small snack at the prescribed time.

Stay in touch with friends and family

Staying at home and complying with social distancing rules means we now have far fewer social interactions. It's important at this time to keep in regular contact with friends, family and colleagues. This may be through [video calls](#), [phone calls](#) or even real-time text-messaging. Book in these interactions at the same time every day.

Avoid naps during daylight hours

If you must nap, restrict your sleep to 30 minutes. Napping makes it hard to fall asleep at night. Avoid [bright light](#) in the evening, including the 'blue light' from computer screens and smartphones. Blue spectrum light suppresses the hormone that helps us sleep.

Stick to consistent sleep and wake times that fit your natural rhythm

If you are a night owl, it's okay to stay up a little bit later and get up a little bit later than others in the household. Just make sure you go to sleep and get up at the same [time](#) every day.

Provided by Swinburne University of Technology

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