

# LET'S GET PHYSICAL

## HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP DURING CORONAVIRUS

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Across the country, fitness clubs and gyms have closed in an effort to stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). For many people, this is much more than just missing a workout –fitness routines have been proven to reduce stress as well as being a social outlet, leaving many people no longer able to follow their usual exercise routines.

It's well accepted that being sedentary is bad for our physical and mental health, so staying active during this difficult time is important. Being physically active can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, while also maintaining muscle mass and bone density.

#### KEEPING ACTIVE

Physical activity also helps to keep your immune system working effectively as it flushes bacteria from the lungs and airways, increases white blood cell circulation, and raises body temperature – all of which help the body fight infection.

As well as the physical health benefits, keeping active is a great way to ward off some of the psychological issues associated with being cooped up for an extended time. Being active helps lower stress hormones, such as cortisol, and promotes the release of feel-good hormones, such as endorphins.

#### DIGITAL OFFERINGS

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, a variety of digital offerings have sprung up to ensure people can continue exercise while social distancing.

Wearable giant Fitbit announced in a blog post that it is supporting people during the pandemic by offering 90-day free trials of its Fitbit Premium and Fitbit Coach services. The premium service includes more than 150 workouts, while Fitbit Coach allows users to stream workout videos on phones or computers.

Meanwhile, online fitness membership GymCube has commented that it was seeing a surge in users.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA WORKOUTS

Although gyms have been forced to close their doors, many are offering their members online services instead. UK health club chains David Lloyd and PureGym are both providing members workouts via their mobile apps, while Nuffield Health is offering workouts via its YouTube channel and well-being app. Virgin Active also announced plans to provide workouts through its social media channels and website.

#### CHILDREN'S FITNESS

Children haven't been left out of the fitness equation either. YouTube fitness trainer Joe Wicks is live streaming daily 'PE with Joe' lessons on his channel, The Body Coach, on weekdays. His first classes are getting more than 2.1 million views.

If you're currently stuck at home, you may be feeling demoralised about what this will mean for your fitness. Whether you were training for a marathon or you enjoy working out at the gym, it can be tough to think of putting your usual routine on hold.

#### ADAPTING YOUR WORKOUT

Even if you're not much of a fitness fan, you may balk at the prospect of staying indoors for a number of weeks while barely raising your step count. Exercise is vital for our mental and physical health, and is arguably more important than ever during periods of self-isolation.

The bad news is that, under new measures announced by the Government, leaving your house is only permitted for essential reasons. The good news is that

doesn't mean stopping activity altogether. You're still able to go outside once per day for exercise. And it's possible to use this time to get fitter and stronger than ever, albeit while adapting your workout so that it can be done from home.

/// EVEN SMALL INCREASES  
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ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

#### BODY-WEIGHT TRAINING

If you can't leave the house, one of the most effective workouts is a mix of body-weight exercises and high-intensity interval training (HIIT). Body-weight HIIT workouts are relatively short and don't take up much space. Best of all, they don't require any equipment.

Body-weight training uses your body as resistance to give you a challenging workout, which can improve your fitness levels and also build strength. Relying on only your body to work out also improves balance and flexibility, engaging and targeting all of the important muscle groups with just a few exercises.

Interval training can be a great way to maintain fitness, and you don't need much space. Hill sprints, jump squats, burpees, planks, skipping or fast push-ups will have you sweating in no time. There are plenty of suitable workouts available online.

/// YOU COULD TRACK YOUR PROGRESS ON A FITNESS APP. SOME APPS HAVE THE ADDED ADVANTAGE OF A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY, WHO CAN HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE AND KEEP YOU ON TRACK. A FITNESS APP WILL GIVE YOU SOLID EVIDENCE TO REFER BACK TO WHEN YOU'RE DOUBTING YOUR PROGRESS, AND YOU WON'T SUCCUMB TO NEGATIVE THOUGHTS THAT COULD PREVENT YOU FROM EXERCISING ALTOGETHER

/// IF YOU PREFER SOMETHING LOWER-IMPACT AND DON'T WANT TO DISTURB THE NEIGHBOURS, NOW'S THE TIME TO ROLL OUT A MAT OR TOWEL AND TRY SOME YOGA OR PILATES

If you have underlying health problems, or currently have a very sedentary lifestyle and any risk factors for heart disease (such as high blood pressure), HIIT may not be safe for you, and you should consider alternatives that you can try.

#### LOW-IMPACT EXERCISE

If you prefer something lower-impact and don't want to disturb the neighbours, now's the time to roll out a mat or towel and try some yoga or Pilates. Just because you're at home doesn't mean you can't access a plethora of yoga classes online, fitness routines and meditations. Walking meditations are ideal and can be done in your house, or outside by following social distancing guidelines. Put your earphones in, concentrate on your chosen guided meditation, and get your steps in whilst you do it.

MoreYoga, London's largest independent yoga studio chain, has started offering free classes on its YouTube channel.

#### STAYING MOTIVATED

Of course, even with the best of intentions, you may find your motivation flagging from time to time. You probably just want things to go back to normal, rather than trying to clear an area of space in your living room.

For this reason, it's important to set goals, big and small, and to schedule your workouts. Routine is important here. You could plan your workouts for first thing in the morning, so you can get them out the way before the day's distractions start.

You could also set an alarm for a 20-minute movement session three times a day – this will help break the day up and make limited resources go further. Go up and down the stairs, or use a box or ledge to perform step-ups.

#### MAINTAINING FITNESS

It can take about seven to 14 days for your aerobic fitness to start declining. What you lose initially is mostly the gains that you've made in the last several months of training. If you've been a lifelong runner, you will retain much of your aerobic fitness for several months.

You could track your progress on a fitness app. Some apps have the added advantage of a virtual community, who can hold you accountable and keep you on track. A fitness app will give you solid evidence to refer back to when you're doubting your progress, and you won't succumb to negative thoughts that could prevent you from exercising altogether.

#### POSITIVE THINKING

Finally, if ever there was a time to apply the power of positive thinking, during this COVID-19 crisis is it. It's important not to be disheartened if you can't continue with your current fitness regime, or a race or event that you've been training for has been cancelled. In this day and age, there are a plethora of options and resources to work out from home, so rather than taking a negative view of the situation when it comes to maintaining your fitness levels, see it as a motivating challenge and a chance to switch things up and progress.

#### SOCIAL DISTANCING

The coronavirus outbreak is having an impact on everyone's daily lives. It is important for both your physical and mental health to keep fit and healthy. The Government's message is that you can exercise outside once a day for one hour, whilst following social distancing guidelines, but stay local and use open spaces near to your home where possible – do not travel unnecessarily. You should only go outside alone or with members of your own household and keep at least two metres apart from anyone outside your household at all times.

If you have a garden, make use of the space for exercise and fresh air. You need to also take hygiene precautions when you are outside, and wash your hands as soon as you are back indoors.

If you're new to exercise, start small – try maybe ten minutes of yoga or walking a day, then gradually build up. Even ten minutes of movement a day can help your body and mind feel better. Encourage your loved ones, who you're no doubt spending a lot of time with right now, to take a moment to move their bodies too. And if you're not feeling well, follow the advice of your health professional – including some rest. ■

To stay fit and healthy, the NHS advises adults to do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, or around 20 to 30 minutes a day, but this may be difficult to achieve while homebound.

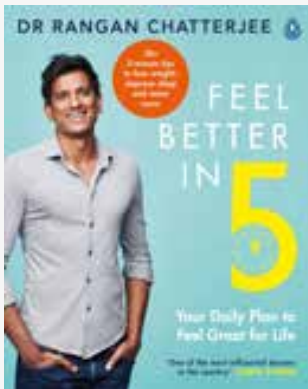
# BOOK REVIEWS – HEALTH

## IN NEED OF READING INSPIRATION FOR A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE?

Look no further than our reviews of these top best new books. Get inspiration for a healthier lifestyle with these top picks.

### FEEL BETTER IN 5: YOUR DAILY PLAN TO FEEL GREAT FOR LIFE

Dr Rangan Chatterjee



One of the most recognisable medics in the land, Chatterjee builds on the foundations of his 4 Pillar Plan and Stress Solution with an invaluable guide to rejuvenation in manageable five-minute bursts. With an emphasis on better health as a journey rather than a destination, *Feel Better in 5* is a transformative plan for improved physical and mental well-being.

*Feel Better in 5* is the first daily five-minute plan that is easy to maintain, easy-to-follow and requires only the smallest amount of willpower.

#### Top tips include:

- ▶ A strength workout that you can do anywhere
- ▶ Gut-boosting snacks you can eat on the go
- ▶ Yoga moves to relax and stay supple
- ▶ Breathing exercises to calm the mind

Drawing on Dr Rangan Chatterjee's twenty years of experience and real-life case studies from his GP practice, *Feel Better in 5* is your daily plan for a happier, healthier you at no extra cost. ■

Publisher: Penguin Books Ltd  
ISBN: 9780241397800

### EAT YOURSELF HEALTHY: AN EASY-TO-DIGEST GUIDE TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Dr. Megan Rossi



With over a decade's experience as a dietician, Dr Megan Rossi imparts some invaluable advice about how to look after your gut in the accessible, authoritative *Eat Yourself Healthy*. Featuring a wide variety of recipes to help manage conditions such as IBS and bloating, this is a terrific guide to a healthier lifestyle.

'I've learnt so much from Megan, looking after my gut is now a priority and I feel so good for it. She's a huge inspiration to us' – Ella Mills, author and founder of *Deliciously Ella*.

#### THE GO-TO LIFESTYLE GUIDE FOR A HAPPY GUT THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

Drawing from the latest research and a decade of experience as a dietitian and consultant at The Gut Health Clinic, Dr Megan Rossi explains how to feed your gut for a happier, healthier you using simple, delicious and gut-boosting recipes.

*Eat Yourself Healthy* is packed with over 50 delicious, easy-to-make meal ideas from delicious breakfast options such as banana, fig and courgette breakfast loaf and chickpea crepes, to crowd-pleasing dinner recipes including creamy pistachio and spinach pesto pasta and mouth-watering satay tofu skewers.

Alongside Dr Rossi's gut-friendly recipes, *Eat Yourself Healthy* also includes expert advice on how to deal with common complaints such as IBS and bloating, diagnose food intolerances, and manage good gut health with sleep and exercise routines.

Supercharge your digestive health and transform your overall well-being with this ultimate guide that promises to make you happier and healthier from the inside out. ■

Publisher: Penguin Books Ltd  
ISBN: 9780241355084

## FAST ASLEEP: HOW TO GET A REALLY GOOD NIGHT'S REST

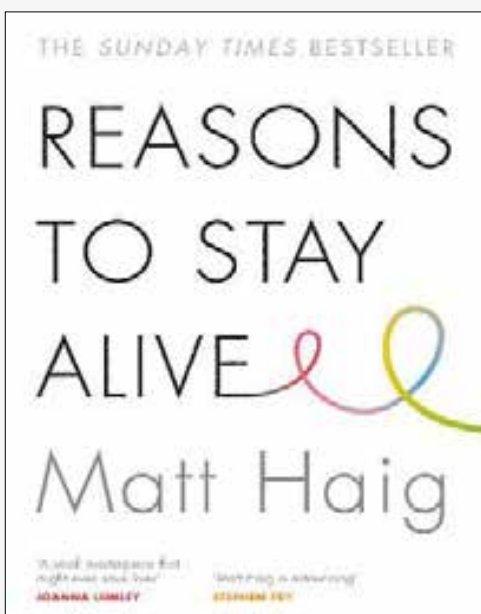
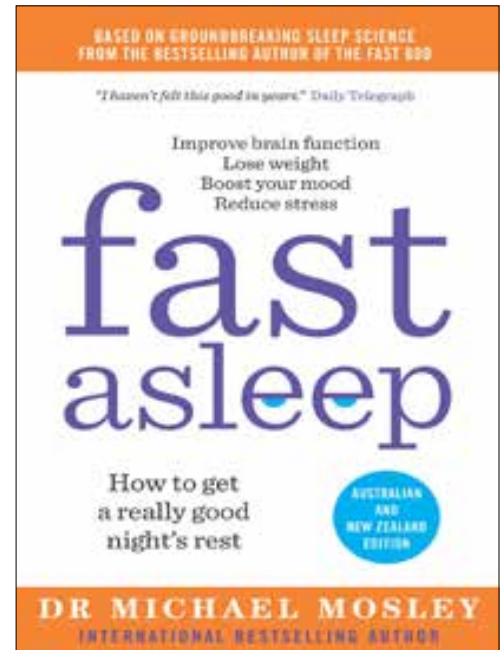
Michael Mosley

Dr Michael Mosley, the wonderful *Trust Me I'm A Doctor* presenter and the author of the bestselling *The Fast Diet* and *The Fast 800*, turns his attention to the secrets of getting a really good night's sleep. In *Fast Asleep*, Mosley – himself prone to insomnia – explores the origins of the most common sleep problems and the inadequacies of standard advice to cure them. Using the latest scientific research, he introduces a simple four-week programme to help you re-establish a healthy sleep pattern.

In *Fast Asleep*, Dr Michael Mosley explains what happens when we sleep, what triggers common sleep problems and why standard advice rarely works.

He has taken part in numerous sleep experiments and tested every remedy going. The result is a radical, four-week programme, based on the latest science, designed to help you re-establish a healthy sleep pattern in record time. With plenty of surprising recommendations – including tips for teenagers, people working night shifts and those prone to jet lag – plus recipes which will boost your deep sleep by improving your gut microbiome, *Fast Asleep* provides the tools you need to sleep better, reduce stress and feel happier. ■

**Publisher:** Short Books Ltd  
**ISBN:** 9781780724201



## REASONS TO STAY ALIVE

Matt Haig

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEEL TRULY ALIVE?

Aged 24, Matt Haig's world caved in. He could see no way to go on living.

This is the true story of how he came through crisis, triumphed over an illness that almost destroyed him and learned to live again. A moving, funny and joyous exploration of how to live better, love better and feel more alive, *Reasons to Stay Alive* is more than a memoir. It is a book about making the most of your time on earth.

'I wrote this book because the oldest cliches remain the truest. Time heals. The bottom of the valley never provides the clearest view. The tunnel does have light at the end of it, even if we haven't been able to see it ... Words, just sometimes, really can set you free.' – Matt Haig. ■

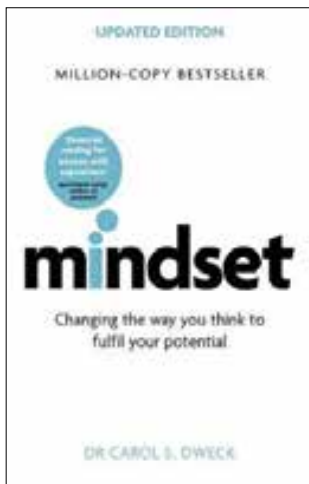
'Warm and engaging, and shot through with humour . . . a valuable contribution to the conversation' – *Sunday Times*

**Publisher:** Canongate Books Ltd  
**ISBN:** 9781782116820

# BOOK REVIEWS – SELF-HELP

## LOOKING FOR SOME ANSWERS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE?

Whether it's physical, emotional or spiritual change you seek, these books may have some answers.



### MINDSET – UPDATED EDITION: CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK TO FULFIL YOUR POTENTIAL

Carol Dweck

World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea: the power of our mindset.

Dweck explains why it's not just our abilities and talent that bring us success, but whether we approach them with a fixed or growth mindset. She makes clear why praising intelligence and ability doesn't foster self-esteem and lead to accomplishment, but may actually jeopardise success. With the right mindset, we can

motivate our kids and help them to raise their grades, as well as reach our own goals, both personal and professional.

Dweck reveals what all great parents, teachers, CEOs and athletes already know: how a simple idea about the brain can create a love of learning and a resilience that is the basis of great accomplishment in every area. ■

**Publisher:** Little, Brown Book Group  
**ISBN:** 9781472139955

### THIS TOO SHALL PASS: STORIES OF CHANGE, CRISIS AND HOPEFUL BEGINNINGS

Julia Samuel

From the author of the bestselling *Grief Works*, *This Too Shall Pass* is a powerful meditation on the difficulty of decision-making in a culture of endless choice. Drawing from conversations with her patients, renowned psychotherapist Julia Samuel explores a range of deeply moving stories of change, opportunity and loss. This touching, beautiful book is full of insight into navigating challenging and transformative crossroads moments in our lives.

If change is the natural order of things, why do so many people struggle with the milestones of life, from first jobs and first loves to children leaving home and retirement?

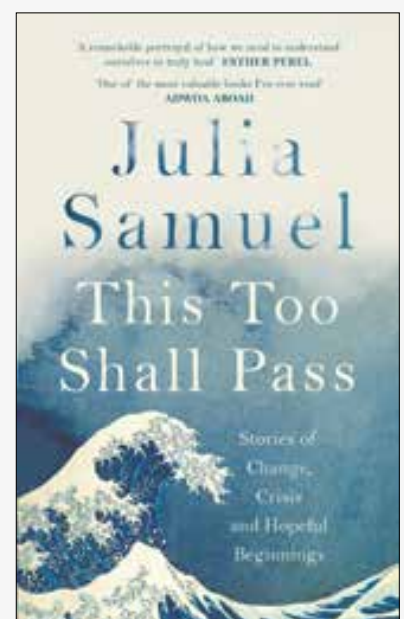
We live in a culture of limitless choice – and life is now more complex than ever. In *This Too*

*Shall Pass*, Julia Samuel draws on hours of conversations with her patients to show how we can learn to adapt and thrive during our most difficult and transformative experiences.

Illuminated by the latest social and psychological research, this book unflinchingly deals with the hard times in family, love, work, health and identity.

These powerful, unforgettable and deeply intimate stories about everyday people will inform our understanding of our own unique response to change and enlighten the way we approach challenges at every stage of life. ■

**Publisher:** Penguin Books Ltd  
**ISBN:** 9780241348864



## THINGS I LEARNED FROM FALLING

**Claire Nelson**

*Things I Learned From Falling* tells an incredible true story of loss, resilience and transformation. On the brink of a burnout, Claire Nelson escaped from her frantic London life to hike in the wilderness of Joshua Tree Park in California. Alone in the middle of the desert, she fell from 25 feet. Brave, honest and profound, *Things I Learned From Falling* is her powerful account of the four days she spent fighting for survival and transfiguring the meaning of life.

An inspirational and gripping first-person account of determination, adversity and survival against the odds.

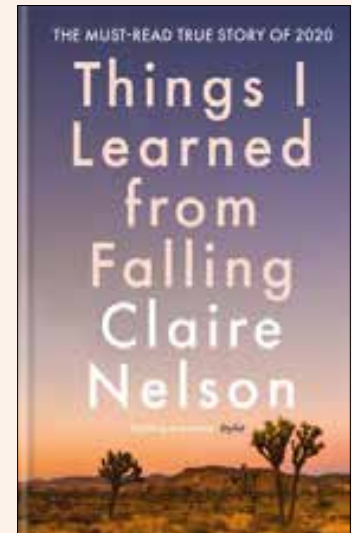
In 2018, Claire Nelson made international headlines. She was in her thirties and was beginning to burn out – her hectic London life of work and social activity and striving to do more and do better in the big city was frenetic and stressful. Although she was surrounded by people all of the time, she felt increasingly lonely.

When the anxiety she felt finally brought her to breaking point, Claire decided to take some time off and travelled to Joshua Tree Park in California to hike and clear her head. What happened next was something she could never have anticipated.

While hiking, Claire fell 25 feet, gravely injuring herself, and she lay alone in the desert – mistakenly miles off any trail, without a cell phone signal, fighting for her life. She lay in the elements for four days until she was miraculously found – her rescuers had not expected to find her alive.

In *Things I Learned From Falling*, Claire tells her incredible story and what it taught her about loneliness, anxiety and transformation – and how to survive it all. ■

**Publisher:** Octopus Publishing Group  
**ISBN:** 9781783253500



## IKIGAI: THE JAPANESE SECRET TO A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

**Hector Garcia, Francesc Miralles**

A reason to jump out of bed every morning. Find out why Japanese Ikigai is the wellness theory everyone's talking about.

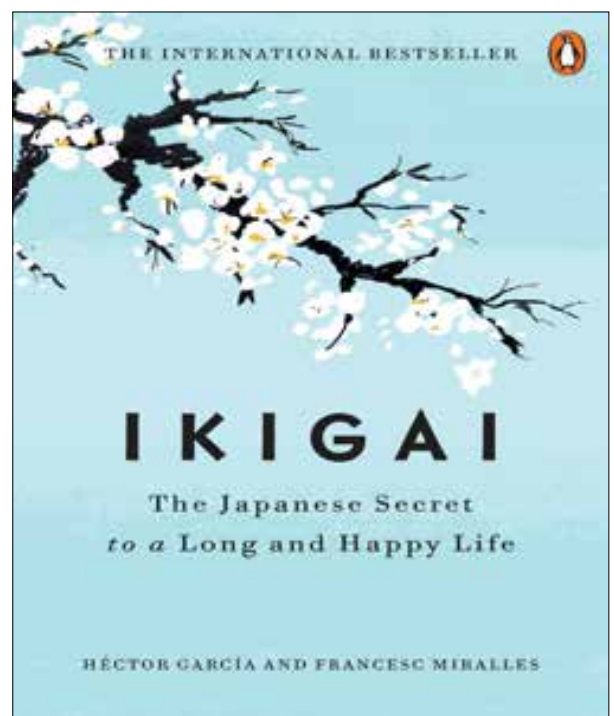
Discover the Japanese secret to a long and happy life with the internationally bestselling guide to ikigai.

The people of Japan believe that everyone has an ikigai – a reason to jump out of bed each morning. And according to the residents of the Japanese island of Okinawa – the world's longest-living people – finding it is the key to a longer and more fulfilled life.

Inspiring and comforting, this book will give you the life-changing tools to uncover your personal ikigai.

It will show you how to leave urgency behind, find your purpose, nurture friendships and throw yourself into your passions. Bring meaning and joy to your every day with ikigai. ■

**Publisher:** Cornerstone  
**ISBN:** 9781786330895





# WORKING REMOTELY

## 10 ESSENTIAL TIPS HOW TO WORK FROM HOME EFFECTIVELY

Prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak, we might have imagined working from home as the opportunity of sleeping in late, lounging around in our pyjamas, and long leisurely lunches. However, as many of us are now having to work from home, even though this offers a great amount of flexibility, it is still a professional job – and it needs to be treated as such.

**A**s you have likely already discovered, working where you live is not as easy as it sounds, especially if you have other people in the space. So where practical and depending on the individual for many working at home, it is still important to have set hours, a dedicated workspace, avoid home-bound distractions, and actually dressing as if we're going to work, to help keep our mindset sharp and focused.

## TO TIPS ON HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY WORK FROM HOME

### 1 PLAN YOUR DAY

This will help you minimise your distractions and maximise your true productive times. Without supervision, even the most conscientious of us can lose focus. Setting a plan not only provides structure to the day, but it also helps you stay motivated. Start the day as you would if you worked in an office. Get up at the time you would usually wake up. Get dressed, and try to avoid online distractions once you sit down to work. You'll soon discover the best rhythm for your day. Then set realistic expectations for what you can accomplish on a daily basis. Make a plan and stick to it. Make sure you give yourself permission to have downtime. If you have to work extra hours, give yourself some extra free time later on to compensate.

### 2 GET ORGANISED

Maintaining balance is one of the most difficult aspects of working at home, because the work is always right there staring you in the face. To keep you on track (and not working too much or too little), organisation will be key. Get organised by creating schedules and to-do lists. At the start of each day, spend some time organising your to-do list. Be realistic by setting goals you know you can achieve, and never promise too much. Along with your to-do items, set yourself deadlines to get each one done. For example, if you've got a report to write, promise yourself you'll finish it before lunch, before moving onto the next item.

### 3 HAVE A SET WORKSPACE

If you can, designate a specific place for a home office. Store all work-related files, reference materials, supplies and computer or laptop there. Try not to make it near a bed or a TV. Avoid home distractions, and never underestimate the gravitational pull of the fridge and your comfy bed. Ideally, you should ensure that your office space emulates that of a true work environment.

### 4 SET OFFICE HOURS

Make sure to create a time slot for each of the day's activities. This helps with communicating to others when your work-time and down-time is. If you have small children, you may need to schedule your work around their naps and periods of home schooling, so that you can have a good period of time to work uninterrupted.

### 5 LIMIT THE NUMBER OF TIMES EMAILS ARE CHECKED

You might find yourself constantly checking email because you're worried about being out of the loop. However, while it's important to stay connected, spending too much time on email might distract you from more important tasks.

### 6 TURN OFF ALL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

In this social media-driven world, it's likely that you spend a significant portion of your spare time browsing Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. And because the home is therefore inherently capable of putting you in a social media mindset, it's important to remove it as a distraction while working. Unless it's essential for your work, stop checking Facebook, turn off Twitter notifications and avoid the temptation to browse your Instagram feed while working. Again, you can do this by promising yourself some time with them once the work is done.

### 7 KEEPING CONNECTED AND IN TOUCH

If you are now having to work remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic, your employer may already have provided the

technology – and the chances are you're using Zoom, Google Chat, Microsoft Teams and so on. However, if this is not the case and you're looking for tech to enable you to keep in contact with clients or customers, employees or suppliers, the main tools are Microsoft's Skype, Google's Duo and Apple's FaceTime, the last of which only works on Apple devices. Most phone-based messaging apps, including Signal, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, also offer video chat, which can be easier to use.

### 8 TAKE MICRO-BREAKS

When making your schedule, you might want to consider working in smaller chunks of time, and allowing yourself time to get up from the computer to stretch. This will really help you both physically and mentally. When you take micro-breaks, you'll likely to be more productive. Get some fresh air if you can. Open your windows to let in as much natural daylight and fresh air as possible.

### 9 DON'T GET DISTRACTED

One significant difference between home working and the traditional work environment is the presence of family members. While they may not be there all the time, you're bound to come into contact with them occasionally while working. Because of this, it's vital that you set boundaries. Make sure that you are focused on the best and proper use of your time during your work hours. Have the radio or some music on in the background as you might do at work.

### 10 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Working at home can lend itself to a sedentary lifestyle, not to mention the close proximity of the kitchen and refrigerator, making weight gain a problem. Make sure to schedule time for exercise, keep healthy nutritional snacks nearby to maintain your concentration levels, and remember to keep yourself hydrated at all times. ■



# FITNESS GOES DIGITAL

## TOP TECH TO KEEP YOU ACTIVE

Just because you can't go to the gym doesn't mean you can't stay fit! In fact, if you're working from home and not moving around as much, it's even more important to get some exercise.

You could start with the Nike Training Club (iPhone, Android). This free app has more than 190 workouts you can download, so you're bound to find something interesting.

The Fitbit Coach app (iPhone, Android) is another good option. It offers a variety of personalised video workouts based on your fitness level.

If video workouts aren't your thing, try Aaptiv (iPhone, Android). Just plug in your headphones or earbuds and follow the audio instructions for a quick workout. ■

# Meditation routine

## How to reduce stress and anxiety levels

Being at home all day can be stressful, even if you're surrounded by family. However, you could use this time to build a meditation routine or use it to reduce your stress and anxiety levels.

**M**editation has its roots in Buddhist philosophy and can help to reduce stress and fatigue. The basic premise of the mindfulness-based stress reduction approach is to learn to detach from anxious thoughts. This is achieved by practicing awareness, identifying tension in the body, understanding your thinking patterns, and learning how to deal with difficult emotions.

Some meditations only take ten minutes a day! To get started, check out Headspace (iPhone, Android), which is offering basic courses for free right now. You can also try Calm (iPhone, Android), which offers relaxing music, sleep casts and a variety of guided meditation packs.

You can also try mindfulness meditation for free via the Smiling Mind (iPhone, Android). The Mindfulness Foundations course is a great way for beginners to learn about mindfulness – just follow along with the program. ■

# GROUP VIDEO CALLING APPS

## STAYING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY



When you're done with your workday (and you should set strict guidelines for your work hours), you'll want to stay in touch with your close friends and family. How can you do that when you can't go out? Video calls to the rescue!

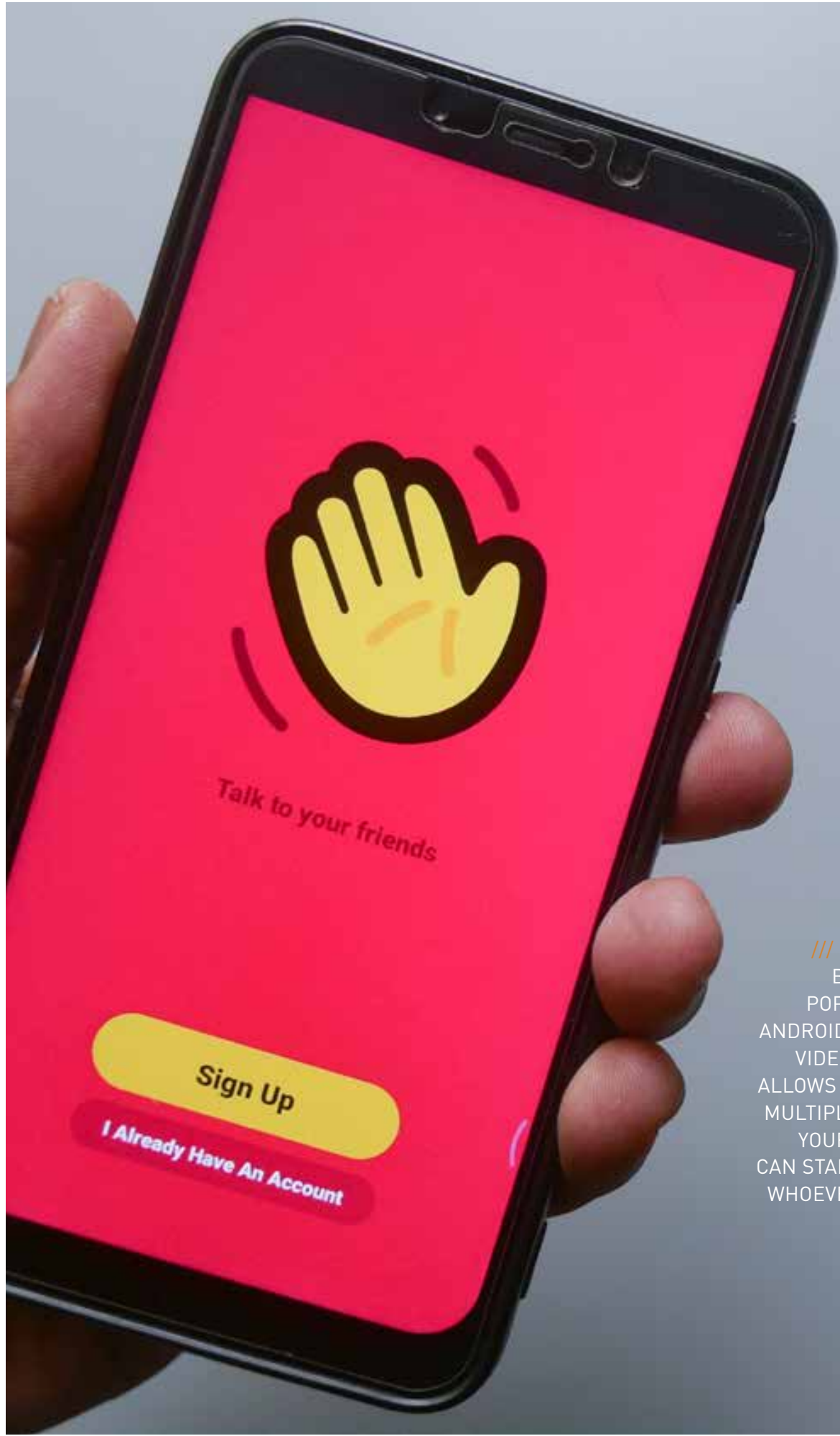
**I**f all your friends and family have an iPhone, there's nothing quite like FaceTime. You can add up to 32 people, and use Animojis or fun effects. It's one of our favourite apps for video-chatting.

If some of your friends have Android phones, Houseparty is becoming very popular (iPhone, Android). This unique video-calling app allows you to create multiple rooms with your friends. You can start a call with whoever's available.

You can also set common social hours with your friends on Houseparty. Pick a time – maybe during lunch or after dinner – at which you can all gather in the app and chat.

Other alternatives include Skype or Google Hangouts. The basic premise of both is the same, but there are a lot of differences between the two chat services in terms of features they offer. Despite being quite similar at first glance, the two services are very different. Google Hangouts is much simpler and less feature-packed than Skype. ■





/// HOUSEPARTY IS BECOMING VERY POPULAR (IPHONE, ANDROID). THIS UNIQUE VIDEO-CALLING APP ALLOWS YOU TO CREATE MULTIPLE ROOMS WITH YOUR FRIENDS. YOU CAN START A CALL WITH WHOEVER'S AVAILABLE



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

## RECOGNISING TIMES WHEN WE FEEL DOWN OR STRESSED

Mental health and well-being play a big part in how happy we are in our everyday lives, especially during this difficult time. It includes factors such as an individual's ability to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, and build strong and positive relationships with others.

/// TO KEEP THE BODY IN  
GOOD HEALTH IS A DUTY...  
OTHERWISE WE SHALL NOT  
BE ABLE TO KEEP OUR MIND  
STRONG AND CLEAR

Buddha

**I**t also involves areas of life such as feelings of satisfaction, optimism, self-esteem, having some control over one's life, having a purpose in life, and a sense of belonging and support. During this coronavirus outbreak, resulting in many of us staying at home or in self-isolation, it's important to consider how to connect with others during these difficult times.

#### **MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS**

Essential for our mental well-being is maintaining relationships with people we trust. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family via the telephone, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's people you normally see often or connecting with old friends.

#### **HELP THOSE AROUND YOU**

Think about how you could help those around you – it could make a big difference to them and can make you feel better too. Could you message a friend or family member nearby? Are there community groups that you could join to support others locally? Remember, it's important to do this in line with guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep yourself and everyone safe. And try to be accepting of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours.

#### **CONNECT WITH SUPPORT GROUPS**

It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation.

Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone, and sharing how you are feeling and the things you are doing to cope with family and friends can help them too. If you don't feel able to do that, there are people you can speak to via NHS recommended helplines, or you could find support groups online to connect with.

#### **PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACT**

Your physical health has a big impact on how you are feeling emotionally and mentally. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, and exercise inside where possible and outside once a day for up to one hour, by following the Government's guidelines.

#### **KEEPING ACTIVE AT HOME**

If you are able to go outside, consider walking or gardening (keeping the recommended two metres from others as outlined in the social distancing guidance). If you are staying at home, you can find free, easy ten-minute workouts from Public Health England or other exercise routines on YouTube and fitness apps. Sport England also has good tips for keeping active at home.

#### **SLEEP HYGIENE PRACTICES**

Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally

and physically, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment.

#### **THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL**

Many people find the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) concerning. However, some people may experience such intense anxiety that it becomes a problem. Try to focus on the things you can control, including where you get information from and actions to make yourself feel better prepared. It is okay to acknowledge some things that are outside of your control right now, but constant repetitive thoughts about the situation which lead you to feel anxious or overwhelmed are not helpful.

#### **REDUCE MEDIA TIME**

The continuous output of 24-hour news and constant social media updates can make you more worried. If it is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting to a couple of checks a day.

#### **POSITIVE NEW ROUTINES**

Life is changing for us all for a while. Whether you are staying at home or social distancing, you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt



and create positive new routines – try to engage in useful activities or meaningful activities such as reading. You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week.

#### **BOOST YOUR MOOD**

When you are anxious, lonely or low, you may do things that you usually enjoy less often, or not at all. Focusing on your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can boost your mood.

#### **TRY SOMETHING NEW**

If you can't do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, try to think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. There are lots of free tutorials and courses online, and people are coming up with innovative online solutions like online quizzes and streamed live music concerts.

#### **CONTROL AND PURPOSE**

Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose – think about things you want or need to do that you can still do at home. It could be watching a film, reading a book or learning something online. Play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, jigsaws or drawing and painting. Find something that works for you.

#### **RELAX AND FOCUS**

Taking time to relax and focusing on the present can help with difficult emotions and worries about the future, and can also improve well-being. Relaxation techniques such as meditation can help some people to deal with feelings of anxiety.

#### **GET NATURAL SUNLIGHT**

If you can, once a day, get outside. Spending time in green spaces can benefit both your mental and physical well-being. If you can't

get outside, you can try to still get these positive effects by spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air and get some natural sunlight, or get out into the garden if you can. Remember that social distancing guidelines enable you to go outside to exercise once a day as long as you keep two metres apart from others who are not members of your household group. ■

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