

Keeping Well at Home



A reminder

What have we been asked to do?

We should only leave our homes for the following reasons:



Shop for basic necessities, such as food or medicine or to access money.



Go for a walk or to exercise, either alone or with a member of our household.



For a medical appointment, or need, to provide care or help for someone who needs it.



Travelling to and from work if you are a key worker, or if working at home is not possible.

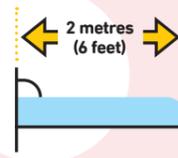


If we have a medical emergency.

We should follow these simple steps to protect ourselves and our community:



Wash your hands with hot water and soap more often for 20 seconds each time.



Keep a minimum of two metres (six feet) apart from anyone outside your household.



Carry tissues with you to catch any coughs and sneezes, and throw them away after.

By staying at home we are protecting ourselves, our families and our communities. No matter who we are, we are all in this together and can help and support each other at this time.

Over the past month we have listened and acted on Government advice to help protect us from the Coronavirus outbreak, which causes the disease called Covid-19.

Messages about “Staying At Home” have encouraged us all to make changes to the way we live and go about our daily lives. Already we are seeing the impact of our actions as fewer people become unwell.

We are all at risk of becoming ill, for those of us aged 70 years or older and those living with pre-existing health conditions, it is especially important that we follow the guidelines. This is the best way we can protect ourselves and others. Staying at home for a long time is not easy, for some people it is particularly hard. There are things that we can all do to look after ourselves and encourage one another to do at this time.

This booklet has lots of ideas and suggestions to help us keep well whilst at home. Together we can support and protect each other by looking after ourselves at this time. It is written for those with less or no access to online resources and includes a list of helpful contact numbers at the back. There are a large number of online resources currently available to everyone to support the information provided here. Ask a friend, family member or volunteer to help find and print additional resources if possible.

We hope you find it helpful and share it with your friends, family and community.



“Even at this time community grows, even by a phone call, life becomes a bit easier and worthwhile.”

Elaine

Mind matters

Why our mind matters

Our mind matters and keeping our mind active is important. We all need to think about our mind in the same way that we need to think about our bodies, especially in times of change.

Where possible, try to keep up with normal everyday activities and interests, especially keeping in touch with friends, family and neighbours. Keeping active with interests and hobbies we enjoy keeps our mind well. Trying something new can be a great thing to do.



“I’ve been advising friends and family not to get hooked on watching, listening to and reading too much news. It only encourages negative feelings.”

Don

There may be times when things change for us, so knowing what to do if something does change will help us cope better. It is important to stay connected and remember others are likely feeling similar so sharing and being kind will help. For most of us, these feelings will pass. There are helplines and local organisations who are here to listen and support. Have a look at the helpful contacts page at the back of this booklet for more information.

Finding joy each day can really help, such as noticing the things we appreciate like blossom or flowers, a call from a friend or family member, a good cup of tea, completing a word search, baking, taking in some fresh air, watching a sunset.

Tips on keeping our mind well and active



Stay connected with others

- Stay in touch with friends, family, neighbours, clubs, and your community by phone.
- Asking for help with shopping and running errands.
- Volunteer to get or become a phone befriender to others.



Plan practical things

- Keep up with usual everyday activities and interests at home.
- Make a 'to do list' for each day: writing shopping lists, making calls, order repeat prescriptions.
- Continue accessing treatment and support for health conditions from your GP.



Stay on top of difficult feelings and worries

- Try to focus on things in your control.
- Limit how much news you watch or listen to and use trusted sources (BBC/ITV).
- Take time to chat about how you're feeling with others, it can really help.



Take time to notice and feel joy

- Take time to focus on activities you enjoy at home.
- Set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a challenge.
- Take note of things that bring you joy and share with others.

If you start to feel overwhelmed, some simple breathing exercises can help:

1. Sit or lie down in a way that's comfortable for you.
2. Take a deep breath in and hold it, at the same time raising and tightening your shoulders, and clenching your fists.
3. Count slowly to five as you breathe out.
4. Do this several times.



“Just because I’m older doesn’t mean I can’t be a volunteer. From home I can volunteer to call someone and have a chat. We probably can help each other just by talking and I might even make some new friends in the process.”

Gill



Moving more

Why being active and moving is important

Our everyday activities such as attending clubs, exercise classes, appointments, meeting friends and family or volunteering has temporarily changed.

Instead our indoor activities such as cooking, eating, getting dressed, reading and watching television make up much more of our day. Finding ways of being active at home will help us feel better. It will also help our bodies be better protected for fighting infection and illness.

Most of us are able to go outside once per day to exercise. Going for a daily walk is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and get some fresh air.

If you are not able to go outside, standing by an open window or on a doorstep to get some fresh air can feel good too. There are also exercises we can do in our homes, that will help us to carry on doing the things we enjoy.

Being active every day helps us to:

- Keep our spirits up.
- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Have a good appetite.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Keep your bowels healthy.
- Keeps our muscles and bones strong.
- Prevent health conditions from getting worse.

Being active every day helps to reduce:

- Risk of falls and fractures.
- Risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.

Quick safety check before exercising

Being active is safe for the majority of people and it has many benefits for our health and wellbeing. There are some small steps you can take to reduce the chance of problems occurring.



Most people can exercise without speaking to a doctor first, especially if their medical condition is under control. However, if you have any symptoms from a heart, kidney or metabolic condition you should check with your GP before you start.



Prepare your exercise space by clearing away unnecessary clutter.

- Keep something sturdy and solid nearby for support (for example a kitchen work surface).
- Have a glass of water ready to sip as you exercise.
- Wear well fitting and supportive shoes, and loose clothing.
- If you are exercising on your own, keep a telephone nearby, just in case you need it.



Set the pace, always warm up and start exercising at a level you find easy and build up gradually.

- If you experience severe pain anywhere or dizziness, stop and rest.
- Remember, it is not unusual to feel some aching or discomfort if you are moving body parts that are stiff and not used to exercise.
- It is common to feel a bit stiff for a few days after exercising in the muscles you have used more than usual. This is normal and shows that your body is responding to the increased movement.
- Try not to hold your breath as you exercise, breathe normally throughout.

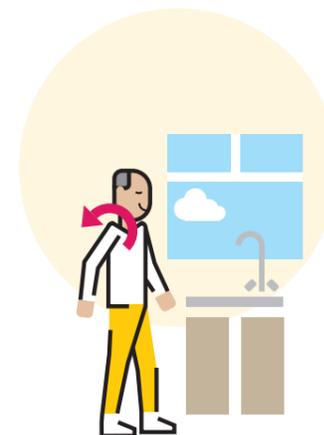
For almost everyone exercise is safer than not moving!

Moving well at home

Any movement is good, particularly if it makes us feel a little bit warm and makes us breathe a little faster. Small chunks of movement every day helps increase energy.

There are ways we can move well at home:

- **Strength and balance exercises that will help to keep you strong and steady on your feet.**
- **Aerobic exercise that warm you up and get you breathing slightly harder to help keep you fit and well.**
- **Breaking up periods of inactivity, such as sitting or lying down throughout the day with movement and activities.**



Strength and balance exercises

Our muscles, bones and joints like to be moved. Lack of movement is bad for our bodies. Just like a car, the body needs to be moved regularly or it will get stiff and rusty.

These exercises will help us stay strong and active. Aim to do these regularly throughout the week, maybe splitting them up and doing them a few at a time during the day, after breakfast or before lunch, whilst boiling the kettle or speaking on the telephone.

It's always good to 'warm up' your muscles and joints and to 'cool down' after any exercise.

The 'warm up'

Always begin with a warm up to prepare for the main exercises. There are four warm up exercises. Complete them all if doing the exercises in one session.

If spreading the exercises over the day, do the seated march first to warm up. You can also do these warm up moves throughout the day to help mobilise the joints, especially after sitting for an hour or so.



"I used to go to a class every week but now I'm doing my exercises at home they really help me to keep mobile and it helps me to think about how to structure my day!"

Christine



The 'seated march'

Warms muscles and prepares for movement.

What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- March with control.
- Build to a rhythm that feels comfortable.
- Continue for 1-2 minutes.



Shoulder circles

Warms muscles and prepares for movement.

What to do

- Sit tall with arms at your sides.
- Lift both shoulders up to ears, draw them back then press them down.
- Repeat slowly five times and feel the shoulder joints loosen.



Ankle loosener

Loosens ankles, improves heel to toe walking action, keeps us stable.

What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- Place the heel of one foot on the floor then lift it and put the toes down on the same spot.
- Repeat five times on each leg.



Spine twists

Loosens spine, helps looking over shoulders, turning in bed.

What to do

- Sit very tall with feet hip width apart.
- Place your right hand on left knee and hold the chair back with the left hand.
- Twist the upper body and head slowly to the right, back to the middle, and round to the left.
- Repeat four more times slowly each way.

Main exercises – sitting

Make sure that the chair you use is sturdy and stable, so it doesn't move around when you're getting in and out of it. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.



Wrist strengthener

Improves grip strength, helps opening jars.

What to do

- Fold or roll a hand or tea towel into a tube shape.
- Sit tall then squeeze the towel tightly with both hands, hold for a slow count of five then release.
- Repeat this exercise 6-8 times.

More challenging option

Squeeze then twist your towel before holding for 10 seconds.



Arm swings

Helps with stamina and endurance.

What to do

- Sit tall away from the chair back.
- Place both feet flat on the floor below knees.
- Bend elbows and swing arms from the shoulder.
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable.
- Continue for 30 seconds.

More challenging option

Increase pace and time to 1-2 minutes.



Pelvic floor strengthener

Helps reduce 'leaking' when coughing and laughing.

What to do

- Tighten the muscles as if you were trying to stop passing urine and wind at the same time and hold.
- Try to hold for 10 seconds.
- Rest for four seconds, then repeat.
- Perform this 10 times.

Avoid:

- Squeezing legs together.
- Tightening buttocks.
- Holding breath.

More challenging option

10 quick contractions by drawing up the pelvic.



"These days I think it's good for me to watch the amount of alcohol I'm drinking and also have days without."

Don



Front knee strengthener

Strengthens the knee for walking and bending.

What to do

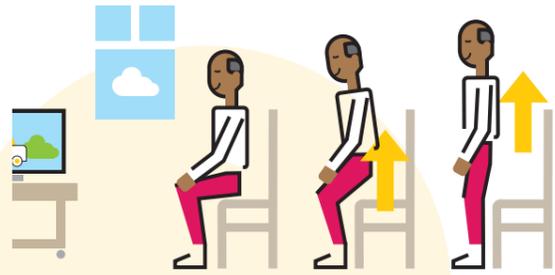
- Sit back in the chair, back supported and feet under knees.
- Brush one foot across the floor then lift the ankle slowly and straighten (do not lock) the knee.
- Lower the foot with control.
- Aim to lift for a slow count of three and lower for a slow count of five each time.
- Repeat 10 times on one leg then swap legs.

More challenging option

Sit away from the back of the chair so more of your leg is off the chair when you lift. Keep the back strong while you lift the leg.

Main exercises – standing

Make sure that you are near a sturdy and stable worktop, and that any chairs used will not move during the sit to stand exercise. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.



Sit to stand

If repeated regularly and slowly will improve lower limb strength and stability.

What to do

- Sit tall near the front of the chair.
- Place feet slightly behind knees.
- Lean slightly forwards.
- Stand up (using hands on the chair for support if needed. Progress to no hands over time).
- Step back until legs touch the chair, then stand tall, bend knees and slowly lower bottom back into the chair.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging option

Try doing the exercise extra slow and hover for a few seconds just before finally sitting.



Heel raises

Help strengthen muscles at the front of the foot, improves balance.

What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, chair or even the sink!
- Raise heels taking your weight over the big toe and second toe, hold for a second.
- Lower heels to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging option

Repeat the exercise, doing it slowly and hold for a second or so just before putting the heel down again.



Toe raises

Helps strengthen the muscles that lift the toe up, important for when stepping and for balance.

What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, chair or even the sink!
- Raise toes taking weight back onto heels and without sticking bottom out.
- Hold for a second.
- Lower toes to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging option

Repeat the exercise, doing it slowly and hold for a second or so just before put the toe down again.



“Drinking a glass of water before meals and a balanced diet are vital ingredients in keeping our body and mind well while staying at home.”

Bhim & Yogesh



Marching to improve huff and puff

Helps maintain bone density at the hip and spine.

What to do

- Stand to the side of the chair holding on with one hand.
- Stand tall.
- March on the spot swinging the free arm.
- Keep marching for 30 seconds.
- Turn slowly around then repeat using the other arm.
- Repeat three times.

More challenging option

If balance is good then bring in both arms and march with more effort.

Main exercises – standing

Make sure that you are near a sturdy and stable worktop, and that any chairs used will not move during the sit to stand exercise in particular. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.



Leg swings

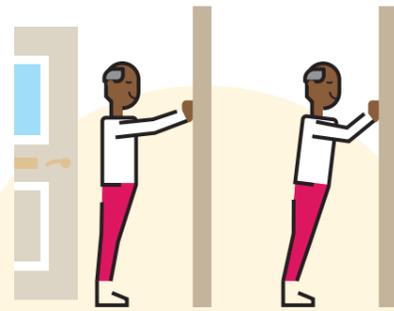
Helps improve strength on the straight leg, improves balance and stability.

What to do

- Stand to the side of the chair holding on with one hand.
- Stand tall.
- Swing the leg furthest away from the chair forwards and back with control.
- Perform 10 swings.
- Turn slowly to repeat on other leg.

More challenging option

Raise the knee up higher to the front and make the movement slower.



Wall press-ups

Helps improve upper body strength, helps maintain bone density at the wrist.

What to do

- Stand at arms length from wall.
- Place hands on the wall at chest height, fingers upwards.
- Keeping back straight and tummy tight, bend elbows lowering body with control towards the wall.
- Press back to the start position.
- Repeat eight times.

More challenging option

Perform the movement more slowly or start further away from the wall.



One leg stands

Helps improve walking stability.

What to do

- Stand close to support surface and hold on.
- Balance on one leg, keeping the supporting leg straight but knee soft.
- Stand tall and look ahead
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with the other leg.

More challenging option

Try to use the support surface less and hold the position for longer, up to 30 seconds.

Aerobic exercises

Any activity that warms you up and gets you breathing slightly harder such as:



Dancing.



Going up and down stairs.

Breaking up sitting

Activities you can do to break up periods of inactivity such as:



Cleaning (dusting, polishing, making the bed, washing up).



Gardening (if you have one or planting bulbs, herbs or houseplants indoors).



Stretch or stand during TV advert breaks or after each chapter of your book.

Cool down

Finish by marching at a relaxed pace for 1-2 minutes. Then try to perform all of the following stretches. They will help with posture, walking and stability.



Back of thigh stretch

Helps with putting on shoes and socks, lengthens stride when walking.

What to do

- Sit at the very front of the chair.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Place both hands on the other leg then sit really tall.
- Lean forwards with a straight back and feel the stretch in the back of the thigh.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Relax and repeat on the other leg.



Chest stretch

Help improve posture, makes reaching backwards easier.

What to do

- Sit tall away from the back of the chair.
- Reach behind with both arms and grasp the chair back.
- Press your chest upwards and forwards until you feel the stretch across your chest.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.



Calf stretch

Helps ensure toes are lifted when walking and for getting shoes and socks on easier.

What to do

- Sit forwards in the chair and hold the sides.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Pull your toes up towards the ceiling.
- Feel the stretch in the calf.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other leg.

My exercise notes

Safety around your home:

It's important to ensure our home is safe, especially if we are doing more exercise and activities in it.



- Keep stairs clear from clutter and well lit.
- Ensure shoes and slippers fit properly.
- Mop up spills immediately.
- Use a non-slip bathmat.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Remove trailing leads from plugs.
- Have a night-light in the bedroom or bedside light or torch by your bed in case you need to get up in the night.

Keeping nourished at home

What we eat and drink is really important for our health. It keeps our immune system strong and resilient as well as enabling us to have the energy to do the things we enjoy.

Planning for and preparing meals and cooking is also a good way to keep up our daily routine, for many it can be an enjoyable part of the day.

Here are some top tips:



Enjoy your food – why not try some new foods or go back to old favourites? Dig out some old and new recipes to try.



Have plenty of variety in your diet – to help you get all the nutrients you need and maintain a healthy weight.



Keep an eye on yourself – if you think you are eating less than usual or don't have much appetite keep track of your weight or check if your clothes, jewellery or belts are looser than usual.



If you have a poor appetite – have you been losing weight without trying or have a low body weight? You should try to increase the amount of energy and protein you get each day. You may find it useful to:

- Eat little and often.
- Use full-fat food and drinks (for example, full-fat milk, yoghurts, cheese).
- Eat more protein such as meat, fish, eggs, pulses or nuts.
- It may help to speak to your GP.



Keeping your kitchen cupboard and freezer stocked – keep some simple, tasty foods and long-lasting foods, such as dried milk powder, tinned soup, rice pudding.



Make meal preparation easy – ideal for when you need something quick and simple, for example, ready meals, snacks, finger food and meal delivery services.



Think about how you will get your shopping – ask a neighbour, family member or Community Hub to help.



Stay well hydrated – we need about 6-8 drinks per day to stay well hydrated. This reduces infections and improves concentration, energy and mood, so we can keep our minds active



If you drink alcohol – it is recommended to not have more than 14 units (one unit is a half pint or a small glass of wine) a week. Try to spread this out and have alcohol free days. Alcohol does dehydrate you, so if you can, have water, juice or a soft drink in between.

Keeping well at home daily goals checklist

Setting daily goals, routine and structure help to provide purpose and a sense of achievement.

This might include working through that list of the things you keep meaning to do but never get around to or to help you work through the information and ideas that have been shared in the booklet.

Keeping in touch

- Talk to family and friends via the phone or over the fence.
- Talk to others about how you feel or help you may need. We all need advice and reassurance and others likely feel similar to us.
- You may want to chat to a befriender or volunteer yourself

Moving more

- Try to move more throughout your day, getting out in the fresh air either on a walk, in the garden, on your doorstep or an open window.
- Try building seated and standing exercises into your daily routine around your home.
- Break up long periods of inactivity with chunks of movement.

Eating and drinking

- Drink plenty of liquids including water
- Stick to regular meal times but if your appetite is poor have healthy snacks in addition to your meals.
- Eat a balanced diet of high protein (meat, eggs and nuts) foods, dairy products, starchy foods (bread cereals, potatoes, pasta or rice) and plenty of fruit and vegetables (fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juice).
- Eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.

Keeping busy

- Plan your day – try to get up and go to bed at a similar time each day.
- Do activities you enjoy, such as watch a film, read a book or do some puzzles.
- Try to do new things each day or start that project you've been meaning to.

Feeling joy

- Find a window with a view to take in the 'outside world'. Appreciate the nature around you.
- Listen to some music.
- Try something different, or something you have you done in the past that you have time to do again. Talk about it with friends.

Keeping Well at Home



The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing



The Healthy Ageing Research Group, linked to the Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing, based at the University of Manchester have created this booklet in close collaboration with: Greater Manchester Ageing Hub, Greater Manchester Older People's Network, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Age UK Salford, Greater Manchester Nutrition and Hydration, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and GreaterSport in partnership with GM Moving. With special thanks to Jason Bergen, Later Life Training, the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine, and the Centre for Ageing Better.

Designed by Think Design Manchester

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