

Staying Home

Daily structure, activities and general advice

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Switzerland has put several measures in place to reduce the spread of the virus. On top of the list of the measures affecting the public is: “Stay home. Only leave [...] home if absolutely necessary.” Staying home and working from home can be a challenging experience. This information sheet offers some suggestions on how to deal with the situation. We do not cover specific recommendations for self-isolation and self-quarantine. For more information on these topics, please consult [this page](#) from the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH).

Daily structure

Keeping a daily routine can have a positive impact on your productivity, well-being, and mental health.

- You could start by defining a schedule and writing it down. It will be easiest to implement if your routines stay as similar to your normal schedule as possible, but including new positive routines can also be good.
- It is helpful to get up at regular times and to get dressed. In addition, maintaining a healthy diet, eating at your usual meal times and getting enough rest and sleep will positively contribute to your well-being. Separating your leisure and sleep space from your working space can also help structure your routine and draw a line between work time and free time.
- If you are not happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently. For example, you could spend more time cooking or do other things you do not usually have time for.

Activities!

- Focus on your strengths and resources to identify healthy strategies that have worked for you in the past. Resources are all your positive experiences in life, problems you have solved, talents and skills. In contrast, indulging in more smoking or in drinking alcohol as a way to cope with stress can be detrimental to your health.
- When planning activities and tasks for work or free time, focusing on activities that give you meaning can increase your motivation, your self-esteem and your resilience to stress.
- Cognitively stimulating tasks are often more engaging.
- Some ideas on how to plan healthy and fun indoor activities can be found below. Importantly, do not forget: **Treat yourself to some activities you really enjoy!**
- Pleasurable activities, as well as time to relax, can reduce fear and worry. Some of the relaxation techniques we put together might inspire you. Please consult our homepage for more information.

Working from home

Much of the advice under “Daily Structure” should already improve your home-office experience. Some of the following ideas can further help you feel satisfied with your work, and increase motivation and productivity. You could consider:

- Setting up a nice workspace at home.
- Keeping your usual routines. This includes allocating time for work, time for leisure and respecting the defined schedule.
- Staying in touch with your colleagues.

In addition, try to:

- Stay on top of your responsibilities.
- Be available for the co-workers and employees that are dependent on you. More advice on managing your team from home can be found [here](#).

Free Time

If you currently have a lot of free time on your hands and feel bored, here are some ideas on how to spend your time. We have also attached a more detailed list of indoor activities as an appendix to this document.

- Reading the books on your shelf that you never got to.
- Writing down thoughts and ideas or writing to a friend.
- Playing games, doing crosswords, completing Sudoku and puzzles.
- Being creative by playing music, painting or drawing.
- Learning new things and skills, e.g. by doing an online course.

Whatever it is, you can find something that works for you. Even if you are very busy with work, it is important to take some time off.

In addition, if you do not have symptoms and do not belong to a high-risk group, consider helping friends, family or neighbors. If you purchase groceries or other essential products for someone in self-quarantine or self-isolation, leave the products outside the person's door. If you are interested in doing volunteering work, you could also do some research online on opportunities in your area.

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Free Time (Continuation)

Enjoy some movement

Physical activity is not just important for your physical, but also your mental health. Including physical activity in your schedule might call for new approaches, but there are still loads of opportunities, and many can be easily integrated in your daily life. For instance:

- Cleaning your home.
- Dancing to music.
- Going up and down the stairs.
- Sitting less – if you notice you have been sitting down for an hour, just getting up or changing position can help.
- There are a lot of videos online that show how you can do sports sessions at home. ASVZ, for example, has [uploaded a few lessons](#), as well as the [NHS](#).
- If the current regulations allow you to go outside by yourself or with members of your household, you can use the opportunity to explore new walks, bicycle rides and jogging paths close to your home. With a mindful attitude, you might enjoy your time outside even more than usual.
- In addition, the WHO has also compiled some [recommendations](#) regarding physical activity for specific age groups and strategies to stay active within the household.

When planning activities, it is necessary to ensure that they are in line with local restrictions.

Social contacts

If you live with other people, supporting each other is good for all those involved. You can also go digital and use technology to keep contact from afar. You could take the opportunity to contact friends and family you meant to keep in touch with for a while. If you find it helpful, consider organizing virtual meetings with your co-workers to work together, or to chat a bit.

Parenting

With schools closed, juggling parenting and working can be a demanding task. The Parenting for Lifelong Health Initiative, along with WHO, UNICEF, and other partners, have compiled a list of tips, which can be found [here](#).

Dealing with information

If you find that the information you are exposed to is distressful, you might benefit from limiting your exposure to 1 to 2 times per day.

We are all in this together and it is normal to experience anxiety or fear during this time. Fear is designed to help keep us safe, but sometimes it can lead to actions which are not beneficial for us or others. Facts can help to minimize fear:

This document was created by clinicians of the Translational Neuromodeling Unit (TNU), a joint institution of the University of Zurich (Medical Faculty) and ETH Zurich (D-ITET). There is no warranty for the accuracy of contact details or external documents/links. Please note that this document might have been revised; the current version can be found at <https://www.tnu.ethz.ch/en/covid-19.html>.

- It is advantageous to think twice about sharing a piece of information. Is it really from a trustworthy source?
- Correcting misinformation around you if you see it will be beneficial to everyone. Common misconceptions are discussed [here](#). In particular, the use of masks is covered [here](#).
- It is important to have enough resources at home, but hoarding is not necessary

Feeling ill?

If you develop symptoms and are not sure what to do, the FOPH has put the following resources at the public's disposal:

- Coronavirus check-up: <https://check.foph-coronavirus.ch/screening>
- Infoline coronavirus: +41 58 463 00 00 - Please note that due to the high volume of calls, you might experience delays.

References and Resources

- UZH: <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/about/coronavirus.html>
- ETH: <https://ethz.ch/services/en/news-and-events/coronavirus.html>
- WHO: who.int/covid-19
- UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>
- Mind (England and Wales-based mental health charity): <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- DGPPN (German): <https://www.dgppn.de/schwerpunkte/corona-psyche.html>
- FOPH: <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov.html>

Any Questions?

If you have further questions, please see the contact details for mental health support that are listed in our leaflet „[Mental Health Support](#)“, as well as the references and links in this document. Please note that while we select links to external websites carefully, we cannot guarantee for the accuracy or quality of these websites.

Indoor Activities

Creative/Handicraft

Idea	Example
Sewing, knitting, stitching, crocheting	
Handicraft work	Origami
Drawing	
Painting	Paint by number, hand lettering
Playing an instrument	Apps/videos for beginners
Singing	
Cooking/Baking	
Photography	
Creative writing	Diary, composing short stories, blogging
Calligraphy	
Felting	
Knotting	Macramé
DIY projects	Up- & recycling, herbarium
Planting vegetables	
Apartment decorating	With pictures, furniture
Working with soap stone	
Learning (magic) tricks	
Music-/videoediting	
Create collages	
Create (photo)album	

Concentration

Idea	Example
Meditation	
Chess	
Reading	Novel, nature book, astronomy, travel journals, magazines, comics, manga
Puzzles	
Meditative drawing	Mandalas
Brainteaser	Online quiz, crossword, sudoku

Exercise

Idea	Example
Yoga, pilates	
Jogging	
Dancing	
Sports	Jump rope or dumbbells exercises, physical strength training
Skill games	Kendama, yo-yo, juggle

Communication/social activities

Idea	Example
Online dinner with friends	
(Video)calls	
Writing & sending mail/postcards	
Helping neighbours	Contact «Quartierclub»

Household/Administration

Idea	Example
Arrange repairing	
Sorting old pictures	
Sorting computer desktop	Sorting hard discs, backups, deleting duplicate files
Systematically sorting of administrative documents	
Create expenditure/contingency plan	
Cleaning the apartment	Single rooms/closet
Reorganizing the wardrobe	
Cleaning	Windows, oven, fridge
Ironing clothes	
Sharpening knives	

Miscellaneous

Idea	Example
Learning new languages	Apps, online courses
Watching selected movies/series	Documentaries, classics
Listening to music	Trying new genre
Online museum tour	
Listening to podcasts/radio	
Online bookclub	
Create family tree	
Create a Wikipedia entry	
Supporting useful charities and petition	
«Support your locals» orders	
Using streaming options	
Online courses	Concerts, opera, theatre