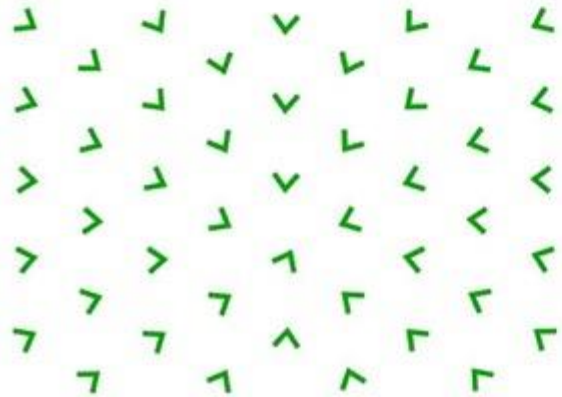


How to Stay Healthy at Home



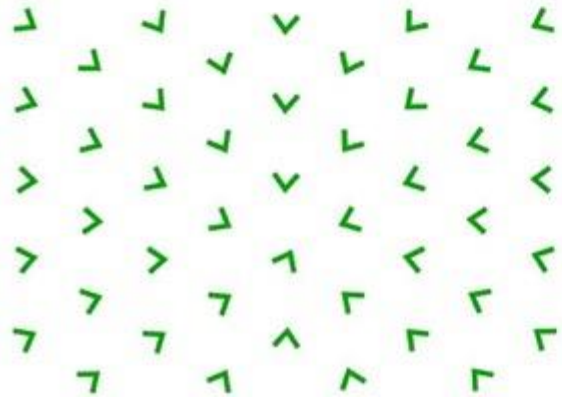
At Nuffield Health our Purpose is that we ensure dedicated experts help people get well, stay well and live well, achieving the level of health and fitness that they aspire to.

Aspiring to be healthy is even more pertinent during this unprecedented time, and we are here for you!



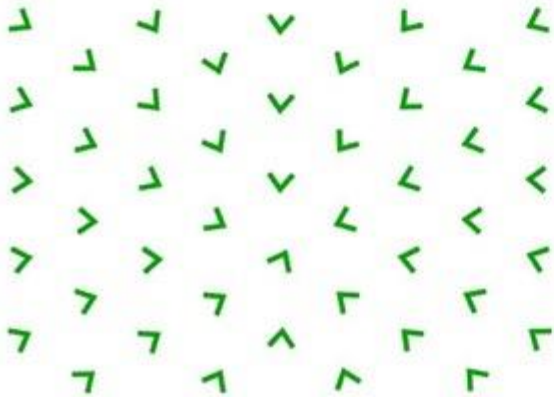
This guidance document, formulated by our expert Health and Wellbeing Physiologists, aims to support you in maintaining your physical and mental wellbeing despite not being able to attend your health assessment due to COVID-19.

You will find information on the areas we consider to be the most important whilst spending more time at home, whether that be working from home or in isolation. This ranges from considering your daily routine to taking care of your posture. You will also find numerous useful links providing further specific detail on areas of interest. Without a doubt, there is something for everybody within this guidance.



Contents

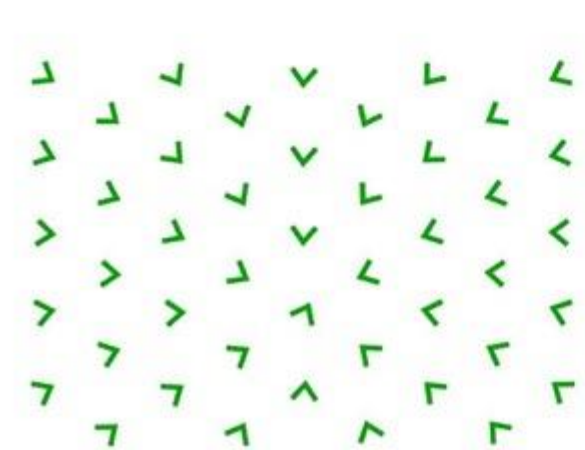
- [Isolation Guidance](#)
- [Hand Hygiene](#)
- [Your Social Health](#)
- [Clocking off!](#)
- [Sleep](#)
- [Working from Home](#)
- [Protect your Posture](#)
- [How to Exercise from Home](#)
- [Maintaining your Hydration](#)
- [Maintaining your Energy](#)
- [High Risk Behaviours](#)
- [Sunlight and Vitamin D](#)



Isolation Guidance

In order to keep up to date on the latest self-isolation guidance on, ensure to consult trustworthy sources for your information. The UK government website is a robust resource for the key information that you will need. Your workplace may also be providing you with trusted information. The link below takes you to the UK Government guidance called 'Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'. This guidance may be updated as the situation progresses and so checking back regularly will be important.

[Government Guidance for Staying at Home](#)



Hand Hygiene

You are now probably aware that the most effective precautionary measure you can take to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community is to wash your hands. This must be done effectively and can be completed using either soap and water or hand sanitiser (that is at least 60% or more alcohol).

Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills any viruses that may be on your hands.

Some extra things to consider are keeping nails short and natural, wearing minimal jewellery on your fingers and wrists. These things can cause germs to be missed when washing your hands. Lastly, to reduce the risk of dry skin or skin irritations occurring, regularly moisturizing your hands is recommended.

For a step by step guide on how to wash your hands effectively, please see the following guidance: [An Expert Guide to Washing Your Hands](#)



Commonly asked questions:

Q: Can I use hand sanitiser if soap and water is not available?

A: Yes. If you do not have access to a sink to wash your hands, then using a hand sanitiser that is at least 60% alcohol is perfectly acceptable. Hand sanitisers are incredibly convenient and are great to use when hands are “socially clean”.

Q: When should I wash my hands?

A: Hand hygiene is imperative before touching your own face (especially mouth, nose or eyes), before and after contact with another person and generally after touching germ ‘hot spots’ such as (but not limited to) door handles, shopping trolleys/baskets, stair or escalator handrails, open/close door buttons (trains or lifts), or money (notes and coins).

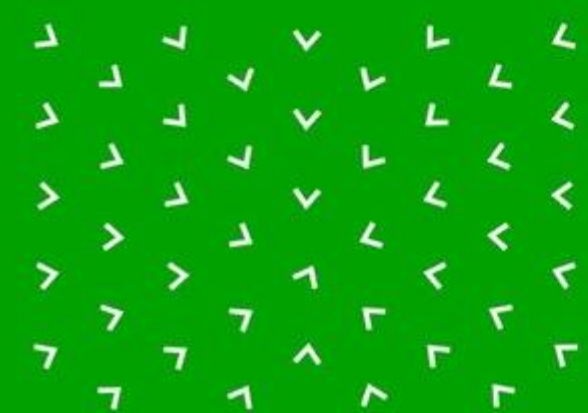


Q: Is wearing rubber gloves in public effective in preventing COVID-19?

A: The WHO are clear with their advice and state that regularly washing your bare hands offers more protection against catching COVID-19 than wearing rubber gloves.

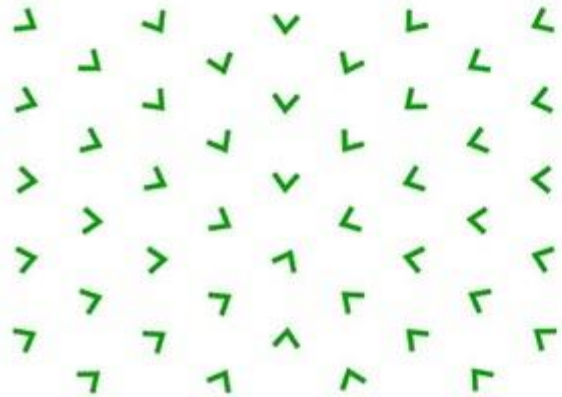
Q: Can I still shake people's hand?

A: Respiratory viruses can be passed on by shaking hands and then touching your eyes, nose and mouth. The advice from WHO is to avoid shaking hands currently and instead wave, nod or bow. If you do shake hands with someone, wash your hands immediately afterwards.



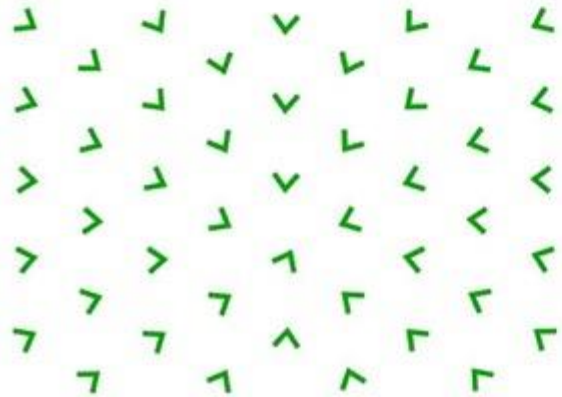
Your Social Health

We are currently living through unprecedented times in our social history; it has now been predicted that at some point in the near future some, if not all of us, will need to consider whether we need to either socially distance ourselves or go into self-isolation to protect our loved ones and the community in which we live. Whilst we all know the importance of social distancing and self-isolation, are we prepared for the potential social impact this may have? We humans are sociable by nature and need to be stimulated mentally and physically to help us feel happy and healthy. To therefore go into “isolation” could be emotionally upsetting, and may cause stress, anxiety, and loneliness. So, Nuffield Health have 4 top tips on how you can maintain social contact and/or stay mentally and physically engaged, whilst still maintaining your safety. These tips are found on the following pages.



Tip 1: Move more, sit less!

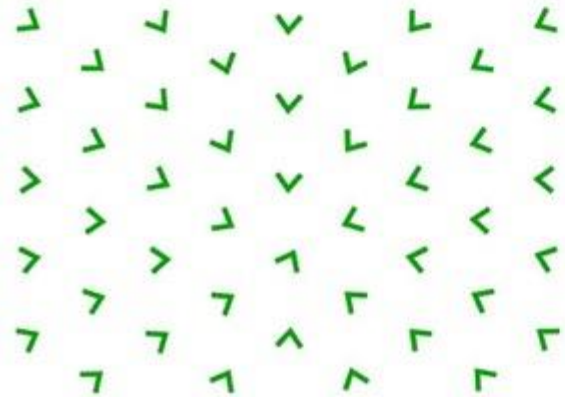
It is important to move around as much as you can; we know the physical benefits exercise brings but what it also does is release feel-good hormones into your brain, so exercising regularly can help improve your outlook, making you feel more positive. Please see our 'Protect your Posture' and 'How to Exercise from Home' section



Tip 2: Talk more, stay silent less!

There are multiple ways to stay connected with others whilst staying safe and following official guidance. If you and your friends and family are looking for a group chat, consider the various apps available that allow conference type calls. These include Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Setting up this time to stay connected is important to establish a sense of normalcy and togetherness and combat that sense of loneliness. For some general ideas on how to combat loneliness, please have a read of the following excellent Nuffield Health article:

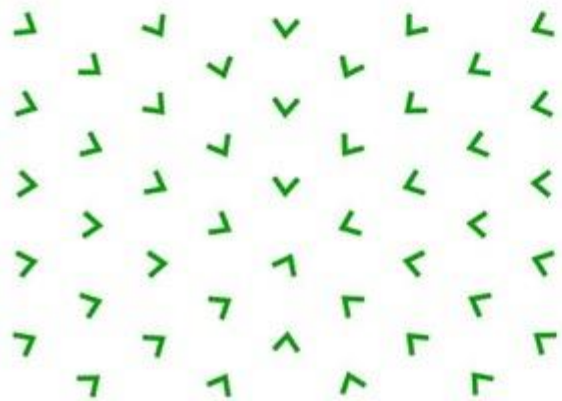
[10 Ways to Take Action Against Loneliness](#)



Tip 3: Volunteer in your community

If it is safe for you to do so, you could look to join a local volunteering group and reach out to the more vulnerable in society, helping to alleviate some of their isolation and distress (as well as your own). This can include volunteering to walk the dog, do some gardening, get some shopping for them or simply have a chat over the phone.

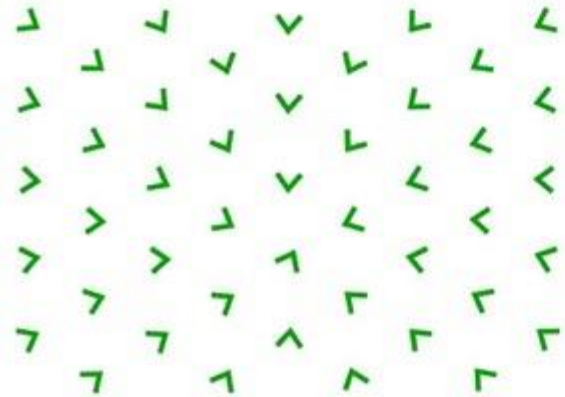
Stay safe by washing your hands. See our guide on '[Hand Hygiene](#)'.



Tip 4: Complete a project, learn something new or explore your hobby

How many times have you said, “when I have time...”? Now is the time to complete those long over-due projects you have never got round to. From organising your books in alphabetical order to re-decorating your home, taking time to tick some things off your “to do list” can be satisfying and productive.

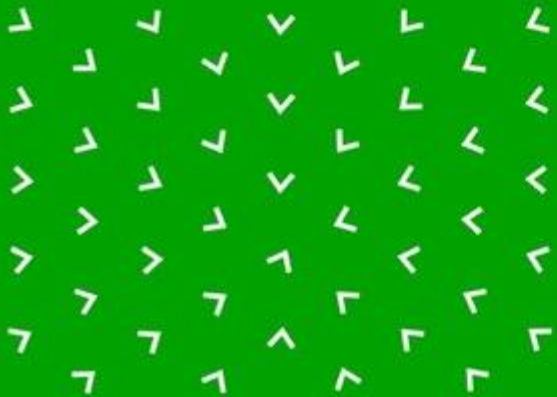
If you want to learn something new, there are various online courses you can enrol in via The Open University, FutureLearn, ClassCentral, Udemy, or why not take a virtual museum tour: [Virtual Museum Tours](#)





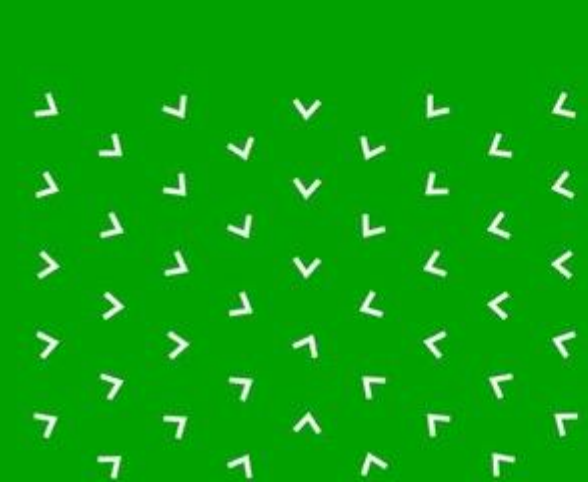
Clocking Off

Whether isolating or not, you may find yourself checking the news, social media and other information sources regularly. If you are working from home, you may also be inclined to work longer due to lack of routine that the office typically offers. This can all lead to overwhelm, loneliness, anxiety or other negative emotions. Consider what actions will help you feel renewed and how can you do more of these? What actions are making you feel drained and how can you do less of these? This will help build your emotional immune system. Some of our suggestions are on the next page.



Build your emotional immune system

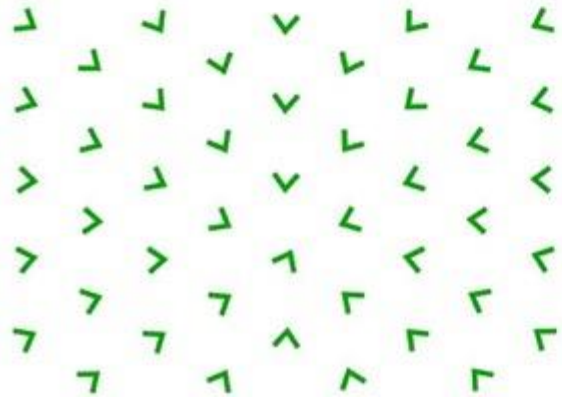
1. Don't over watch or read the news. Limit your updates to once or twice per day and to one or two sources.
2. Practise acceptance of some uncertainty. Try postponing your worry period to specific times.
3. Remember to breathe. When we experience stress, our breathing becomes more rapid. For some guidance, please see our article: [Deep Breathing Advice](#)
4. Take part in activities that bring you into the present, so you aren't worrying too much about an unknown future, e.g. reading, cooking, DIY or doing something creative. Be creative, thinking about how you can access nature. Can you birdwatch? Do you have a balcony so you can plant seeds?
5. Try relaxation techniques, meditation and mindfulness to activate your 'rest-and-digest' system - [Beginners Guide to Relaxing](#)
6. Try some online guided Yoga. There are various options free on YouTube.
7. Use wellbeing apps, including mindfulness apps: [25 Essential Apps for a Healthy Mind and Body](#)
8. Do things that make you laugh, e.g. watch a clip of your favourite comedian.





Sleep

It is very important to main a regular sleep routine and good sleep hygiene. The quality and quantity of you sleep impacts your mental resilience and immune function. Take a look at our list of sleep articles to inspire and motivate you to sleep well: [Nuffield Health Sleep Articles](#)



Working from Home

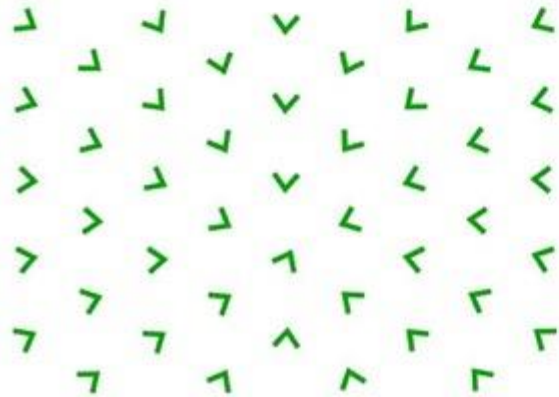
Working home for some this will be just like any other week. However for many it will be a first and could bring unfamiliar challenges. So, what's the best way to stay efficient and keep your spirits up?

Get dressed

Washing and getting dressed will not only improve your state of mind, it will psychologically prepare you to start work. Some people find that dressing formally is helpful, and useful if they need to dial into a video call.

Pick up the phone

When you're working from home, you could spend the whole day without speaking to anyone which can be isolating. Make some time to pick up the phone and have a real conversation, rather than relying on email and instant messaging.



Establish boundaries

Decide your working hours and stick to these. If you are at home with your children or someone who needs care, you may need to adjust what hours will be most appropriate for your personal circumstance. Once complete or during breaks, it's best to switch off your computer, alerts (including phone) and tidy away papers.

Take regular breaks

It's good to have a routine when you're working from home, but work shouldn't become monotonous and you shouldn't stay glued to your screen all day. It's important to take regular screen breaks and get up from your desk and move around. Be strict on yourself and consider going outdoors.

Accept limitations

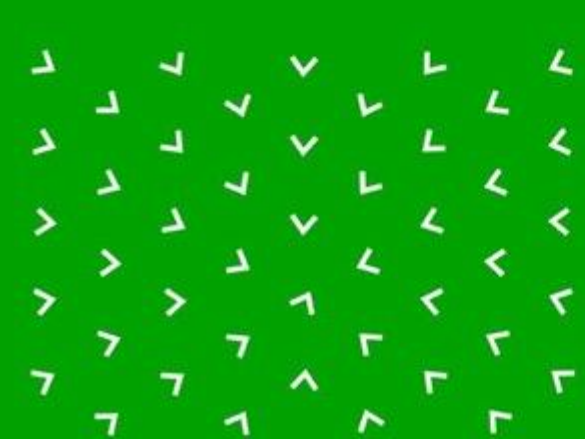
If you cannot access everything you need for certain tasks, acceptance of this and changing tasks will be important to reduce frustration.



Protect your back and posture

Self-isolating or working from home will present itself with many positive benefits such as no office commuting time and the chance to eat fresher, home cooked lunch choices. However, one negative outcome you may experience is a change to your postural health and back care. Your home desk may not be set up appropriately to protect your back, neck and shoulders. You may also move less often and become more sedentary. In short, you may experience discomfort and stiffness. So, let's consider how to protect your back.

If you are using a home based desk that you are not familiar with or a laptop, take time to review our article: [The Science of Slouching](#)



Regardless of how optimal your sitting posture may be, you must move often. Moving often is the single most important action to take to protect your back and reduce your risk of discomfort. Take the '55 to 5 rule', which involves moving for 5 minutes for every 55 minutes of sitting. Have a look at our interesting articles below that will help you get moving. Or, get up and dance to some uplifting music for 5 minutes!

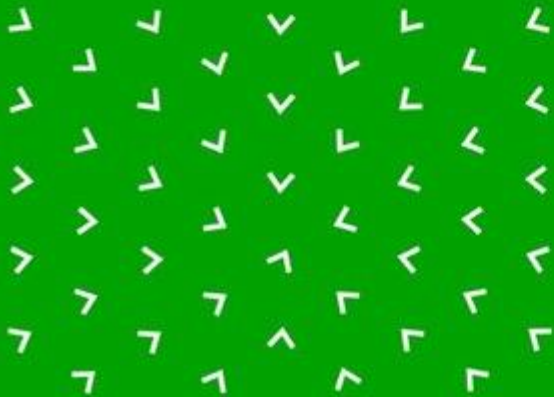
[The 5-minute Office Workout](#)

[Build Strength in your Back - Guided Workout](#)



Move, move, move!

Remember, you are very likely underpredicting your time spent sitting, otherwise known as sedentary time. A high sedentary time is an important health risk, even if you have taken the time to exercise that day.

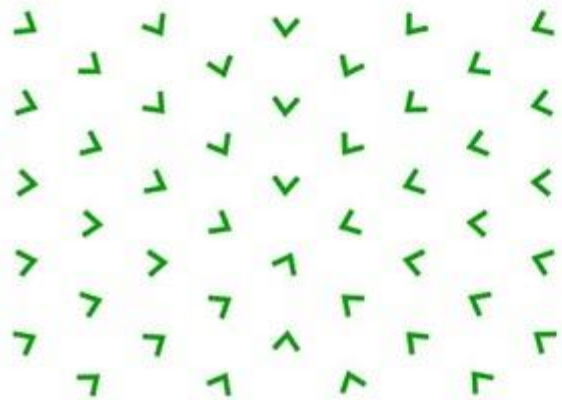




How to Exercise from Home

Experts around the world are continuing to highlight the importance of exercise and the benefits being physically active can bring, even in the current climate. Not only can staying active improve your physical wellbeing but help to maintain a healthy immune system and mental wellbeing too.

If you are feeling well enough, it is recommended that you should aim to complete a minimum 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise across the course of the week. Further to this, evidence suggests that short duration, very vigorous exercise (at or close to all-out or maximal effort) at volumes of 75 minutes per week or more may bring equivalent health benefits. The evidence also suggests that at least twice a week, all adults should undertake activities which increase or maintain muscle strength (resistance training). The activities chosen should use major muscle groups in the upper and lower body. This can include activities such as using bodyweight, free weights, resistance machines or elastic bands, as well as activities of daily living such as stair climbing, wheeling your wheelchair, carrying shopping bags, lifting and carrying children, and gardening.



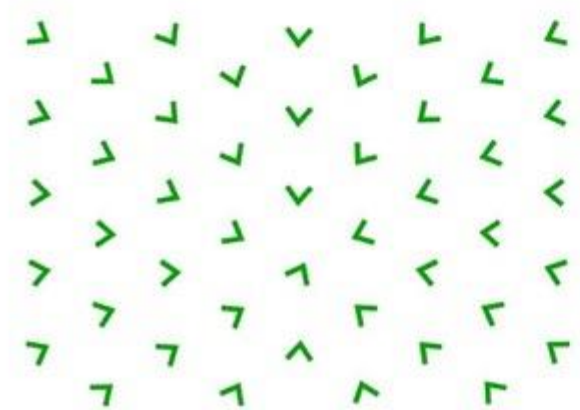
Remember: the greatest gains are seen in those who go from doing nothing to doing something, you don't have to be an athlete...everything counts!

Some fantastic resources include:

Nuffield Health have developed workouts that you can complete at home. This HIIT class [here](#) can be done at any level with minimal equipment.

Nuffield Health have developed a home-based work for you and your children to complete together, aimed specifically at getting you children moving: [Workout for Adults and Children](#)

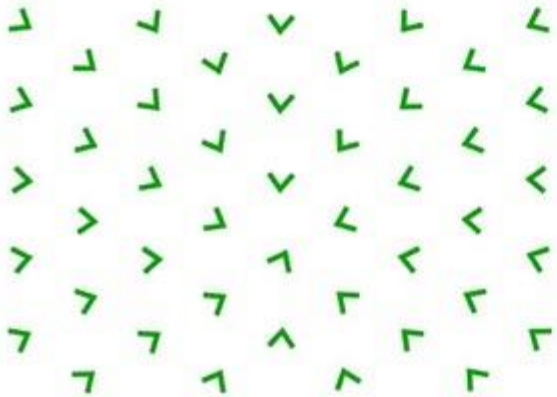
You will find some home-based exercises within our Simple Exercises YouTube Channel: [Simple Exercises](#)



So what do you need? The answer is very little! If you do have various bits of equipment at home, that is great and we would suggest carrying on as normal if confident to do so, but you don't need weights or machines to have an effective work-out as you can just use your own bodyweight. All you need to do is make sure you have enough space and that you apply some health and safety precautions (i.e. make sure there is nothing you could slip or trip on)! Typically, there will also be things around your home that you can use to complete a workout – for example, the stairs, a chair, a door frame!

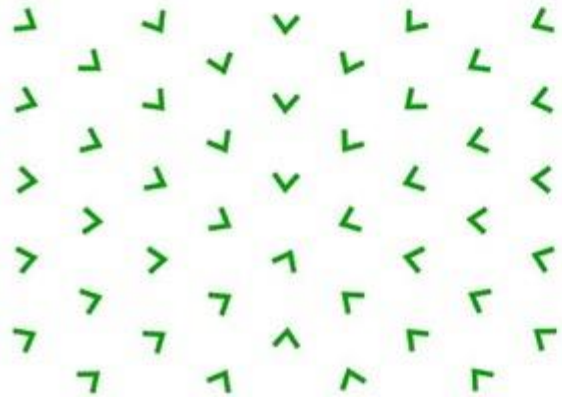
Can I do exercise outside of my home? It is important to remember that currently, if you are social distancing, you are still able to go outside for a walk, run, cycle or any outdoor exercise mode that you enjoy! At present, there are no restrictions on this if you and your household are well. Just remember to maintain a 2 to 3-meter distance with other people and take the necessary preventative precautions when you return home by washing your hands. If however you are self-isolating and well, please see the advice [here](#).

Should I exercise if I am over 65? The answer is yes! If you are feeling well it is recommended that older adults should maintain or improve their physical function by undertaking activities aimed at improving or maintaining muscle strength, balance and flexibility on at least two days a week. These could be combined with sessions involving moderate aerobic activity or could be additional sessions aimed specifically at these components of fitness.



Be Sensible!

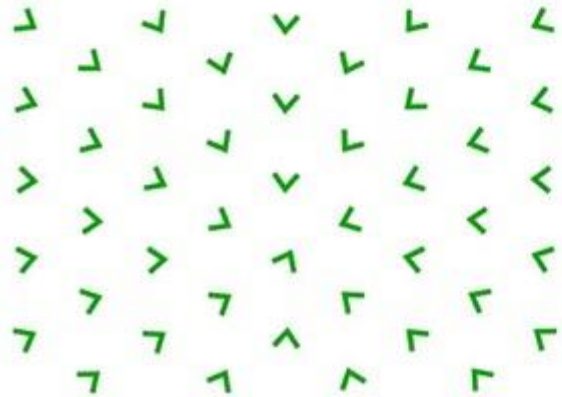
Please remember that if you have an existing health condition such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, joint problems, if you are pregnant, or any other consideration that may change your exercise capacity then opt for low intensity and longer duration exercise.



Exercise if Self-isolating

Just because you now must stay at home doesn't mean you can't exercise and maintain your fitness.

You can use our Nuffield Health 'My Wellbeing' app, which is free to download. This app gives you home exercise advice, exercise tutorials and full workout plans.



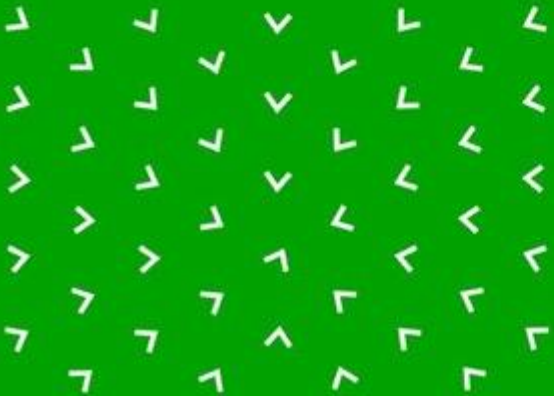


Maintaining your Hydration

Now is a great time to try out new habits such as drinking more water. You could start the day with a cup of hot water and a squeeze of lemon. You may want to track your intake and use your urine colour as a trusty hydration indicator. Is your urine clear and pale? If your urine is dark, you are not drinking enough water. Sparking water is also a great choice if you enjoy the bubbles! Opt for sparking water rather than high sugar or sweetened options.

Check out the NHS Urine chart: [Hydration and Urine Chart](#)

You may find yourself drinking more caffeinated drinks. Caffeine is a diuretic and causes you to lose water. Loss of hydration can reduce your concentration and thirst can be mistaken for hunger, leading to snacking! These refined, processed and sugary snacks can also compromise immune function, so simple swaps to fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds is a great way to also get more antioxidants in your diet, reducing inflammation in the body.



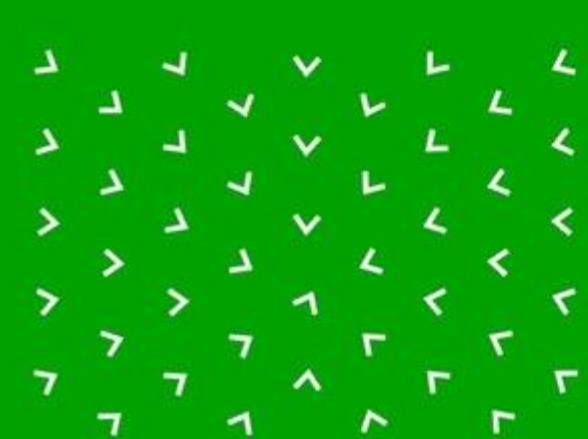
Maintaining your Energy

Certain nutritional steps can boost your feelings of energy and vigour, which will be important if you get that ‘cabin fever’ feeling. Have a look at our article on this topic:

[Nutrition Tips for Boosting Energy](#)

We also have a great read on nutritional steps to boost your body’s immune function:

[Eating your Way to a Healthy Immune System](#)



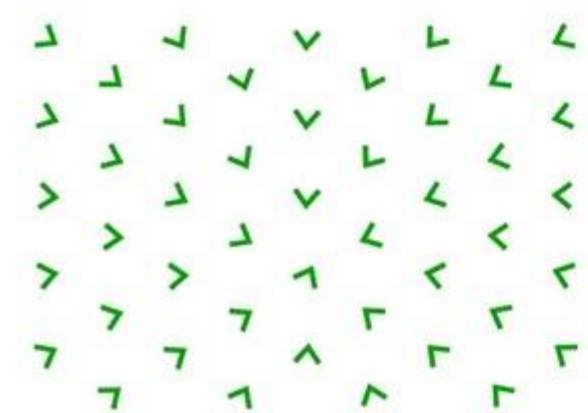


High Risk Behaviours

Spending more time at home may result in you, quite frankly, feeling 'bored'. A very important consideration is that you do not turn to high risk lifestyle behaviours due to this boredom. This may include consuming more alcohol than you typically would as you are no longer having to drive in the morning. Being at home may make you more likely to consume more caffeinated drinks and snack on unhealthy choices or snack more often. You may also smoke more cigarettes or if you are drug user, use drugs more frequently.

This also applies to other addictive behaviours such as social media, gambling, online shopping and consuming excess food. It is important to recognise that being bored is a high-risk situation for addictive behaviours or unhelpful lifestyle choices. Furthermore, having increased worry or anxiousness due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, poses a risk to engage in unhealthy behaviours.

Addictive behaviours are multifactorial and complex. It is recommended that you take steps to recognise whether boredom and isolation is a high-risk situation for you personally. Take steps and seek support and put preventative measures in place to help you to continue to successfully control your addiction.



High Risk Behaviours

An example of a preventative measure is 'environmental control'; this involves controlling your environment in order to control your behaviour. This can include putting your phone on aeroplane mode for a few hours; delete social media apps; delete any saved bank details or accounts for online betting; ask a family member to put away your work laptop where you cannot access it; avoid buying unhealthy snacks for the house; avoid buying alcohol for the house, etc. In short, remove your ease of access to unhealthy and risky behaviours and make healthy behaviours easy! Check out our ['Your Social Health'](#) and ['Clocking Off'](#) section for ideas on how to distract yourself.

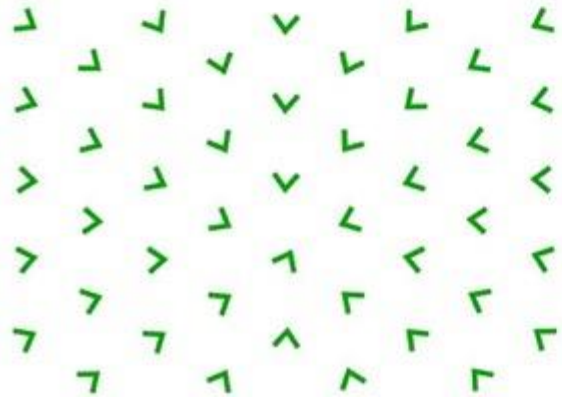
Resources are available for more tips on keeping high-risk behaviours under control:

[Drink Aware](#)

[Smoking Advice](#)

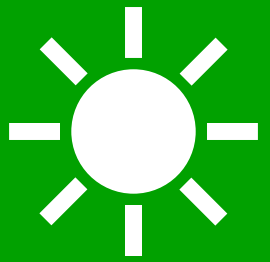
[Top Tips for Healthier Snacking](#)

[Gambling Awareness](#)





Sunlight and Vitamin D



It is recommended that you take steps to experience fresh air and sunlight regularly. Vitamin D is created when **YOUR** skin is exposed to sunlight, specifically UVB radiation. It is important for calcium absorption and bone health but deficiency impacts many other health risks. Between April and September, exposing your skin to direct sunlight for 10 minutes once or twice per day is recommended (Royal Osteoporosis Society). If it is cloudy or you have darker skin, the duration will need to be slightly longer. This short duration advice is important due to the opposing risk of skin damage. You are currently still allowed to exercise outside, and this is the best way to get direct sunlight. Do remember that glass blocks the UVB radiation and so you will have to open your window if you are not going outside. UVB radiation is also blocked by sun cream, however it is still important to remain sun safe and to use sun cream if exposed for longer periods to prevent burning.

Although the amounts are smaller, some Vitamin D can be obtained from dietary choices. The Royal Osteoporosis Society provides a Vitamin-D rich food chooser and recommend 10 micrograms of dietary Vitamin D each day (this is on top of Vitamin D from sunlight exposure):

[Vitamin D Rich Food Chooser](#)

