



Keele
UNIVERSITY

Impact Accelerator Unit

Top tips

For health and wellbeing during COVID-19

For people at home, aged 70 and over, with joint pain and health conditions

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@KeeleIAU

We are all in challenging and unsettling times, but whilst you may have been advised to stay at home you are not alone; support is available

Keep up to date - informed not overwhelmed

1

Reading too much news can lead to feeling stressed or overwhelmed. If this is the case, we suggest limiting the number of times you check the news to once a day and use reliable sources of information to stay informed. We have added useful resources at the end of this document.



2

Look after your wellbeing

Aim to do something each day that makes you feel good. Making a note daily of three things that you are grateful for has been shown to improve mood. Examples include, listening to music, looking at old photos or watching your favourite comedy show. Keep in touch with friends and family. Phone calls or video calls are a great way of feeling connected and reducing isolation. **Remember this is a temporary situation and we will get back to normal.**

Keep moving and active

Keeping moving is good for wellbeing and keeping your heart, lungs and muscles strong and helps keep joints mobile. Aim to also do strengthening and balance exercises to maintain your fitness in and around the home. Good exercises to strengthen the muscles in the legs and help balance include sitting then standing from a chair (5-10 times) and sidestepping by the kitchen units (1 minute).



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Routine, goals and activities

'Timetabling' may help you in scheduling your daily and weekly activities. Keeping a similar wake up and bed time each day can help your sleep and mood. Helpful tips for relaxation and preparing for a good night's sleep include a warm bath or shower, and a hot (non-cafeinated) drink. Aim to stop watching TV or reading your phone at least an hour before going to bed. Striking a balance of being busy and occupied with resting times, will keep a steady pace and may help reduce flare ups of pain and feeling low.



5

Accessing healthcare may be different

Should you need to contact your general practice for a review of your health conditions or if a new concern has arisen, you should contact your practice by telephone or via the website. You are then likely to be contacted by a member of the practice to assess your concerns. You may be offered a telephone, video or face to face appointment (if required). If you have symptoms of Covid-19 (a high temperature and a new continuous cough) you need to contact NHS 111 (on-line or by telephone). Hospitals have temporarily suspended all routine out-patient activity, investigations and surgery and, if necessary, they will contact patients about this. Hospitals are continuing to manage suspected cancer referrals and emergency conditions.



6

Eat well

Eating well and drinking plenty of water regularly is important for your general health. Try to eat a variety of different foods and take advantage of any food delivery services available in your area. Don't worry if you don't have fresh produce. Tinned foods such as beans, meat, fish and vegetables can be a good source of nutrients. Frozen fruit and vegetables are a particularly good source of vitamins. Consider buying vitamin D supplements (10 µg daily) to help with bone health.



Medication



7

You should take all your regular medications as usual. Please do not order more medication than necessary. If your medication review is due, this is likely to be done by a GP via a telephone consultation. If you take medications that require regular blood tests, e.g for rheumatoid arthritis, you may be contacted by your hospital doctor or general practice and advised as required. If you struggle to collect your medications due to the need to self-isolate or stay at home, there is plenty of help around. Speaking to your pharmacist, checking your general practice surgery/council websites is a good starting point; they may be able to arrange the delivery or signpost you to a local voluntary service providing collection and delivery of your medications to your doorstep.

8

Access sources of information and support

For reliable **coronavirus updates** and **recommendations**: Watch the daily televised health bulletin on the BBC by the Chief Medical Officer (by TV, radio or the internet) or view Public Health England guidance (via the internet www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england or by Twitter @PHE_uk or Facebook)

For ideas on **home exercises** try this Chartered Society of Physiotherapy link: <https://bit.ly/3aFPR4x>

For more information and advice about **joint pain** and the **coronavirus**, Versus Arthritis has a dedicated phone helpline 0800 5200 520 or visit their website www.versusarthritis.org/

If you need advice or support about **money, care, loneliness** or **health** and the **coronavirus**, Age UK have a helpline 0800 678 1602 or visit their website www.ageuk.org.uk/

For support about **wellbeing, anxiety** and **mood**, Mind has a helpline for more information and sign posting about wellbeing 0300 123 3393, their website is www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/

*You are
not alone*