



5 Steps to Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

Physical and emotional health are important to our overall well-being. Here are **5 steps to help you maintain a healthy lifestyle**.



STEP 1: Stay Connected With Others

Keeping in contact with family and friends can improve your mood and help you feel supported in day-to-day life. Here are things you can try to stay connected with others:

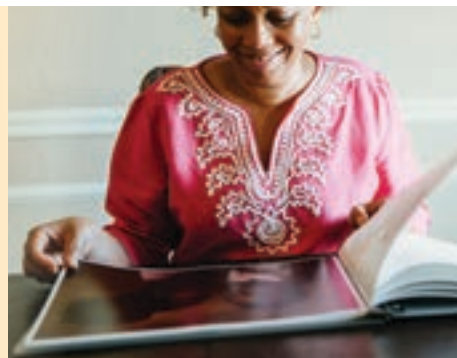
- **Call or text someone**
- **Invite friends or family over for a catch-up** if you can (subject to local and national government guidance)
- **Reconnect with an old friend** through email
- **Use social media and Facebook groups** to share ideas (e.g. funny videos)
- **Use video chat** to keep in touch with people that it's harder to see in person
- **Create a group chat** and text each other throughout the day
- **Other** (write your thoughts here): _____



STEP 2: Create Your Happy Space

While you are at home, **there are simple things you can try** to make your environment feel more pleasant and peaceful, like:

- Light a candle
- Listen to music
- Control the lighting, such as opening shades to let sun in or dimming lights for a quieter feel
- Put photos of family and friends where you can see them
- Make a list of people and things you are grateful for
- Other (write your ideas here): _____



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STEP 3: Nourish Yourself

Doing your best each day to take care of your mind and body may help give you strength.

Check off the things you will try to include in your daily life:

EAT WELL

- ☐ Follow advice on eating well from my healthcare professional
- ☐ Eat a healthy, balanced diet¹
- ☐ Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables which provide vitamins, minerals and fibre¹
- ☐ Eat a variety of high-fibre foods, such as wholegrain bread, brown rice and oats¹
- ☐ Choose a variety of proteins, including meat, fish, eggs and pulses¹
- ☐ Limit sugar and alcohol¹
- ☐ Try to reduce the amount of processed meat and red meat I eat, and avoid 'fast food' restaurants¹
- ☐ Other (write here): _____



REST

- ☐ Avoid caffeine for at least 6 hours before bedtime²
- ☐ Try to get up and go to bed at the same time each day²
- ☐ Spend time relaxing before I go to bed, such as by having a warm bath, reading or listening to music²
- ☐ Allow myself to rest during the day²
- ☐ Keep my bedroom quiet and dim for a restful night's sleep²
- ☐ Other (write here): _____



EXERCISE

- ☐ Check with my doctor first before starting any new exercises²
- ☐ Go for a short walk every day²
- ☐ When I'm ready, try gradually increasing the distance I walk²
- ☐ Remind myself that some days I will feel more energetic than others, and that's OK
- ☐ Other (write here): _____



RELAX

- ☐ Focus on slowing my breath (e.g. breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth, breathing more slowly and deeply with each breath)³
- ☐ Listen to soothing music³
- ☐ Use mindfulness to change the way I think, by focusing on the present moment rather than the future or past³
- ☐ Practise my talents (e.g. play piano, create art, sing)
- ☐ Take some time for myself to enjoy hobbies
- ☐ Download free apps, such as Headspace, to help me practise mindfulness and feel more calm
- ☐ Other (write here): _____



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STEP 4: Control What You Can

You may be faced with things in the world that are out of your control, but you can still control daily activities in your life, like:

- **Plan to Disconnect.** Do your best to follow the news at specific times, such as in the morning or midday, and not before bed to help you feel calm before falling asleep.⁴
- **Take Advantage of the Time.** If you find yourself at home more often, you may find it gives you time in your day that you may not normally have because of other responsibilities. Use this time to do things you enjoy, like seeing friends and family or taking up a new hobby.⁵
- **Choose Your Mindset**

I can't do all the things I used to ➞ It will take some time to adapt to my new way of life

I am confused by reading too much online ➞ I will listen to reliable sources, such as my doctor, to get the facts

I am afraid ➞ I have been afraid before and got through it



STEP 5: Honour Your Feelings

At this time, you may have a range of emotions. It's normal to feel this way.

The following things may help:

IF I FEEL	I WILL
Scared	Try not to panic. Reminding yourself that it's OK to feel many emotions may help you to feel more calm. Call a friend, if you can, or write in a journal to express how you are feeling.
Isolated	Connect with local support. It can help to speak to someone about how you're feeling. If you don't want to talk to family or friends, speak to your doctor. They may be able to recommend a local support group or refer you to a trained counsellor or psychologist. ⁵
Powerless	Remember my strengths. Think about the qualities you have turned to before during difficult times, such as perseverance or patience. Try to lean on those strengths now.

Circle the words and values that best describe you:

STRONG • POSITIVE • GRATEFUL • HOPEFUL • BLESSED
DETERMINED • HONEST • LOVING • FAMILY-FOCUSED

For additional support, reach out to your healthcare team or local patient organisation

Breast Cancer Now
breastcancernow.org

Macmillan Cancer Support
macmillan.org.uk

References:

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4. Cohut M. Anxious about the news? Our top tips on how to cope. 2020. Available at: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/327516> [Accessed July 2020].
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