

COVID-19 Can be Stressful – Exercise!

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful. Fear and anxiety about an outbreak can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in people. Coping with this stress the correct way can make you stronger! Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include fear, worry, changes in sleep or eating patterns, worsening of chronic health or mental conditions, and an increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Ways to cope with stress

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Instead, connect with others by talking to people you trust about your concerns and feelings.
- Take care of your body.
 - **EXERCISE!** Unwind by doing activities you enjoy and get plenty of sleep.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Eat health, well-balanced meals and avoid alcohol and drugs.

Why Physical Activity?

Physical activity improves overall health, can reduce the risk of various chronic diseases, and can make people feel better, function better, and sleep better. Some health benefits start immediately after activity, and even short bouts of physical activity are beneficial.

Why Regular Rest Periods and Break Time Exercise?

Rest periods give the body time to recover from work. Breaktime exercises and stretches strengthen the body. Pay attention to signs of discomfort and fatigue on the job; these are warning signs from your body. As muscles tire during a work task, slouching can lead to poor posture, sloppy, uncontrolled movements, and injuries. Rest breaks mean recovery for the body.

What to Do?

- During a job task, **take micro-breaks** lasting 10-15 seconds every ten minutes.
- **Take mini breaks** lasting 3-5 minutes every thirty to sixty minutes. These short breaks give the body a rest, reduce discomfort, and improve your performance.
- **Alternate your work activities** and postures throughout the day.
- Rotating tasks may seem inefficient, but the rest and use of different muscle groups increases energy and maintains productivity.
- If you work at a single workstation and job task all day, **move into different postures** while you work: first standing, then standing with one foot resting on a stool, then sitting.
- **Stretches** help you warm-up before work and relax during breaks; they increase flexibility and boost blood flow and oxygen to muscles.
- **Perform stretches slowly and gently**; avoid extreme postures and stop stretching if you feel pain or discomfort.

COVID-19 Exercising Resources:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/be-active-during-covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>