

Coping with Social Distancing, Quarantine & Isolation

It is more important than ever to separate yourself from others with the number of COVID-19 cases increasing. Spending days or weeks at home with limited resources, stimulation and social contact can take a toll on your mental health, so it's still critical to get the social support you need. Here are some strategies on how to cope:

Limit news consumption to reliable sources. It's important to obtain accurate and timely public health information (from sources like the CDC), but too much exposure to media coverage of the virus can lead to increased feelings of fear and anxiety. Try balancing time spent on news and social media with other activities unrelated to quarantine or isolation, such as reading, listening to music, or learning a new language.

Create and follow a daily routine. Maintaining a daily routine can help both adults and children preserve a sense of order and purpose in their lives despite the unfamiliarity of isolation and quarantine. Try to include regular daily activities, such as work, exercise or learning, even if done remotely.

Stay virtually connected with others. Your face-to-face interactions may be limited, but psychologists suggest using phone calls, texts, video chat and social media to access social support networks. If you're feeling sad or anxious, use these conversations as an opportunity to discuss your experience and reach out to those you know who are in a similar situation.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Get enough sleep, eat well and exercise in your home when you are physically capable of doing so. Try to avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with the stresses of isolation and quarantine.

Use psychological strategies to manage stress and stay positive. Examine your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Try not to catastrophize; instead focus on what you can do and accept the things you can't change. One way to do this is to keep a daily gratitude journal or download an app that delivers mindfulness and relaxation exercises.

*Tips adapted from <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

**For more resources visit EinsteinLiveWell.com,
click Programs, then click Caring for the Caregiver**



So, you've heard of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to keep in touch, and you more likely than not have already tried FaceTiming or Skyping family members to keep in touch while practicing social distancing, but there are some other fun and creative ways to keep in touch with your social support network that you may not already be aware of:

Houseparty App: A face-to-face social network where you can connect with the people you care about the most. The app alerts you when your friends are "in the house" and ready to chat so you can jump right into the conversation. You can even play games with your friends in the app!

Zoom: This app/website is offering free virtual meetings to help you connect with your social circle. You can invite up to 100 people to join you on video! Have a virtual happy hour, sing happy birthday, or just have a check in!

Words With Friends App: Exercise your brain and challenge your friends and family members to a game of scrabble or discover new friends with random opponent matching.

Boggle With Friends App: Bring the fun of family game night to your phone! Challenge your friends, family, or new opponents to spell out the most words before the clock runs out!