



COVID-19 CARE TIPS

This COVID-19 crisis has radically changed our lives. Just a few months ago, we had no idea our 'world' would be confined to our homes!

This crisis is a powerful reminder of how important freedom is - and how much we need human connection!

Remember you are not alone. Because what is DIFFERENT here is that everyone is impacted! Your neighbour, mom, boss and friends as well as your counterparts around the world are all going through something similar.

So, it's important to remember:

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. Viktor E. Frankl

This is the challenge each of us must rise to! If we're going to be stuck at home, we may as well make the most of it.

Here Are 15 Tips to Help You Make Your Life Better While Physically Isolated:

1) Create a Healthy, Supportive Routine

When we feel powerless or helpless (as so many of us do at the moment), one EXTREMELY easy thing to do is to create a routine or schedule.

While we're all stuck in anxiously waiting at home, it's easy to lose our sense of time. Days can begin to blend into each other. A routine can give us an anchor and greater sense of control over our lives. If you have children, creating a routine is especially important to give them a sense of normality.

This routine or schedule can be as simple as:

- **7 am** Wake-up
- **8 am** Breakfast
- **10 am** Exercise
- **11 am** Talk to friends
- **12.00 pm** Lunch
- **1-4 pm** Learning or a home project
- **5 pm** Make and eat dinner
- **7 pm** Talk to close family
- **8 pm** Reading and/or journaling
- **10 pm** Bed

Be sure to include food preparation, social time, exercise and outdoor time, and some learning or creativity so you get some *benefit* from this challenging time.

It's also important to recognize weekends because it's too easy for weeks to blur together. So, make a looser schedule for your weekends. For example, you could include:

- Sleeping in/later bedtime
- Brunch
- "Treats"
- Movie night with popcorn
- A virtual happy hour with friends or colleagues
- A larger project, perhaps some art, craft, gardening or home redecoration

Create a routine for a sense of control and mastery over your environment and life circumstances. Reclaim what power you can over your own life, because with all this uncertainty it's important for you - and especially important for children - to have predictability.

2) Build Your Physical Strength, Fitness Levels or Flexibility

Building your physical strength is powerful and health-boosting! Not only is physical strength and flexibility life-affirming and good for our health but feeling more *physically* powerful actually helps us feel more empowered and less helpless *in life* too!

So, add some physical activity into your schedule - as little as 15 minutes daily. Maybe by the end of this you'll be fitter or even be able to do 10 (or 100!) press-ups!

There are many options to boost your physical strength and health. Here are some ideas:

- Take up a yoga practice - excellent for strength-building, flexibility - and calm! There are lots of online options. Here is one with everything from 10 minutes for beginners to an advanced practice. [Sarah Beth Yoga on YouTube](#) has more (free) yoga videos than I can count
- Learn do a press-up or push-up. Then see if you can get to 10 (or more - depending on where you start)!
- There are so many online fitness classes on YouTube - for beginners, experts - with equipment and also with no equipment whatsoever. [PopSugar Fitness](#) has many options to choose from.
- One of my favorite quick wellness routine YouTube videos is [Trainer to Pink, Kelly Rowland shares her 5-step Wellness Routine](#)

REMEMBER: Being stronger = FEELING stronger and more in control! And building your PHYSICAL strength or fitness = REDUCED feelings of helplessness!

3) Learn with Non-Fiction Books

Use this time at home to educate yourself with *non-fiction* books. There is so much to be gained - like self-confidence, negotiation skills, health (sleep, nutrition), how to have difficult conversations and much more.

What keeps you up at night? There's probably a book about that! What do you wish you were better at? There's probably a book about that too! Want to start your own online business? I know there are lots of books about that!

Here are some book ideas to get you thinking:

- **Be more productive or creative** with "The Now Habit" by Neil Fiore or "A Whack on the Side of the Head (How You Can Be More Creative)" by Roger Von Oech and "A Whole New Mind" by Daniel Pink.
- **Think (or rethink?) how you live** with books like "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan (also available in a young reader's version), "Slow Food: Collected Thoughts on Taste, Tradition, and the Honest Pleasures" by Carlo Petrini, "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America" by Barbara Ehrenreich, "Doughnut Economics" by Kate Raworth.
- **Get personally inspired** with "Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts" and "The Gifts of Imperfection" by Brené Brown, or "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor E. Frankl.
- **Up-skill yourself** with "Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most" by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen.
- **Learn about the human mind** with "Blink" by Malcolm Gladwell or "The Whole Brain Child" by Daniel J. Siegel MD and Tina Payne Bryson, PhD.
- **Get healthier** with "Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams" by Matthew Walker PhD.
- **Be more confident and discover your strengths** with "The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance - What Women Should Know" by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman" or "Now, Discover Your Strengths (How to Develop Your Talents and Those of the People You Manage)" by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton.

- **Finally, read a memoir!** Choose someone you admire, get inspired and learn how other people think - and live their lives.
- **My favorites that I reread throughout the year** include “The Magic of Thinking Big” by David Swartz, “Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway” by Susan Jeffers, Ph.D., “Ask and It Is Given” by Esther and Jerry Hicks, and “In Tune with the Infinite” by Ralph Waldo Trine.

Reading one book will expand your mind, reading several of these books is going to make you more interesting, help you learn new skills - and maybe even make you more employable too!

4) Gain a New Skill with Online Learning

There are so many opportunities online to gain a new skill and they're growing by the day!

Grow your personal or creative skills or choose a new skill to learn and take back to work with online training providers like [Udemy](#) or [Teachable](#).

There are many other providers.

If there's a skill you always wanted to learn, search for it. But be sure to read the course descriptions thoroughly, check reviews if there are any - and check money-back guarantees as you need to!

And with so many learning options ranging from FREE to tens, hundreds, and thousands of dollars, there will be something out there simply perfect for you.

Learn a new skill without going online. Get out the cookbooks. Whether it's finally learning to make pasta or bread from scratch, or experimenting with vegetarian cooking, it's empowering to produce something new and develop your skills!

5) Explore your Life Vision

Rather than watching endless news streams, you can choose to focus on a bigger picture - your future. What do you want from the rest of your life? What would you be disappointed you did NOT do? Where do you envision yourself in 10 years?

Having a clear vision of how you *want* your life to be is a powerful motivator. A vision helps us work towards our goals, take action and make change. Soon, we'll all be super-busy again - and a vision might be just what you need to stay focused!

Here are 5 questions to ponder or journal around to go deeper:

- What do you desire or yearn for in your life?
- How do you want to feel?
- What do you really, really want to be different in your life?
- What would have happened in 3 years time such that your life is spectacular, and you feel magnificent about yourself?
- What's your dream for this lifetime? Imagine you're 90 years old and looking back over your life; what did you do that made you proud and happy?

TIP: Remember to think *possibility* not probability! Don't limit yourself and your ideas because you don't believe something is likely. Instead believe it's possible - and even if you don't get all the way there, you may get close - or even find something better along the way!

6) Be in the moment

In THIS moment you are OK. You are safe. Take one day at a time. One hour or even one breath at a time if you need to.

This tip is about being super-present, not thinking ahead or remembering the past, but practicing BEING.

This is a PRACTICE - meaning you will have to do it over and over again - bringing yourself back to the NOW. Over time it gets easier, and it's a great skill to have to take back to "normal" life.

So, when you notice you're worrying, feeling twitchy and want to pick up your device and find out what the "latest" is about the COVID situation, say to yourself, "It's OK. In this moment, I am safe. In this moment I am OK." You can also add or say, "In this moment, my children/husband/family are safe."

EXTRA TIP: Reduce or minimise how often you watch and read the news! And DON'T read or watch the news (or articles about COVID-19 or similar) just before bed!

7) Laugh

Distracting ourselves from our fears is a valid technique for feeling better!

Laughter releases helpful chemicals in our bloodstream - Endorphins (our natural "happy" drug) and Dopamine (part of our bodily "reward" system).

- What are your favorite comedy shows?
- Is there a comedian you like?
- Netflix and similar programs have so many watching options, so find something that makes you laugh!

IMPORTANT: We should NOT overuse laughter as a distraction technique. And it shouldn't be used for ongoing and persistent fears in regular life. But for a situation like this, where there isn't much that any of us can do other than sit and wait - distraction can be a great coping mechanism.

8) Start a Journal

If you've always wanted to journal, now is a good time to start. More than just keeping a record of your day, a journal can help you explore and sift through your feelings and experiences and learn from them. **This is a great way to get to know you!**

It's great to choose a beautiful notebook, but the most important thing is to just get started. Here are some prompts to get started with:

- Today I am feeling _____. I think this is because _____.

- One big thing I have learned during this crisis is _____.
- I remember the last time I was stuck in the house _____.
- One thing that's surprised me recently is _____.
- What matters most to me in life is _____.
- Describe your ideal day _____.

"A journal is expressive by nature and it contains feelings, emotions, problems, ponderings and it is more reflective on the meaning of life being lived." **Lynda Monk**

You may find this [How to Journal article](#) from the IAJW (International Association for Journal Writing) helpful to get you started.

I have coaching clients who have transformed their journal entries into published books! Yes, most of them have turned their stories of pain and disappointment into a purpose of helping others. You never know the path that life will guide you on so stay open to allow and receive.

9) Be Kind

Kindness and compassion are one of the most powerful tools any of us have in our toolbox right now. Many of us are largely housebound, never mind the fear that you or a loved one might actually catch the COVID virus! So, of course we're going to experience emotions of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.

- Use kindness to comfort yourself when afraid or feeling anxious or fidgety. Be gentle. Imagine you're soothing a friend, small child or animal who is afraid - what would you say to them? Then say that to yourself!
- Use kindness to give yourself - and others - the benefit of the doubt. Instead of getting upset when you see other people behaving badly, remember that we all do silly things when we're scared.
- Imagine you have a kind, wise self. A part of you that is unflappable, intelligent and unconditionally loves ALL of you. Now, when you need it, imagine that kind, wise self is with you, supporting you, maybe giving you a hug - and saying exactly what you need to hear (not just the sugary stuff, but also the tough love and common sense).
- Take time to find something to be grateful for and spend 10-15 minutes focusing only on thoughts of that.

10) Help Others

Helping others is empowering *and* makes us feel better. Here are a few ways you could help others.

- Check in on a neighbor or friend and see if they need anything. You can do this by phone, or in person, remembering to maintain social distancing of six feet.
- Offer to get someone groceries if you're going.
- Help someone less technically savvy learn how to use Zoom or WhatsApp or whatever they need to get online.
- Host a virtual get-together with your regular friends.
- Reconnect more deeply with friends or relatives who have moved away.

11) Live Your Values

When we know our values, we understand what motivates and drives us. When we build our lives around our values, we create a life that is meaningful. Finally, when we *align* our actions with our values, we're being truly authentic. It's a very satisfying and fulfilling way to live.

And living your values could be the single most important thing any of us can do right now.

Here's an exercise you can do:

- List your values on a piece of paper or in your journal.
- Give each value a score ___ / 10 as to how well you are living that value in your life now (where 0 is not at all and 10 is full-out).
- For the scores that are 8 or more - great!
- For the scores that are 7 or less out of 10, ask yourself, "How could I express this value more in my life right now?" "What could I do differently or approach differently, so that I feel good about how I live this value in my life?"

For example: You have a value of creativity, but you're only managing to 'go through the motions' right now and your score is 4/10. Ask yourself how you could be more creative during this time - whether it's cooking, gardening, art or writing or helping your kids do something creative, or even watching a documentary about someone creative you admire...

12) De-Clutter

I bet you have some organizational things on your to-do list (like going through winter clothes, sorting out toys to donate or tidying the laundry closet, garage or shed) that have been on there for a while. Use this isolation period to get them done!

Getting organized and de-cluttering allows us to exert some control over our lives - and therefore feel less helpless! Plus, it will feel amazing just to have it done.

Organize your closets, your garage, your books, your photos, office, kitchen equipment. Whatever needs organizing. Or perhaps you need to go through your receipts or file your taxes!

A simple 3 Step Method to go through your stuff:

1. If you're keeping it, be sure to DECIDE where it will "live" from now on.
 2. If you're not keeping it, create two piles:
 - Things to DUMP
 - Things to DONATE (and if relevant to pass on to specific people).
 3. When you're done, put each pile into bags or boxes, and then once this crisis is over you can get rid of what you no longer need.
- TIP: You don't need to do any of this 'in one sitting', do an hour a day - you'll be surprised how much you get done if you keep it up for a week!

13) Grow Something - Or Get an Indoor Flowering Plant

There is nothing quite like growing something - whether it's flowers, fruits or vegetables that makes us feel good! Even if you live in an apartment, you could grow fresh herbs on your windowsill or balcony to cook with!

- Get some seeds, (a pot and some soil if needed) and get started.
- Many plant nurseries are still open, or you could order seeds etc. online.
- Follow the instructions - and remember to water it!

If growing something is just too much work, get yourself a spring bulb or succulent (cacti) planter, or you could get an indoor plant like a Spathiphyllum* (Peace Lily) is good for cleaning the air of pollutants (and easy to take care of).

* Be aware that some plants are poisonous to pets - so please check.

14) Send "Real" Snail Mail Letters or Cards

Go old-fashioned. Who doesn't love to receive a lovely card or handwritten letter in their mailbox? Rediscover the lost art of letter-writing and make someone's day.

Yes, you could send an email appreciating someone, and that's great. But imagine your recipient's face as they pick up that *hand-written* card in the mailbox.

Wondering what to say? Write from the heart! Here are some ideas to get started:

- I really appreciate having you in my life because _____.
- I love hanging out with you when we _____.
- I've realized that you bring _____ to my life.

15) Begin a Meditation Practice

Meditation is a practice that has been proven scientifically to calm us, help us be more creative and be happier (for starters). It's extremely beneficial.

There is a lot to learn about meditation - and it's called a Meditation *Practice* for a reason. But it's also not as hard as it sounds. You can start with as little as 5 minutes a day - and it's good to build a routine, so you meditate at the same time every day. Get a book on "Meditation for Beginners" or go to YouTube or Google and search for "How to Meditate". Search online and you'll have lots of options to choose from.

It helps to have a quiet space without interruptions - which many of us don't have at the moment. And for some people, *trying to* meditate when anxious can be stressful. If this is the case, listen to a relaxing guided meditation instead.

Another idea is to listen to a sleep meditation or "Body Scan Meditation" before going to sleep.

Which of the above ideas resonated with you? Believe you have the skills and power to tackle this situation and you will! Choose to make the best of a difficult situation and no matter what - you'll find a way. If you know me, you know that my favorite affirmation is, "Whatever happens, I'll handle it."

This current and unprecedented COVID-19 situation will end and become a part of history. When it does, you'll be proud you made the effort to learn something - whether it's about yourself, fresh knowledge, a new skill - and who knows what else! Live your values, stay SAFE, and be kind to yourself and others

Love, light, and gratitude,



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Dora Carpenter is a visionary who has always had a passion for helping others embrace their unique gifts, talents, and abilities. As a certified professional coach, she inspires and empowers individuals for personal and professional success. She is known for challenging and motivating clients to take forward-moving action and work through life transitions, grief, and fear. Her gentle and empathetic, yet expressive approach, is articulated in her coaching, training, writing, and speaking. A client says, "She is a magnetic mentoring coach who journeys with you through your experience."

Dora Carpenter is a certified life coach, certified grief coach, and former licensed Feel the Fear® trainer. As Founder of the Institute of Professional Grief Coaching and the From Grief to Gratitude Coach Certification Program, she trains and certifies grief coaches. Dora Carpenter has been recognized by the National Association of Distinguished Professionals and has appeared on various media outlets.