

Tips, advice and ideas  
for looking after your

# mental & physical health

Advice for those who  
are shielding in Bromley

# 8 tips for looking after your mental health

## 1. Stay connected with people

Maintaining healthy relationships with people we trust is important for our mental wellbeing, so think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while needing to stay at home.

You could try phone calls, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's with people you normally see often or connecting with old friends.

## 2. Talk about your worries

It's normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember: it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too.

If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead. Our assistance helpline is available to help with support by calling 020 8313 4484 (during weekday office hours).

## 3. Support and help others

Helping someone else can benefit you as well as them, so try to be a little more understanding of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours at this time.

Try to think of things you can do to help those around you. Is there a friend or family member nearby you could message or who could undertake tasks for you, such as shopping or collecting prescriptions? Are there any community groups you could join to support others locally with tasks that you could do from home?

Remember, it is important to do this in line with official coronavirus guidance to keep everyone safe.

## 5. Look after your body

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol.

## 4. Feel prepared

Working through the implications of staying at home should help you feel more prepared and less concerned. Think through a normal week: how will it be affected and what do you need to do to solve any problems?

You could also think about who you can get help from locally – as well as people you know, lots of local and community help groups are being set up. Try to remember this disruption should only be temporary.

## 7. Do things you enjoy

If we are feeling worried, anxious or low, we might stop doing things we usually enjoy. Focusing on your favourite hobby, relaxing indoors or connecting with others can help with anxious thoughts and feelings.

If you cannot do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, think about how you could adapt them, or try something new.

There are lots of free tutorials and courses online, and people are coming up with inventive new ways to do things, like hosting online pub quizzes and music concerts.

## 6. Stay on top of difficult feelings

Try to focus on the things you can control, such as your behaviour, who you speak to, and where and how often you get information.

It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about coronavirus are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, try some ideas to help manage your anxiety or listening to an audio guide.

## 8. Look after your sleep

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically, so it is important to get enough.

Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep up good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. See our sleep page for more advice.

## LEARN MORE - VISIT:



### NHS Every Mind Matters

Expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing  
[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)



### YoungMinds

Tips, advice and guidance for children and young people

[www.youngminds.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/coronavirus)



### Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, you can call any time

Call 116 123



### Good Thinking

Tools to help your mental health for anxiety, sleep problems, stress and low mood

[www.good-thinking.uk](http://www.good-thinking.uk)



### YoungMinds

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger, for free 24/7 support

Text YM to 85258

# Urgent support

## Free 24-hour listening support

When life is tough, Samaritans are here to listen at any time of the day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult.

Call free on 116 123 or visit the Samaritans website - [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).

Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance.

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 or visit Shout Crisis Text Line - [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org).

*If you are having thoughts of suicide, are harming yourself or have thought about self-harm, it's important to tell someone.*

*These thoughts and feelings can be complex, frightening and confusing, but you do not have to struggle alone.*

*If you cannot wait to see a doctor and feel unable to cope or keep yourself safe, contact one of the organisations below to get support right away.*

## Urgent, non-emergency medical advice

If you need help urgently but are not at risk of death or serious illness, use the NHS 111 non-emergency advice online.

NHS 111 advice online - [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111).

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

## CALM

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason.

Call 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight).

Visit the CALM website - [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net).

## When to get help from your GP

It's important to seek help from your GP immediately if you are experiencing the following symptoms for the first time or are not already receiving care from mental health services:

- hallucinations – hearing or seeing things that are not there (for example, hearing voices); this can also include feeling, smelling or tasting things that are not there)
- delusions – having strong beliefs that are not shared by others (for example, believing there is a conspiracy against you)

These are symptoms of psychosis and it's important to get treated as soon as possible, as early treatment is more effective. If you do not require urgent support but are still concerned about your mental health, contacting your GP is a good place to start.

# Advice, tips & tools

## 1. Eat well

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health, and can help you feel your best.

Eat a wide variety of foods in the right proportions, and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

*making the best choices about your health & wellbeing*

## 2. Have a healthy weight

Weight gain occurs when you regularly eat and drink more calories than you burn through normal bodily functions and physical activity.

To lose weight, you should try to cut down on how much you eat and drink and be more active.

## 4. Sleep well

Many effects of a lack of sleep, such as feeling grumpy and not working at your best, are well known. But did you know that sleep deprivation can also have profound consequences on your physical health?

Regular poor sleep puts you at risk of serious medical conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes – and it shortens your life expectancy.

## 3. Do physical exercise

Adults should do some type of physical activity every day. Any type of activity is good for you. The more you do the better.

Make sure the type and intensity of your activity is appropriate for your level of fitness.

## 5. Drink less alcohol

Regularly drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week risks damaging your health. Regular drinking at high-risk levels can make your mental health worse.

The effects of alcohol on your health will depend on how much you drink. The less you drink, the lower the health risks. For help, call 020 8289 1999.

## 6. Stop smoking

People breathe more easily and cough less when they give up smoking because their lung capacity improves by up to 10% within 9 months.

We all know that stopping smoking improves your physical health. But it's also proven to boost your mental health and wellbeing: it can improve mood and help relieve stress, anxiety and depression. For help, call 0300 123 1044.



# 8 ideas for starting physical exercise

## Getting started

### 1. Move more by making small changes

However you choose to move, it's all good for your health and wellbeing.

### 2. Choose activities you enjoy

Doing something that you enjoy means you're far more likely to keep doing it.

### 3. Set goals and make a plan

A plan and goals covering how, when and where you'll get active can really help.

### 6. Build new habits

Repeat the bits you enjoy daily and keep trying new activities that inspire and motivate you.

### 5. Pace yourself and listen to your body

Only do what feels comfortable for you, particularly if you have a health condition.

### 7. Wear something comfortable

You don't need special kit or equipment, but you do need to be comfortable.

### 8. Stay hydrated

Drink plenty of water before, during and after activities to help your body stay healthy.



# Home exercises

Being stuck in does not mean that you can't be physically active. Use these places to find home exercises:



10 mins videos  
Cardio, strengthening, cool-down and more...

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos)



## Apps, videos & workouts

General fitness, yoga, older adults, pregnant women and more...

[www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement](http://www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement)  
#get\_active\_at\_home



## Instructor-led videos

Aerobics exercise, strength and resistance, and pilates and yoga

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio)



## Fun activities

Exercises & workout videos for older people

[www.facebook.com/MytimeActivePrimetime](http://www.facebook.com/MytimeActivePrimetime)

## LEARN MORE - VISIT:



### Change 4 Life

Healthy families recipes and activities to keep children entertained and keep active

[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)



### NHS Live Well

Advice, tips & tools to help you make the best choices about your health & wellbeing

[www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell)



### NHS One You

Help to live healthier and feel better with free tips, tools and support

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou)



### Sport England

Tips, advice and guidance on how to keep or get active in and around your home

[www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout](http://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout)



### Stop Smoking London

A helpline to help and support you to stop smoking.

[www.stopsmokinglondon.com](http://www.stopsmokinglondon.com)

## COVID-19 advice and support

### Bromley COVID-19 hub

[www.bromley.gov.uk/covid-19](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/covid-19)

### Bromley Assistance Helpline

*For volunteer support with tasks such as shopping, prescriptions, befriending or dog walking*

[www.bromley.gov.uk/requestforassistanceform](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/requestforassistanceform)  
or call 020 8313 4484 (weekday office hours)

### Government Shielding

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable)  
or call 0800 028 8327

### NHS

[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

### Bromley volunteering hub

[www.bromley.gov.uk/volunteering](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/volunteering)

### Recycling, waste and street cleaning

[www.bromley.gov.uk/wastenews](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/wastenews)  
or call 0300 303 8658 (weekday office hours)

### Parks and open spaces

[www.bromley.gov.uk/parks](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parks)  
or call 0300 303 8658 (weekday office hours)

### Housing

If you are homeless or are threatened with homelessness -  
call 020 8461 7721

### Bromley Children Project parenting helpline

Call 020 8461 7259

### Council tax and benefits

[www.bromley.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/benefits)  
Or call 0300 303 8670 (weekday office hours)

### Children and young adults with disabilities and learning needs

[www.bromley.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/localoffer)

### Domestic abuse

[www.bromley.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/domesticabuse)  
Email [info@bcwa.org.uk](mailto:info@bcwa.org.uk) or call 020 8313 9303

## General enquiries and questions

**Call 020 8464 3333**

### Schools and education

[www.bromley.gov.uk/schools](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/schools)  
or call 020 8313 4044

### Free school meals

[www.bromley.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)  
or call 0300 303 8664 (weekday office hours)

### Care and support

[www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)  
Call 0300 330 9039 or email [spa@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:spa@bromleywell.org.uk)

### Social care

For adults call 020 8461 7777  
or for children call 020 8461 7373.  
Out of weekday office hours, call 0300 303 8671

### Mental health

For adults - [www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)  
Call 0300 330 9039 or email [spa@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:spa@bromleywell.org.uk)  
For children - [www.bromleywellbeingcyp.org](http://www.bromleywellbeingcyp.org)  
Call 0203 770 8848 or email [info@bromley.org](mailto:info@bromley.org)

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