

Student self-care for stress and anxiety

When we feel very stressed or anxious, it can be easy to forget that there are things we can do to make ourselves feel better. Here, Dr Dominique Thompson gives 5 tips for taking care of yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Tip 1: Remember you're human!

A healthy daily routine can help keep you on track and functioning well. Don't forget to eat balanced meals, sleep, rest, and talk with other people regularly. You can still stay socially connected during the lockdown ... try setting up a virtual dinner party, share a movie night, or join an online pub quiz!

Tip 2: Keep healthy study habits

Plan when you are going to study and don't leave it all to the last minute. Take regular breaks, and don't work overnight – your brain needs sleep to process your learning, and a lack of sleep will affect your memory. Sensible studying means better academic outcomes, and less stress! If you are struggling, find out what online study support is available at your university.

Tip 3: Be active

The key here is to work off some of the stress and anxiety, as well as boosting your happy hormones (endorphins). It may mean going out for a walk, cycle, or run (remember to stay physically distanced!), or doing some yoga or muscle toning at home. There are plenty of online exercise classes you can join, from bootcamps to ballet, and many of these are free to access during the coronavirus outbreak.

Tip 4: Try positive activities

Mindfulness (a form of meditation and relaxation), gratitude (feeling thankful for the good things in life) and savouring (actively appreciating enjoyable activities) are all positive activities that may help you to feel calm. You can read more about mindfulness on the [NHS website](#), and there are also meditation and mindfulness apps to guide you. You could also try writing positive feelings and activities down each day – a similar activity to journaling.

Tip 5: Distract yourself with positive techniques

This is useful if you feel yourself getting increasingly anxious or worried. One popular technique uses the five senses. To distract yourself from the source of your anxiety or panic, focus instead on one thing you can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch or feel. You can repeat this if you need to. It is a quick and memorable way to look after yourself at a difficult moment.