

VOLUNTEER WELLBEING GUIDE

Keeping well and connected during COVID-19

Last updated: 21st April 2020 // Author: Laura Ambler /OXFAM



OXFAM



**GROWS VEGETABLES
FILLS CLASSROOMS
BUILDS WELLS
EMPOWERS WOMEN
FIGHTS POVERTY**



Photo credit: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam

THE ONGOING COVID-19 PANDEMIC has meant that Oxfam volunteers are temporarily unable to fulfil their roles and are instead at spending lots of time at home. Concerns around your own, family or friends' health, childcare challenges and limited physical and social contact can expose us to isolation and stress. As a result, it is of upmost importance that we look after our physical and mental health during this time.

This pack includes a variety of resources, tips and ideas to help boost your wellbeing and keep you connected to the Oxfam community.

For up to date information and guidance regarding COVID-19:

Please [refer to the government's dedicated web page](#).

For up to date medical advise, please [refer to the NHS' dedicated web page](#).

You can find an overview of Oxfam's [response to COVID-19 here](#).

In this pack you will find:

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“There has never been a more important time to prioritise how we’re looking after ourselves and each other – our wellbeing and self-care as well as caring for others”

- DANNY SRISKANDARAJAH, OXFAM GB CEO





KEEPING IN TOUCH

Join the Volunteer Community Facebook Group

Whilst our shops are closed, you can keep in touch with us and your fellow volunteers through our new Volunteer Community Facebook group. This will be one of our main spaces for staff to share updates on our work, activity ideas and volunteer events for you to get involved with during shop closure. This space will also enable you to get to know some of your fellow volunteers across the country and share ideas on how we can come together over the next few months.

[You can request to join the group via this link.](#)

Give us a call

If you have any questions or thoughts you want to run by us during this time, we are here to listen. Our dedicated supporter relations team are available to call from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday UK time via 0300 200 1333 .

Outbound calls

Over the coming weeks, our team will call as many volunteers as we can for an informal check in. If you haven't yet received a call but would like to speak to us, you can always do so using the details above.

Inspiring stories



Image credit: Laura Ambler / OXFAM

[Rainbow pictures springing up as a symbol of hope across the country](#)— BBC News, 2020



Photo credit: @CaptainTomMoore, Twitter

[99 year old war veteran raises over £18m for NHS by walking around his garden](#)—Justgiving, 2020

Introducing the dancing hand wash!

Oxfam has been leading the way providing clean water and sanitation to the world's poorest and vulnerable people for decades – so in that spirit check out [Oxfam's all-dancing video](#) to encourage hand washing!



MAINTAINING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING



Photo credit: Katie Richardson / Oxfam

Spending lots of time at home can blur work and personal boundaries and requires a lot of self-discipline. This combined with being unable to go out, see friends/family, additional care responsibilities or being isolated may have a negative impact on mental health. Here are some top tips for promoting positive mental wellbeing during whilst spending more time at home:

Create structure

Structure helps to create boundaries around work, home and relaxation, which boosts productivity. Create a routine or timetable to follow to keep up your focus and motivation.

Set realistic goals

Set yourself regular, realistic goals for outlining what you seek to achieve each day.

Make time for healthy practices.

During the lockdown, it's easy to spend a significant portion of each day in front of a computer and/or television screen. Make sure that you allow time for proper meal breaks and make the most of your opportunity to leave your home once a day for exercise, fresh air and sunshine (weather permitting!).

Keeping in touch with others

Keep in regular contact with your family, friends and Oxfam peers for support

Communication channels

Having communication from multiple channels can feel overwhelming, choose one or two channels and tell colleagues how you prefer to be communicated with. Add it to your email signature.

New routines

Try to create a new daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself, include some daily exercise and relaxation. Tips can be found [here](#)

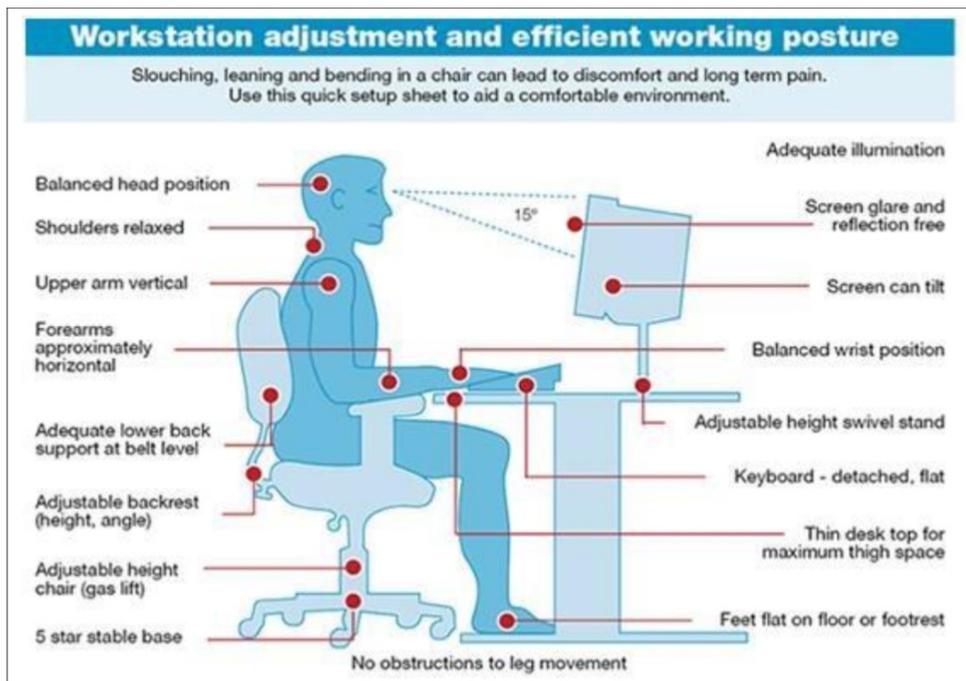
Information

Rumour and speculation can fuel anxiety. Having access to good quality information about the virus can help you feel more in control. Use local government advice.

MAINTAINING PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Whilst spending more time at home, it's important to keep your body moving to maintain your physical health.

If you find you are spending more time sat at your computer, ensure you position yourself ergonomically using the diagram below to prevent strains:



KEEPING FIT

There are lots of great free resources available online to help get you moving, no matter your age, ability or enthusiasm level! Here are some of our top recommendations:

- Internet sensation Joe Wicks has a range of free workouts available [via his Youtube channel](#). These include sessions tailored for children, senior citizens, and for those with access to minimal space and equipment.
- Workouts tailored to suit parents can be found at [Movement for mums](#)
- There are many fantastic free Yoga and stretching video classes available on Youtube, [such as this one](#).
- Don't forget that you are permitted to make one trip outside of your home for exercise a day, so long as you do not have any symptoms of corona virus. You can read more on [the government's advise here](#).

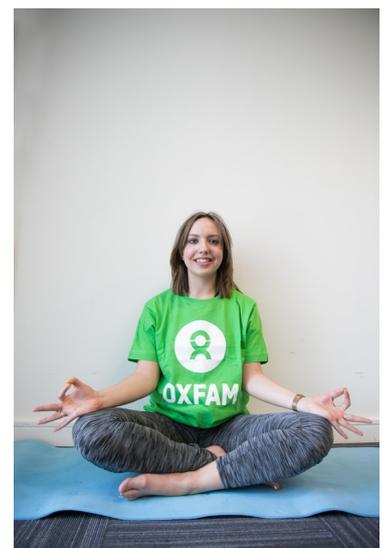


Photo credit: Katie Richardson / OXFAM

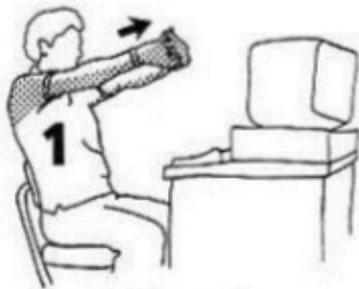
COMPUTER STRETCHES

If you find you are regularly sitting at your computer for long periods of time whilst at home, try these stretches to reduce stiffness and improve your circulation:

Computer & Desk Stretches

Approximately 4 Minutes

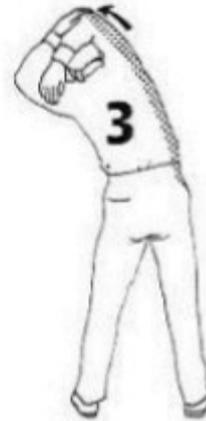
Sitting at a computer for long periods often causes neck and shoulder stiffness and occasionally lower back pain. Do these stretches every hour or so throughout the day, or whenever you feel stiff. Photocopy this and keep it in a drawer. Also, be sure to get up and walk around the office whenever you think of it. You'll feel better!



10-20 seconds
2 times



10-15 seconds



8-10 seconds
each side



15-20 seconds



3-5 seconds
3 times



10-12 seconds
each arm



10 seconds



10 seconds



8-10 seconds
each side



8-10 seconds
each side



10-15 seconds
2 times



Shake out hands
8-10 seconds

SEEKING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Domestic Abuse Support

For those in the UK, the government has confirmed that anyone who is at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse, is still able to leave their home and seek refuge. If you are experiencing domestic abuse and are based in the UK, the following services are the safest and most able to support you. It's important that they know you need help now or may need help in the future. **In an emergency, always contact the police by calling 999.**

- **Women's Aid** - <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline** – 0808 200 0247
- **Your local rape crisis centre** – <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rapecrisis-centre/> 0808 802 9999
- **Refuge Charity** for women and children against domestic abuse <https://www.refuge.org.uk> 0808 2000 247
- **Contact your local police** on 101
- **Child Line:** 0800 1111

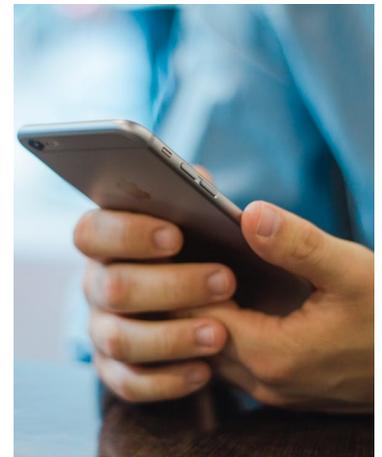


Photo credit: Adrianna Calvo / PEXELS

Mental health services

There are a number of organisations who offer specialised support to those experiencing mental health issues due to COVID-19 or for any other reason. A summary of contact details for some of these organisations can be found below.

- **Samaritans:** call 116 123 or visit <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- **SANE:** call 0300 304 7000
- **Happiful** mental wellbeing advice: visit <https://happiful.com/>
- **Directory of counsellors:** visit <https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/>
- **Mental Health Foundation:** visit <https://mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- **Mind Resources:** Visit <https://www.mind.org.uk/> or call their Infoline: 0300 123 3393 or Legal line: 0300 466 6463

Money Advice

- **The Money Advice Service:** visit <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en> or call 0800 138 7777 or Tynetalk: 18001 0800 915 4622
- **Stepchange** debt charity: visit <https://www.stepchange.org/> or call 0800 138 1111
- **The money charity:** visit <https://themoneycharity.org.uk/>
- **National Debtline:** visit <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/> or call 0808 808 4000

Home Schooling

- **Wide Open School:** Free advice and support for home schooling via <https://wideopenschool.org/>
- **Tips on home schooling** via <https://happiful.com/5-ways-to-support-your-mentalwellbeing-while-homeschooling/>
- **Oxfam Education Facebook** for activities linked to our work, <https://www.facebook.com/oxfameducation/>



Housing support

- **Shelter:** visit <https://www.shelter.org.uk/> or call 0808 800 4444
- **Citizens Advice:** visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>
- **Housing Justice:** visit <https://housingjustice.org.uk/> or call 0808 800 4444

Drugs and Alcohol

- **FRANK** (Drug and Alcohol): visit <https://www.talktofrank.com/> or call 0300 123 6600
- **Alcohol Change:** visit <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>
- **Alcoholics Anonymous:** visit <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/> or call 0800 9177 650
- **Drinkline:** visit 0300 123 1110
- **Release:** Drug addiction advice and support <https://www.release.org.uk/> 020 7324 2989

ACTIVITIES TO KEEP YOU BUSY

Organisations and institutions around the world have been finding ways to open their doors to the public remotely whilst encouraging everyone to stay at home. There are lots of great opportunities to take advantage of which will help keep you feeling busy, educated and entertained!

- **Virtual visit to a zoo** <https://www.chesterzoo.org/> or <https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/webcams/>
- **Free full length plays** from the National Theatre every Thursday via [their Youtube channel](#)
- **Free video calls** with friends for up to 40 minutes at a time [with Zoom](#)
- **Cambridge University Press** is offering free articles and papers [via this link](#)
- **Cultural virtual tours** from google <https://artsandculture.google.com/>
- **Free cookery classes** with Antoni Porowski from Queer Eye <https://www.instagram.com/antoni/>
- **Free music concerts** from Birmingham Symphony Hall <https://www.thsh.co.uk/whats-on/season/watch-party>
- **Mediation** – 20 minutes for reducing stress and anxiety <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlr3RsUWrdo>

TOUR THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSEUMS FROM HOME

Worried about missing out on your cultural fix while in lockdown? Then worry not as numerous museums and art galleries across the world offer the chance to take virtual tours to view their collections from the comfort of your living room! From the Egyptian mummies at the [British Museum](#), the Dutch masters at [Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum](#), the splendours of the [Hermitage in St Petersburg](#), or Dallas's [Frontier of Flight Museum](#).

There is sure to be something that will tick your box.

You can even make it into a social occasion, using the share screen functions on Zoom or Skype to go gallery hopping with friends and family.



Photo credit: Riccardo Bresciani / PEXELS



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