

Five ways to wellbeing

The following steps have been researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation. Let us know what you think about them and we could do to help you look after wellbeing

1. Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

With this in mind, try to do something different today and make a connection.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email - ring or connect via Zoom, House Party, Skype or Microsoft Teams
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you
- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone **really** is

2. Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being. But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

This is why it seen as a legitimate reason for you to be outside during lockdown. However, if you are shielding then there are still things you can do in your own home or garden.

Today, why not get physical? Here are a few ideas:

- Do a few trips up and down the stairs
- Go outside for a walk - research shows that seeing trees (in real life) helps to increase positive wellbeing
- Follow an online exercise video - it doesn't need to be too strenuous
 - Joe Wicks
 - Tyson Fury
 - Mr Motivator
 - Green Goddess
 - I was surprised too that these two are still going!!

3. Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

- *Look after plants in the garden / order a plant for your house - there are a number of garden centres offering home deliveries*
- *Have a 'clear the clutter' day - tidy your bedroom*
- *Take notice of how your family / friends or colleagues are feeling and acting*
- *Change your home routine a little - take your daily exercise at a different time, go a different way, watch a different channel (natural history or history etc)*

4. Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Why not learn something new today? Here are a few more ideas:

- *Find out something about your family / friends / colleagues*
- *Sign up for online learning course - follow the links sent to you by your schools or there are lots that are free at present*
- *Read the news or a book*
- *Set up an online book club*
- *Do a crossword or Sudoku*
- *Research something you've always wondered about*
- *Learn a new word or language (Duolingo is free at the moment!)*

5. Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing. Not everyone can volunteer at the moment, but doing something for others - collecting shopping for a vulnerable neighbour or making a drink for each other all counts!