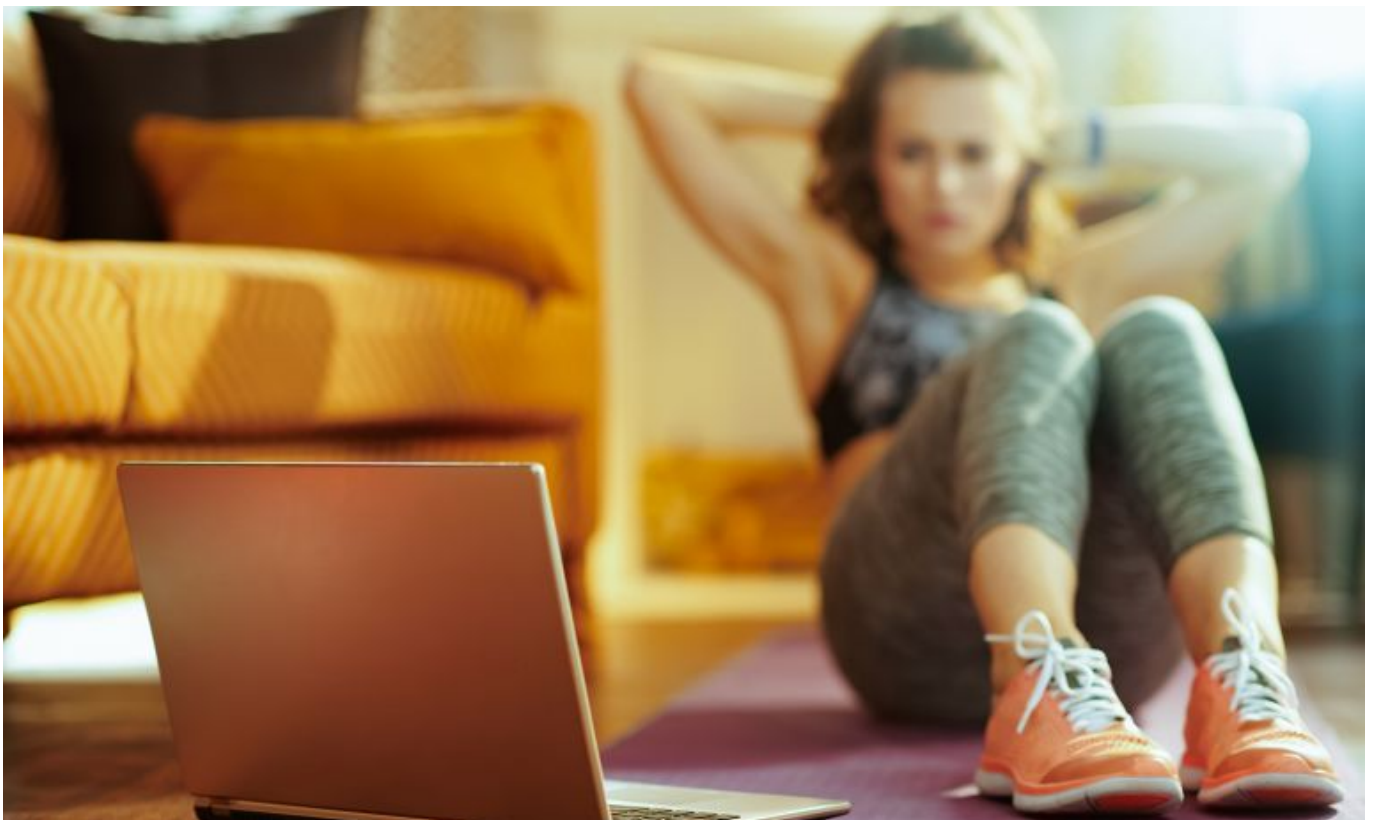


Exercise During Coronavirus: Tips for Staying Active

You may be finding it tougher to exercise while under lockdown or a stay-at-home order. But you can still find ways to make movement a part of your daily routine.



With most of our daily movement restricted during the coronavirus pandemic, it can be difficult to keep up an exercise routine. If you enjoy fitness classes, you're probably missing the camaraderie and the atmosphere of the gym. And even if you are getting some movement in, you might be feeling frustrated that you're not at your usual level of activity. But now, more than ever, exercise is important. It can have a huge impact on [anxiety you're feeling due to coronavirus](#) and help ease stress and [depression](#).

It's normal to feel stir crazy, but also less motivated to exercise since your routine has been

turned upside down. But don't be too hard on yourself. Even a small amount of movement, like a walk around the block, can make a difference. Here are some tips to stay active even during quarantine or a stay-at-home order that are doable whether you're just starting to exercise or a seasoned fitness buff.

Can exercise help protect you from coronavirus?

While being fit won't prevent you from catching the virus, it does have many other protective effects. Physical activity helps improve all aspects of your health, including boosting your immune system. [It also reduces stress and anxiety and improves mood](#), which in turn helps you [sleep better](#) and prevents burnout. Exercise also releases endorphins, chemicals in your brain that revitalize your mind and body. If you use exercise to keep up your energy and spirits in trying times such as these, you might be less inclined to turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, like drinking too much, which does wear down your immune system.

Tips for getting the exercise you need during COVID-19

Get outside if you can

Check the latest guidelines from your government on the specifics for your area. Take a walk, jog, or ride a bike outside if you can—just maintain a safe distance from others. Gardening and yardwork are also good options. The fresh air and sunshine will benefit your mental health as well.

Make it a social activity

Including the people you're quarantined with can make exercising more fun. Play an active game like tag or hopscotch with your kids or turn on some music and dance together. You can also use your neighborhood listserv or sites like Nextdoor to coordinate fun things to see on your walks with your neighbors. Plan a social distance scavenger hunt or wear Halloween costumes.

Track your workouts

Using fitness trackers, apps, or even just keeping a journal can help you stay accountable and motivated. Seeing your progress and your ability to keep active during this difficult time

will give you a sense of accomplishment and an emotional boost to keep going.

“Sneak” movement into your routine

Even though we’re mostly housebound, you can still find ways to incorporate movement into your day. Try to think of physical activity as a lifestyle choice, rather than as a designated event. This may help sustain you in times like these, when your schedule has been upended.

- **Use your chores.** Household tasks like scrubbing, sweeping, dusting, and vacuuming can all add up when done at a brisk pace. They also work the muscles in your arms and legs.
- **Exercise during commercial breaks.** Many of us are watching more TV. Make the commercials and credits count by adding in some squats, jumping jacks, push-ups, or lunges.
- **Take advantage of pauses during the day.** Take advantage of times when you’re waiting for something to finish or start. You can fire off some arm exercises or practice some yoga poses while the dinner is in the oven or during those 15 minutes before a Zoom meeting.
- **Move around the house more.** Walk around while you’re making calls. Take an extra lap or two around the house if you have to put something away. If you have stairs, go up and down them a few times throughout the day.

Take advantage of technology

Many personal trainers and gyms are offering virtual sessions and classes, which can help keep you accountable and give you a social connection. For free workouts, YouTube is a great resource. You can find virtually any type of exercise at any workout length or intensity you’re looking for. There are also many apps, both paid and free, that offer guided workouts and routines.

Turn it into a game

Activity video games like those from Wii and Kinect and Dance Dance Revolution can help you get your heart rate up while staying at home. There are also many options for “exergames” that simulate dancing, skateboarding, soccer, bowling, or tennis. These can be great alternatives if you miss the real thing.

How much exercise do I need?

Especially during periods of [uncertainty and fear](#), it's important to remember that something is always better than nothing. Going for a walk around the block will not only stretch your legs but help clear your head as well. It might even inspire you to walk a little further the next day.

That said, the current recommendations for adults are to aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity every week. That's about 30 minutes of movement, 5 times per week. It's also okay to break it up. Two 15-minute workouts or three 10-minute workouts can benefit you just as much. A shorter interval might even suit you better now since that's about the length of many workout videos or the time it takes to do a round of exercises.

Staying motivated to exercise

It can be difficult to [stay motivated to exercise](#) in the best of times. The added disruption and stress from the coronavirus pandemic only makes it harder. That said, there are things you can do to support yourself.

Blueprint a plan for success

Put it on your schedule. Just as sticking to a routine helps you maintain a sense of normalcy, scheduling your workouts may prevent you from procrastinating *or avoiding* them.

Follow your body's rhythms. Since you might have a more flexible schedule right now, try to plan your workouts for when you have the most energy. Taking a short exercise break during your workday might re-vitalize you, for example.

Use your social networks. Announcing your plans to your partner or social group, online or off, will help you stick to your goals. If you're alone, post your workouts on social media to motivate others. If they give you positive feedback, this will give you a boost for your next session as well.

Reward yourself

Our current situation may have made it difficult for you to partake in your favorite forms of exercise. While you're making do, it's normal to feel like working out isn't as enjoyable,

maybe even frustrating. If this is the case, don't beat yourself up. Instead, try focusing on how much better you'll feel after you move a little. It also helps to give yourself an extra treat. Take a long, hot bubble bath, for example, make a fruit smoothie, or call a friend or family member.



Get more help

[Blogilates Workout Videos](#) - Workouts to provide general cardio benefit and to achieve improvements in specific parts of the body. (Blogilates)

[Leading Lady Fitness](#) - Low impact 10 minute at-home workouts. (StephWilberding.com)

Daily Workouts Fitness Trainer app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) - Exercise Coach for Women & Men. (Daily Workout Apps LLC)

Zombies, Run! app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) - An ultra-immersive running game and audio adventure. (Six to Start)

Yoga for Beginners | Mind+Body app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) - Daily workout & fitness studio. (Fast Builder Limited)

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