

Coping with cabin fever

This is a very stressful time. You may be worried about getting COVID-19 or afraid that someone you care about will get it. If you've lost your job, you may be anxious about your finances. On top of that, you're probably stuck at home. Cabin fever can set in. You may feel trapped, bored, and irritable.

Cabin fever is no joke. It can lead to depression or self-harm. If you live with others, it may cause you to lash out at them. Here are some ideas that may help you cope.



Try to stay on a regular schedule. Having a normal routine may help you feel better. Try to get up and go to bed at your usual times. Eat meals when you normally would. If you have kids, try to keep them on a schedule too. It's a good idea to have a set time for schoolwork and a limit on screen time. But don't be too hard on yourself if it doesn't always go as planned.



Get outside if you can. Fresh air and sunshine are good for both your mind and your body. If you can, go out for a walk or a bike ride. If you can't go out, try to spend time near a window where you can get some natural light.



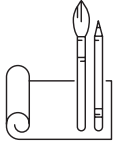
Take care of your health. Be careful of sleeping too much or snacking too much. Try to eat healthy foods, get enough rest, and be active. Limit or avoid caffeine and alcohol.



Connect with friends and family. A call, text, or video chat may help you feel less alone. Think of ways to bring people together. Maybe you could suggest a virtual family gathering. Or set up a virtual friends' meet-up or game night.



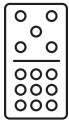
If you live with others, find some time for yourself. This may be hard to do, but it can be important. If you can, go for a walk or drive by yourself. Do some deep breathing while you take a bath or shower. Or get up before everyone else, and enjoy the quiet. If you have noise-cancelling headphones, they can be another way to grab a few minutes of peace.



If you're bored, get creative. This could be a chance to do something you never had time for in the past. There are lots of free online classes. Maybe you could take dance or yoga lessons or learn a new language. Or maybe there's a book you've been meaning to read. This time at home could be a gift.



Look for the good around you. There are a lot of scary things going on, but good things are happening too. Look for stories that give you hope, like those of people helping other people.



Take a break from the news. Limit the amount of time you spend watching or reading about the pandemic. Focusing too much on it may make you more anxious and irritable.



Find healthy ways to deal with your emotions. Some people ease stress by writing in a journal, playing music, or doing a hobby they enjoy. For others, prayer, meditation, or exercise can help. Think about what works for you.

If anger or frustration with others overwhelms you, remind yourself to stop before you act. Go to another room, or walk around the block. Take deep breaths until you cool down. Remember that everyone is feeling stressed right now.



Reach out if you need help. If you're struggling with feeling sad, depressed, or anxious, you may need more help. Many therapists can do counseling by phone or online. Or you could look for an online support group. Or call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5590, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, or feeling hopeless, get help right away. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), or text HOME to 741741 to access the Crisis Text Line. Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Home is not a safe place for everyone. If it's not safe for you to stay at home, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233), or text LOVEIS to 22522. Help is available 24/7.