



## **COVID-19 FREE Wellness Survival Guide**

By: Marcus Allen

The Coronavirus pandemic has introduced a novel challenge to most people around the world. Despite lockdowns and quarantines, people need to find ways to maintain their personal wellbeing without their traditional resources readily available. So, what does one's wellbeing include? It includes a whole host of things one may not actively think about on a normal basis. Wellbeing can be either physical or mental; both are important and somewhat dependent on each other.

Dr. Russell G. Buhr, a pulmonologist at UCLA Health, said, "Trying to preserve some sense of normalcy is really important for people's well-being." Though people can't go about their normal routines, they can simulate it. They should go to bed and get up around the same time they normally would. They should also eat and workout at the same time. All these small things help maintain rhythm and prevent the feeling of just floating. If one finds this too difficult, create a new routine. Even write it out and place it somewhere visible. This posting serves as a constant reminder making it harder to deviate.

On top of creating a new routine, mindfulness is crucial in bolstering one's mental wellbeing. With the coronavirus creating chaos and breaking news every day, it feels as if the world is spinning out of control. With such isolation and uncertainty, stress, anxiety, and depression have skyrocketed. Meditation can be a valuable technique used to gain control of the mind and thoughts. According to Steph Auteri, "In recent years, research on this ancient practice has shown that meditation may improve immune response, and also decrease stress and depression." Meditation is a holistic practice considering the helps not only ease stress and depression but also improves the immune response. And, a robust immune system is the best line of defense against the coronavirus.

Many may ask, "How do you meditate?" The answer to this is there is no wrong way to meditate. Meditation is a very personal practice specific to each person. The basis of meditation is breathing; the goal is to slow the breathing down by taking a long inhale paired with a slow exhale. Another key is being aware of your body and the space surrounding you. Besides these two commonalities, meditation can be whatever you make it to be. One can do classic seated, standing, or laying down meditation bringing attention to his or her breath and body. A few apps that have guided meditations are headspace (<https://www.headspace.com>) and calm (<https://www.calm.com>). Guided meditations walk through the meditation process telling him/her when to breathe and how much. The apps have numerous different meditations; so don't be reluctant to give many a try to find the right one for you. Headspace is currently letting people access free meditations, mindfulness exercises, and sleep experiences. In addition, the company is offering free access to the app's premium content to healthcare professionals. Calm also has a free version of the app available.

Though mental wellbeing is essential, it can't be discussed without physical wellbeing. Not only does exercise and movement alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression, but it also keeps you healthy and feeling good. It lowers blood pressure, improves blood flow, boosts your levels of good cholesterol, and so much more. As many know, gyms, which are most people's main exercise outlet, are closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. So, how do people stay fit when the gyms are closed? All it takes is a little creativity!

One can simulate lifting weights in a number of ways. The first and easiest way is to do bodyweight workouts; this simply requires space. The following resource: <https://www.self.com/gallery/bodyweight-exercises-you-can-do-at-home> has 53 bodyweight exercises along with detailed explanations and video demonstrations. For those who want to add weight, several different household items can function as weights. For instance, a backpack or a gallon jug of water is practical when performing squats or lunges. People can find a list of 31 household items that can be used for exercise at <https://cardiosmash.com/31-household-items-you-can-use-to-workout/>. Another resource is the 7 Minute Workout: Fitness App. It provides professionally designed workouts for free. The workouts have audio and video instruction; it is like having a coach at your fingertips.

Lastly, there are a plethora of outdoor activities people can partake in and still practice social distancing. One can walk or bike around the neighborhood, hike at a nearby state park, or walk the stairs at a nearby building. These are just to name a few; the possibilities are endless. Participating in an outdoor activity has numerous benefits. It provides a source of cardiovascular exercise, which enhances your endurance and decreases your risk of cardiovascular disease. Being surrounded by nature not only encourages a peaceful state of mind, but it also allows one to soak up some vitamin D, a critical vitamin needed for a healthy immune system, from the sun.

So, take advantage of your town or city by enjoying the nature unique to it. These activities are all free and available all the time.

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