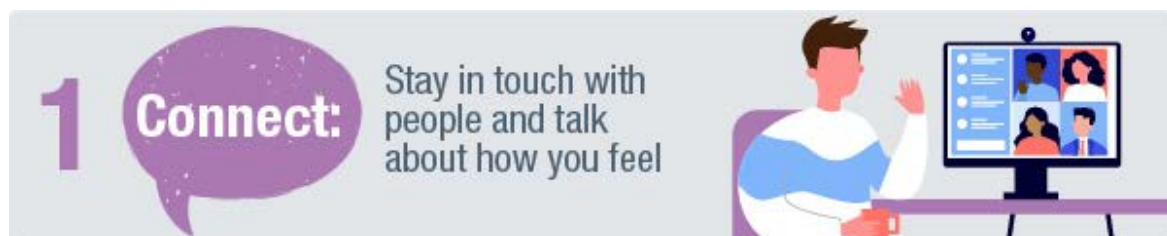




Article subject: 6 ways to improve your wellbeing during lockdown and social-isolation

It's more important than ever for all of us to take care of ourselves and look after the people around us. The current situation is very difficult for everyone and it's understandable to have negative feelings about what is happening and how it is affecting you and the people you care about.

As you know, EMCOR UK cares very much about the wellbeing of everyone in our business and as you would expect, we want to help. That's why we've put together these ideas for taking care of your mental health and wellbeing during lockdown and included lots of ideas about what you could do to feel better.



Staying at home shouldn't mean not communicating at all. Now is the ideal time to communicate *more*, not less – and reaching out to others is definitely good for your mental health and wellbeing. You could even plan regular touchpoints with your favourite people so you always have more interaction to look forward to.

What can I do?

- Call your friends and family regularly for a chat – it will make you feel better and it might make them feel better too. And try to also talk about something other than your concerns or theirs. Remember good times in the weeks or months gone by; plan new activities for when life gets back to normal; share jokes and stories about the positives you have found.
- Video calls and group chats can be lots of fun too. If you're not sure how to set one up, call someone you know who is good with technology and see if they can talk you through it. It might take time to work it out but at least you will have learnt a new skill and will have the chance to keep in touch in a

new and exciting way.

- Reach out to people you've lost touch with or that you haven't spoken to in a while because life has been too busy. Now is the perfect time to reconnect and rekindle positive relationships.



Helping other people is a good distraction from your own worries and concerns and it is guaranteed to make you feel good about yourself too. When you stop to think about it, you can probably imagine plenty of situations where others could use your help. There have been lots of heart-warming examples of neighbours who have never spoken before helping each other for example. But do make sure you still continue to follow the [Government guidelines](#) at the same time.

What can I do?

- Consider the people you know who might need support. As well as things like shopping, elderly friends, family or neighbours might welcome a phone call or even a letter to brighten their day. If you have children, perhaps they could help with this too.
- Think about the people you don't know but who live near you who might be struggling. If you are fit and well and symptom free, you could put a note through their door with your contact number and offer to pick up essential items such as food or medication.
- If you can manage it, you could make a donation to your local food bank. These are in demand in normal times for those who are really struggling to make ends meet – and they are seeing even more people at the moment with so many being unable to work.



Exercise is not only good for your body, it also has a positive effect on mood and can even help you to sleep better at night too. If you exercised regularly before the lockdown, you might feel frustrated that you can't continue with your normal routine – perhaps because your gym is closed or you can't play team sports. And if you didn't exercise much before, thinking of ways to do it now might feel quite daunting.

What can I do?

- You are allowed to go outside once a day for exercise for up to an hour. This could be a brisk walk, a run or a bike ride for example. And you can go alone or with others in your household if they fancy it as long as you stay at least 2 metres from anyone else you meet. And it's a great way to see your neighbourhood from a different perspective from normal.
- Try a home workout. This could be as simple as some stretches, running on the spot or up and down stairs, press-ups and squats, star jumps – whatever you fancy. Or try out a home workout. There are hundreds of these online from HIIT to yoga to Pilates to strength training – but do make sure you choose something that suits your ability and fitness level.
- Set aside a regular time to exercise every day as part of a routine. You don't have to stick to the same thing; you might want a workout one day, a brisk walk the next, and a yoga session after that. The choice is yours - just make sure it's fun not a chore.



It's easy to lapse into bad habits when you're bored or frustrated at home, however it does make sense to actively try and avoid this. The right food choices are not just about not being hungry, you can also feed your mind, body and soul, and boost your immune system if you get the balance right. And don't forget that alcohol includes lots of sugar and calories and too much makes you feel worse not better.

What can I do?

- Think about the nutritional breakdown of the food and drink you are consuming. Try and include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and a good balance of carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins and minerals.
- Plan your meals and shop accordingly. And take time to include what you already have in your cupboards and freezer so you minimise the shopping required.
- Try some new recipes. You could get some inspiration from cookery shows or [online](#) or share ideas with friends and family. You could even send pictures of your creations!

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Keep Learning:

Stay positive and boost your mind



Keeping your mind active and your mood upbeat is easier said than done when you are confined at home and not able to do the things that normally help to alleviate stress and keep you engaged and occupied. But it is important for your mental health to try to control your negative thoughts and keep anxiety at bay. Consider these ways to maintain a positive and active mind.

What can I do?

- The constant stream of news and updates about the pandemic means we all feel anxious about what is happening. Take back control and limit your news intake to set times of day – and then switch off the TV and online feeds for the rest of the time to give yourself a break.
- From conspiracy theories to fake news to plain old scaremongering – there are plenty of stories circulating that simply aren't true. Stick to the facts by only accessing credible sources you can trust such as [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk) and the [BBC](https://www.bbc.com). And fact-check if you're not sure about what others are saying on social media.
- Give your mind a break from constant anxiety and learn something new. There are hundreds of free tutorials and courses online as well as quizzes, streamed theatre and music events, virtual tours and plenty more.

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Relax:

Focus on the present



It's perfectly normal to be feeling very concerned about the coronavirus outbreak and worry about how things are going to change going forward. Taking time to focus on the present and the things you *can* control is one way to help alleviate that anxiety and avoid feeling overwhelmed.

What can I do?

- Make an effort to stop and experience the moment you are in. Notice the details in front of you, acknowledge how you feel, what is happening right now, and where you are.
- Try using proven techniques such as mindfulness and controlled breathing to help you relax and feel calm. There are lots of resources available from audio guides to phone apps to online sessions that can help you learn to

do this effectively.

- Set aside time for yourself to do something you personally find relaxing such as reading, drawing, watching a sunset, completing a jigsaw puzzle, having a leisurely bath or listening to music.

If you are still worried and upset, have specific mental health needs or you require extra support, you can find details of various [professional helplines here](#) as well as use the EMCOR UK Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); 24/7 confidential support service helpline - freephone number: 0800 0305182.