



# HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

## DURING LOCKDOWN

Being isolated from friends and loved ones can leave you feeling stuck in a weird kind of mental Limboland... Here are five tips to help you take care of your mental health every day.

### 1. Be gentle with yourself (and others)

It's okay to be scared. We're living through a collective traumatic experience – what you might not realise is that you (and others around you) are probably in different stages of the grieving process. And that's exhausting. So no, you don't have to be super productive and learn all the recipes/ musical instruments or start an epic side hustle. Take time out when you need to. Do what you can, when you can. Focus on staying healthy rather than becoming superhuman. You're already enough, and you don't need the guilt of "wasted time" heaped on your head.

### 2. Move

Whenever you feel your mood getting low, get up and do ten minutes of physical activity. It will make a massive difference to your mental health and energy levels. And no, you don't have to do every single exercise podcast or YouTube tutorial out there – the end goal is not to become an Olympic athlete, but to build up your stamina and energy levels to get your head in a better space. Stretch or do yoga on the balcony, play backyard hockey, run around the block, do some sit-ups or tricep dips in front of the TV... Just try.

### 3. Reach out

Weirdly, the longer some of us feel lonely and isolated, the less we're likely to want to connect or talk to others. But reach out: you're not alone in this, and chances are your friends, loved ones, neighbours and even strangers are all going through the same cycle of fear, sadness and loneliness. Chat to your mates on socials, join online support forums, and keep an eye on the people that share your home space with you. We need each other and none of us should be trying to deal with this alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

**Tip:** Agree on a "Bat Signal" with the people you trust: an emoji or word you can send when it feels like the walls are closing in and you really need to talk to someone RIGHT NOW, but can't even speak, really. When the Bat Signal comes up in your DMs, drop what you're doing and help your friend. Ask them to do the same for you.

### 4. Discover how you find – and make – meaning

Don't lose sight of what makes you, "you"; and realise how important you are to the people around you. Make and share musical playlists or TikTok videos, read the books you love, watch something uplifting, garden, join an animal charity, make new friends online, experiment with recipes, paint, do woodwork, create cards for your parents, help your neighbours... Think about what brings you joy. And ask yourself: how do you add to the world around you right now – and what would you like to add in future? This will help you find purpose in every day.

### 5. Focus on what you can control – let go what you can't

For example: you can control making your bed in the morning, hugging your mom or eating healthy – but you can't control what the news is going to throw at you all day. So, avoid the news. It's all just "corona corona corona" anyway and makes people more anxious and fearful. Pick your battles: we don't know what will happen in future, so don't worry about "the future" too much. Worry about "the now", the people around you, and the decisions you can make to improve each day for yourself and others around you.

**REMEMBER:** it's okay to not be okay. Don't go it alone – reach out to friends, family and people you trust to get help and support when you need it.

**BeyondBlue:** [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Bite Back:** [www.biteback.org.au](http://www.biteback.org.au)

**Livewire:** [www.livewire.org.au](http://www.livewire.org.au)

**ReachOut:** [www.au.reachout.com](http://www.au.reachout.com)

