

## Recreation and Leisure for Seniors during COVID-19

To be healthy and to feel well, it is important to take time for recreation and leisure. With restrictions on leaving home and maintaining social distance, some of us may have lost our recreation activities and be searching for a meaningful way to spend the day. Below are some suggestions for ways that you can spend your time and stay engaged while staying home and keeping safe.

### Cognitive Activities

It is important to keep our brains engaged and challenged! Not only do cognitive activities maintain our brain health, but they can help to reduce stress and anxiety and serve as an escape from life's troubles.



1. **Read a book:** Looking for some inspiration? Many book stores offer must-read lists and also offer digital versions of books.  
<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/30-books-that-everyone-should-read-least-once-their-lives.html>
2. **Try a word puzzle**
  - a. Crossword  
<https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword>
  - b. Word search  
<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/games/word-search>
3. **Knit/crochet**
  - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vm6oaYzHyA>
  - b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egp4NRhIMDg>
4. **Learn something new:** There are many different free websites and videos available that can increase your knowledge on a subject of interest. Try watching at TEDx video or perhaps learn a new language.
5. **Try a new hobby or rediscover a past interest**

## Physical Activities

Exercise is a great way to reduce stress, improve sleep, and to keep ourselves healthy! Although we cannot go to the gym or attend group exercise classes, there are still plenty of ways to keep active while in self-isolation. Remember to go at your own pace, take breaks as needed, and always consult your doctor if you are experiencing pain during activity.



1. **Go for a walk:** This may be a walk around your block (as long as there are not many people around), a walk to the end of your driveway or even a walk around your apartment during a commercial break.
2. **Clean:** Cleaning is a great way to tidy up and to increase your heart rate. Think about how many steps you take while vacuuming!
3. **Stretch:** Stretching will help to increase and maintain joint mobility. It can also increase circulation and decrease joint stiffness.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vHN-1qPg\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vHN-1qPg_Q)
4. Try a gentle exercise video (remember that exercise should never feel painful and to go at your own pace!)

**Emotional:** Emotional programs are an opportunity for self-expression. With changes to our daily routines, it is common to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or uncomfortable. Emotional programs allow you to get in touch with what you are feeling and provide you with a healthy outlet.



1. **Listen to your favorite song:** Why not turn on the radio and listen to some music, or use a music streaming service like YouTube or Spotify to select songs that are special to you.
2. **Journal:** There are many different types of journaling. Unsure where to start? Try using journaling prompts.
  - a. Self-reflection journaling  
<https://psychcentral.com/blog/30-journaling-prompts-for-self-reflection-and-self-discovery/>

- b. Bullet journaling  
<https://medium.com/@melodywilding/bullet-journaling-for-beginners-and-impatient-unartistic-people-like-me-6efd7ee97f0e>
  - c. Gratitude journaling  
<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-journal/>
3. **Bird watch** (from your window): Although we may feel trapped inside, we can still enjoy nature from our windows. Take some time to look outside and make note of the local wildlife that is around.
  4. **Paint/ draw:** Just getting started or looking for inspiration? There are many how to videos available on YouTube or Pinterest.

## Social Activities

It is natural for humans to require socialization and opportunities to build connections with others. Social distancing has many of us feeling isolated and lonely. Although our previous ways of connecting with others may not be available, there are a variety of ways to fulfil the need to connect with others.

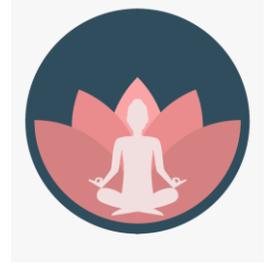


1. **Phone a friend or family**
  - a. Catch up with friends and family.
  - b. Take a virtual tour: Many zoos, aquariums and tourist attractions have created virtual tours. Why not phone a friend and each of you grab a computer and explore a new site together:
    - i. Museum of Natural History:  
<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour/current-exhibits>
    - ii. Ripley's Aquarium:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8ffeGDJXyg>
    - iii. Eiffel Tower: <http://www.3dmekanlar.com/en/eiffel-tower.html>
2. **Video call:** There are many great programs available that provide video calls, like Skype, Zoom, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, etc.

3. **Volunteer call programs:** Looking to reach out to a volunteer for a chat? Try out one of the programs that pairs a senior with a volunteer for an opportunity to socialize.

## Spiritual Activities

Spirituality is a person's attitude, perspective and state of being; it provides purpose to our lives. For some, spirituality may mean religion, and for others it is taking time for themselves and listening to their bodies.



1. **Mindful activities:** Any activity can be mindful. Take the time to be in the moment and stay focused on the task at hand. If your mind wanders, bring it back to the present, and stay focused.
2. **Meditation:** Meditation can be quite challenging. It can be difficult to focus the brain on the present moment and to quiet external thoughts. There are a variety of different meditation techniques, from staying quiet and focusing on breathing to concentrating on a script. It is important to find a technique that works for you.
  - a. Body scan  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2UFYXYQHjA>
  - b. Guided meditation  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar\\_W4jSzOIM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar_W4jSzOIM)

## Live Programming

1. **Zoom Tai Chi:** Tuesday mornings at 10 am, please join Daniel Pikelin for a Tai Chi class using Zoom. Zoom is a great way to connect with others and take part in a group program virtually. You will have the option of sharing your camera and microphone if you would like the instructor and other participants to see you, or you can hide your image and mute your microphone to participate anonymously. For more information or to receive the link and instructions for set up, please email Jonathan Kirby, Manager, Community Wellness, at [jonathan.kirby@sprintseniorcare.org](mailto:jonathan.kirby@sprintseniorcare.org).