



## Six Tips to Maintain Mental Well-Being During Social Isolation

Social isolation and loneliness have become widespread problems in the United States, posing a serious threat to our mental and physical health. Social isolation is the lack of relationships with others and little to no social support or contact. It is associated with risk even if people don't feel lonely.

Loneliness is feeling alone or disconnected from others. It is feeling like you do not have meaningful or close relationships or a sense of belonging. It reflects the difference between a person's actual and desired level of connection. This means that even a person with a lot of friends can feel lonely. Research suggests that loneliness impacts some groups more than others, including people with a chronic disease like chronic kidney disease (CKD) or end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

### 1 Keep a Routine

One of the best things that you can do to preserve your mental well-being is to stick to a routine. For example, if you're used to going to the gym before work but your routine changes, try to get an at-home workout in before you start your day. There are many online programs and videos available. Maintaining your daily routine can help keep your mood as lifted as possible and prevent boredom and distress from taking over.

If you have school-aged children, then creating a routine for them is also important. Implement a structured schedule for them. Whether they are practicing virtual learning with their schools or if they are just at home, they will know what your expectations are. Try to limit screen time as much as possible, and incorporate learning activities throughout the day.

### 2 Get a Good Night's Sleep

This goes hand-in-hand with sticking to a routine. If you do not have a good sleep routine, it can be easy to go to bed or sleep in later than you typically would. Breaking your normal sleep routine can have negative effects on your overall mental well-being, so try to stick to your typical sleep schedule.

### 3 Spend Time Outside

Try to get outside periodically throughout the day. If you're working, stand up from your desk and try to take a quick walk outside after lunch, or step outside into your backyard or walk around the block.

Being outside also helps to promote higher levels of vitamin D, which the body makes when skin is directly exposed to the sun. Many people are deficient in vitamin D. Exercising outside can be a great way to correct that. If you are a dialysis patient, your body may process Vitamin D differently. You may be given medicine during treatment to help your body absorb Vitamin D. Be sure to wear sunscreen if you will be in the sun for more than 15 minutes.

### 4 Step Away for a Moment

If you are feeling isolated or lonely, you may easily become overwhelmed. Try not to focus on the isolation. Limit your social media usage and avoid "doom scrolling" or watching constant negative news programming. Consider checking for updates once in the morning and once at night. Know your limits and step away when needed.

### 5 Leverage the Power of Technology

Feeling lonely is common. Fortunately, advancements in technology have made it easy to connect with others without having to be in physical contact with or in close proximity to them. Use technology to reach out to loved ones to reduce feelings of loneliness and anxiety, and to supplement your social life if you're unable to see people in person.

### 6 Practice Positivity and Gratitude

Taking five minutes a day to write down the things you're grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and can help you change your mindset from negative to positive. It's important to build time into your routine to practice positivity or express gratitude to improve your mindset and boost your mood.

For more information about social isolation and loneliness please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/loneliness.htm>

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:

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