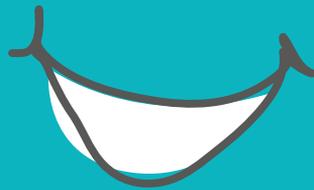


Healthy
lifestyles
Gloucestershire

Top Tips for Wellbeing During COVID



COVID-19 & Wellbeing



We are all facing changes and challenges due to COVID-19. For the first time in a long time, we are living with society wide changes that have changed the way that we interact with each other, how we do our jobs and how we manage day-to-day tasks like shopping.

It is only natural that people feel more anxious and unsettled. Whilst we can play our part to manage the spread of COVID, we can also take some steps to help manage our own wellbeing and to support those that we care for and are close to us.

There is lots of information available online but here are just a few of our TOP TIPS for managing our Mental Wellness.

1 Talk about things

There is an old saying that a problem or a worry shared, is a problem halved. This is true in many cases. It is ok to not feel ok when we are facing trying times. The worst thing that we can do is bottle that up and pretend that the worry isn't there. Our first top tip is GET TALKING.

Think about the people that you trust and that you can share your worries with. You may find that other people actually feel the same way as you, and those feeling are quite normal at the moment.

Be open about how you feel and let people know if there is anything they can do to help you. Sometimes just speaking worries out loud can make them feel more manageable.

Everyone will feel different emotions due to what is going on, but it's perfectly normal. Learn what helps you feel better - call a friend, listen to uplifting music or even have a hot bath to help you relax.

[Every Mind Matters](#) provides simple NHS-approved tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health. If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please contact [NHS 111 online](#).



2 Connect With Others

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can:

- Help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- Give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and allow you to support others.

There are lots of things you could try to help build stronger and closer relationships:

Do

- If possible, take time each day to be with your family, for example, try arranging a fixed time to eat dinner together
- Try switching off the TV to talk or play a game with your children, or family
- Volunteer to support the COVID in your community. [Find out how to volunteer](#) on the GOV.UK website
- Make the most of technology to stay in touch with friends and family. Video-chat apps like Skype and FaceTime are useful, especially if you live far apart.

Connecting with others helps us to feel a sense of belonging and can reduce feelings of social isolation

3 Be physically active

Self distancing and the restrictions to us moving about freely can be tough, but regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Exercise is important for maintaining age-related brain function and for promoting well-being. The good thing is, it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can benefit your wellbeing as well as providing some level of exercise.

There's lots of good ways to still be active during COVID – you can download our Top TIP for Activity <https://www.hlsqlos.org/covid-19-resources>

Here are a few ideas:

- Go for a walk as part of your social distancing exercise. Remember to stay close to home and observe the 2m guidelines
- Join an online group – there are loads online such as Joe Wicks
- Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you start work
- Climb your stairs at home
- Digging the garden and mowing the lawn
- You can access free easy [ten minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or try other exercise videos at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has tips for [keeping active at home](#).



4 Take time to notice what's around you

Life is busy and sometimes the days seem to pass without us really noticing the good things that are part of our day. Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

Take some time just to notice the good things in the world around you. It can be simplest of things that have the biggest impact, even things like:

- Flowers that are growing
- People laughing and smiling
- How nice your house looks after you have cleaned it
- The warmth of the sun
- How well you feel after you have exercised.

5 Learn something new

Being at home more than we normally would is a great opportunity to learn something new. That doesn't mean you have to do a formal qualification, rather it's about learning to do something that really interests you.

Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- Helping you to build a sense of purpose
- Helping you to connect with others.

Some of the things you could try include:

- Try learning to cook something new. Find out about healthy eating and cooking tips
- Work on a DIY project, such as fixing a broken bike, garden gate or something bigger. There are lots of free video tutorials online
- Consider signing up for an online course. You could try learning a new language or a practical skill such as plumbing
- Try new hobbies that challenge you, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint.

6 Give to others

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with other people.

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

Some examples of the things you could try include:

- Saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you
- Asking friends, family or colleagues how they are and really listening to their answer
- Spending time with friends or relatives who need support or company. If you are not living with them you can use online Apps such as Facetime and Zoom to help you connect



7 Eat to feel good

Changes in blood sugar levels are linked to changes in mood and energy. Eating regularly maintains blood sugar levels. Not eating regularly can make you tired, irritable, anxious and cause poor concentration.

Good tips include eating breakfast, eating every 3-4 hours, avoiding junk foods, eating plenty of fruit and veg and drinking lots of water.

8 Take time out for yourself

People have lots of different ways of relaxing or having downtime from the stresses of life. These can be the things that you stop doing when you start to feel low in mood, or stressed, as you forget to be kind to yourself. In times like this, they may be things that you have had to stop doing due to social distancing.

Find ways that you can have some time for yourself, doing the things that you like to do. It can be simple things like having hot bath, listening to music, watching a film, keeping online social arrangements and hobbies going where possible, whatever it is, think about the things that help to keep you calm or more content, and make sure they are still in your routine.

9 Practice relaxation & mindfulness

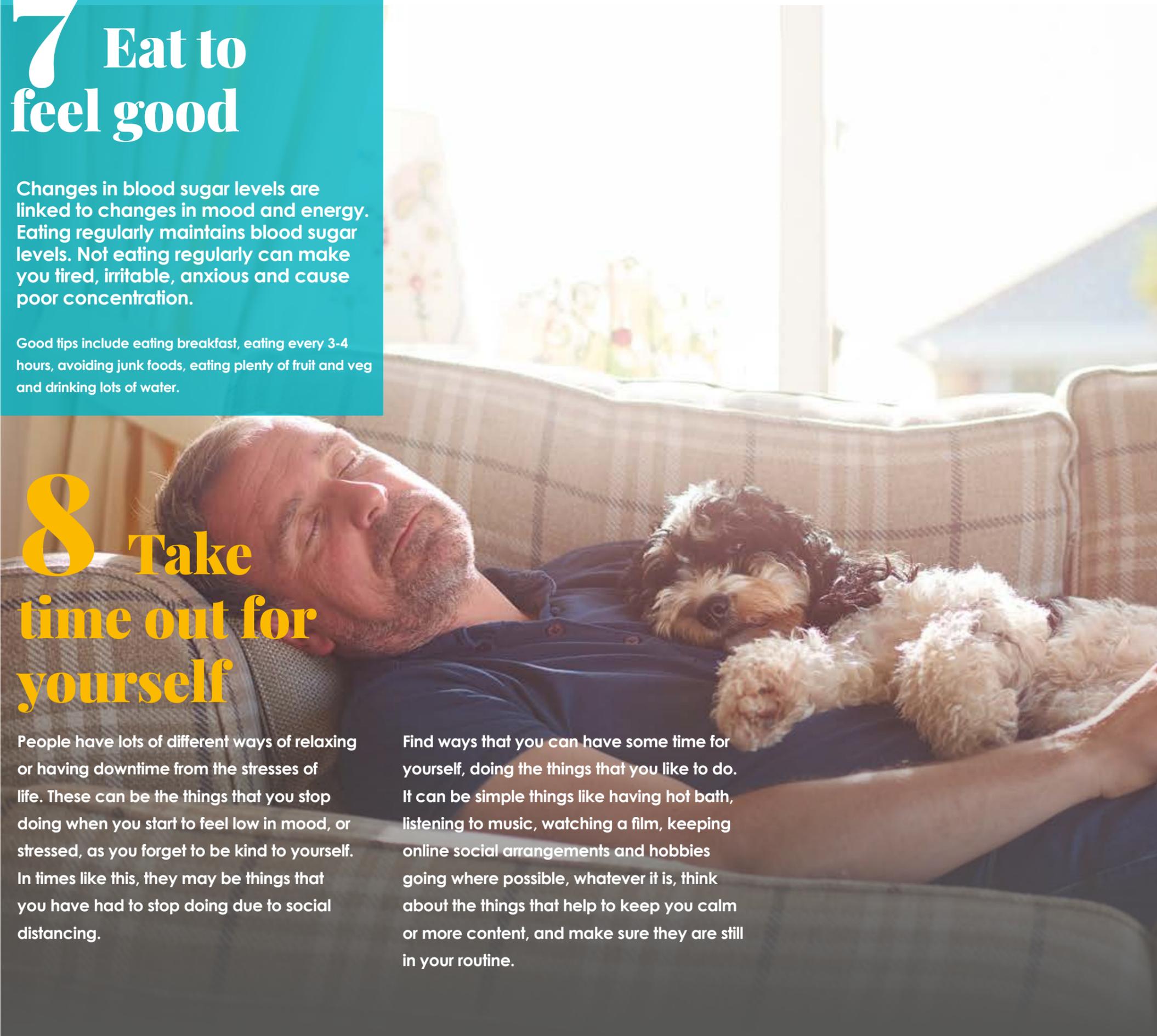
Practicing mindfulness and relaxation can boost your confidence to handle problems but it also has many benefits, including:

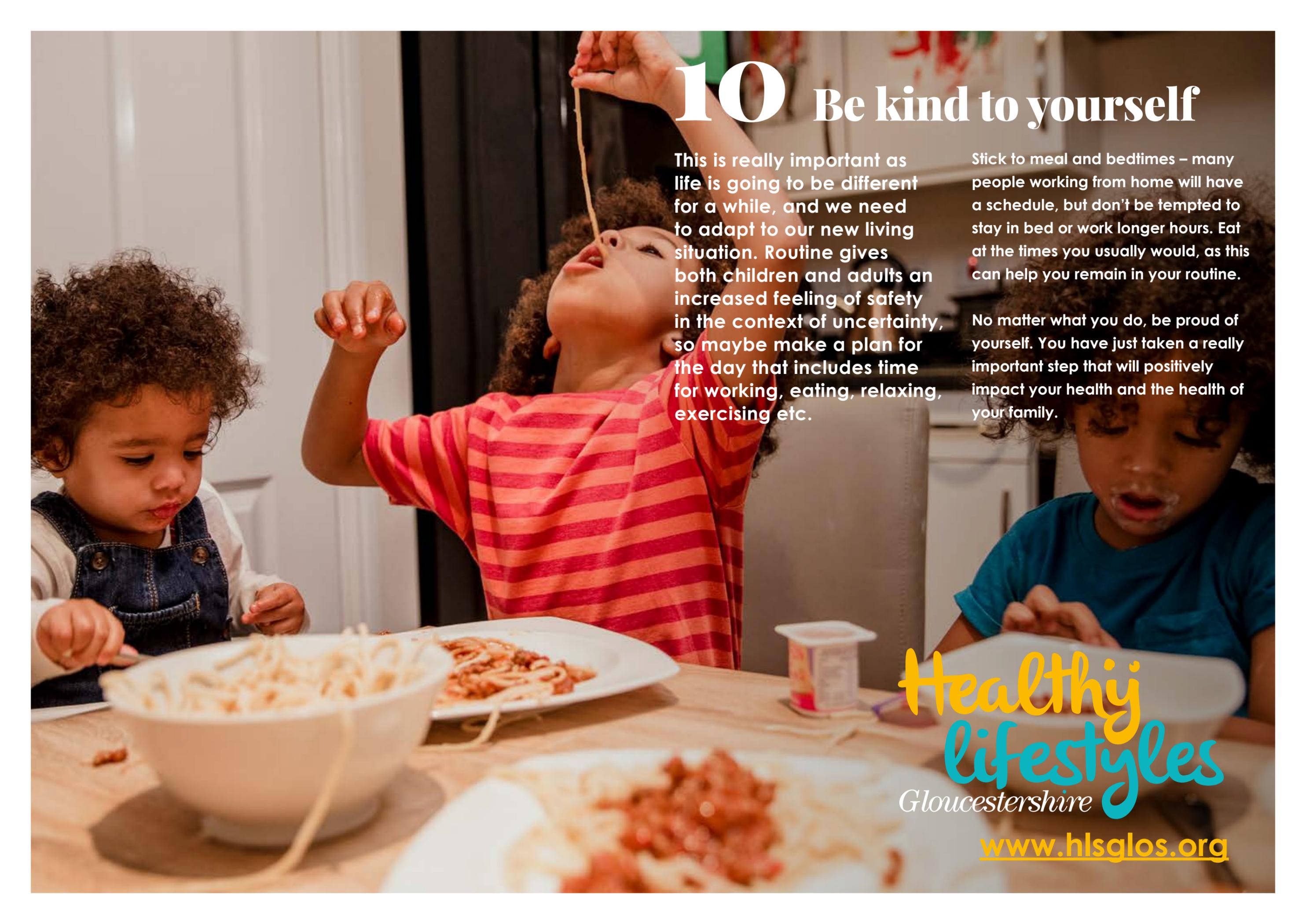
- Slowing heart rate
- Lowering blood pressure
- Slowing your breathing rate
- Improving digestion
- Maintaining normal blood sugar levels
- Reducing activity of stress hormones
- Increasing blood flow to major muscles
- Reducing muscle tension and chronic pain
- Improving concentration and mood
- Improving sleep quality
- Lowering fatigue
- Reducing anger and frustration.

To get the most benefit, use relaxation techniques along with other positive coping methods, such as thinking positively, finding humor, problem-solving, managing time, exercising, getting enough sleep, and reaching out to support family and friends.

There are some great Apps and resources online. One of our favourites is the Mindfulness App <https://themandfulnessapp.com/>

You can also visit the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools, if you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood.





10 Be kind to yourself

This is really important as life is going to be different for a while, and we need to adapt to our new living situation. Routine gives both children and adults an increased feeling of safety in the context of uncertainty, so maybe make a plan for the day that includes time for working, eating, relaxing, exercising etc.

Stick to meal and bedtimes – many people working from home will have a schedule, but don't be tempted to stay in bed or work longer hours. Eat at the times you usually would, as this can help you remain in your routine.

No matter what you do, be proud of yourself. You have just taken a really important step that will positively impact your health and the health of your family.

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Guidance is available

Please note: guidance is regularly being updated, therefore the most accurate and up to date Public Health England guidance will be via the [gov.uk pages](#) (link here). Users can sign up to receive weekly or daily updates to all guidance changes relating to COVID-19.

The following Non-PHE resource links are up to date as of Wednesday 15th April 2020.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

[Every Mind Matters](#)

Every Mind Matters is now tailored to support people through social distancing and home isolation. Find guidance, advice and tips on how to maintain your mental wellbeing if you need to stay at home or are worried and anxious about the outbreak

[Mental health in the workplace](#)

Department of Health advises that 1 in 4 of us will experience mental ill health at some point in our lives. It is therefore important that employers and their staff take steps to promote positive mental health and support those experiencing mental ill health

[Promoting positive mental health in the workplace](#)

Mental ill health costs employers in the UK £30 billion every year through lost production, recruitment and absence. Promoting positive mental health in your workplace can therefore be hugely beneficial. Staff with good mental health are more likely to perform well, have good attendance levels and be engaged in their work

[Managing staff experiencing mental ill health](#)

Managers deal with ill health on a regular basis. While they are usually confident in dealing with physical ill health, they may be less sure of how best to approach mental ill health. Yet it should be similar, with a focus on how they can best support the team member back to work and/or to perform at their best

[Dealing with stress in the workplace](#)

According to the HSE (Health and Safety Executive), in 2015/16 over 480,000 people in the UK reported that work-related stress was making them ill. This amounts to nearly 40% of all work-related illness. It is therefore important that an employer takes steps to tackle the work-related causes of stress in its organisation and encourages staff to seek help at the earliest opportunity if they begin to experience stress

[Long work hours, weekend working and depressive symptoms in men and women](#)

Increased depressive symptoms were independently linked to working extra-long hours for women, whereas increased depressive symptoms were associated with working weekends for both genders, suggesting these work patterns may contribute to worse mental health.

[Five ways to mental wellbeing](#)

Foresight's 'Mental capital and wellbeing' project considered how to improve everyone's mental capital and mental wellbeing through life. Evidence suggests that a small improvement in wellbeing can help to decrease some mental health problems and help people to flourish. This document, produced by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) on behalf of Foresight, sets out 5 actions to improve personal wellbeing

[Workplace Anxiety & Work-Related Anxiety](#)

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, fear, nervousness or unease about something. It may be caused by issues in the workplace, such as workload, performance or conflict with colleagues. Outside the workplace, factors such as relationship, family or debt problems can create anxiety. Employees could take steps to manage these issues, by communicating with their managers and seeking help, where necessary

[Guidance for the public on mental health & wellbeing](#)

Advice and information on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak

[Mental Health Matters](#)

For adults 18 and over - 24 hour phone and web chat for emotional support and signposting to services They are experiencing high demand currently – if unable to get through first time then advised to keep trying Tel: 0808 145 4507

STAYING ACTIVE AT HOME

[One You](#)

Moving is good for your body and mind. Try these easy ways to move more every day

[NHS move more](#)

Home-based strength and cardio workouts for adults

[Live well](#)

Seated strength and flexibility exercises for adults with mobility issues

[5-week programme](#)

Five-week strength and flex programme

[#StayInWorkOut](#)

Sport England's Stay In, Work Out campaign

[Mind](#)

Information about how physical activity can help your mental health, and tips for choosing an activity that works for you, and how to overcome anything that might stop you from becoming more active

[British Heart Foundation](#)

Dreary weather can make it harder to exercise outside. With help from two experts, Rachael Healy presents a guide to keeping moving without leaving the house.

[Chartered Society of Physiotherapy & AGE UK](#)

Staying healthy and active is important at any age and getting older shouldn't prevent this. Although you might feel your body slowing down slightly, there are plenty of things you can do to ensure that you keep fit and active.

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