

10 tips on how to cope with contact restrictions/quarantine

1. Maintain daily structure!

Consider a reasonable time to get up (anywhere between 6 a.m. for early risers and 10 a.m. for late risers are possibilities) and make sure you don't sleep longer than 8-9 hours a night. Furthermore, as nice as it can be to relax in your pajamas all day, maintaining a morning routine can be of great benefit. For example, showering and getting dressed on work days can help with activity and energy levels. Similarly, maintaining normal times for meals, learning and sleeping can give you extra support....and if you didn't have a schedule before, now might be a good time to give it a try ;-)

2. Plan your day!

A good daily schedule can help to prevent feelings of helplessness and loss of control – instead of passively letting the day go by, try to actively shape it. Set clear times for things you need to do (e.g. cleaning, laundry, personal hygiene, meal preparation) and things you want to do (e.g. reading time, watching TV series, talking to friends on the phone, doing sports, yoga ...) -it can vary greatly depending on what you decide belongs to which category. It can be helpful to plan the evening before, so you know what to expect the next day and can start your day motivated. However, make sure not to over-schedule, but do make sure to allow for free time!

3. Control your media consumption!

Do not spend your entire day on your cell phone, PC, or game console. Enjoying a movie or a game can be a good idea, but don't stay glued to your electronic devices for hours on end. Instead, take some time to discover yourself and learn some new skills (see point 4).

4. Start looking for meaningful projects!

What are the things you always wanted to do and have put off due to lack of time? The possibilities are endless: from spring cleaning to crafts, puzzling, gardening (balconies too!), picking up that old diary, learning a new language....use your imagination! Divide your project into small parts and set moderate goals that you can work toward every day.

5. Move!

Exercise is like medication for the body and soul and works to cure brooding and negative moods. It doesn't have to be a high-performance sport, even a walk in the fresh air or a workout at home is beneficial. There are many resources circulating and being shared on the internet that do not require training equipment if you are in need of ideas. Start small: 5-10 minutes a day is a lot better than two hours at once and then never again.

6. Maintain your social contacts!

Maintain your social contacts as much as possible: meet up with friends by chatting via phone or video call. You can use the time to catch up with old friends or to strengthen new contacts. If you get tired of talking, surprise your friends with a postcard, a letter or a longer email. In your conversations and messages, focus on the positive things that have happened in your day and avoid moaning together. Alternatively, you could write to yourself (e.g. morning pages, diary, blog, etc...).

7. Don't become a COVID-19 expert!

Do keep informed of the current situation (once a day is enough) for health and safety reasons by relying only on a few sources of information, rather than jumping from one horrific story to the next. Don't let it become your only topic of interest that takes all of your time and energy.

8. Strengthen your resilience!

Take the opportunity now to start strengthening your "psychological immune system" because both small challenges as well as bigger crises occur from time to time in life. However, developing resilience helps to face these challenges head on and emerge even stronger. Resilience can be learned and practicing certain skills for 5-20 minutes every day can help. For example, learning techniques that promote relaxation (e.g. progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training), mindfulness, acceptance of things that cannot be controlled, etc... will help develop your inner strength for the long-term.

9. Reflect on your strengths!

If you find yourself getting into a dark mood, look for the positives. Consider what you like about yourself and your strengths. What positive experiences have you had up until this point in your life. Don't give up or get discouraged if you can't think of much - this is not uncommon when experiencing a negative mood. Asking your friends or parents what they like about you can help you in this process!

10. Seek help!

When you are in a crisis, your thoughts can go round and round in circles. If it becomes too much, look for professional help. For example, psychosocial advice now available to you by phone during our open office hours, from 09 p.m. to 3 p.m.. Up to date information can be found on our homepage. After an initial telephone contact there is also the possibility to arrange further phone appointments.

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