

# COVID-19: Staying well



Tips for mental and physical  
well-being during a pandemic

B R E A T H E  
the lung association



## Our top 5 tips for a healthy mind

Some of the information in this resource has been in part adapted from information provided by Jana Danielson of Lead Pilates and our friends at the Lung Foundation Australia. Thank you.

- ❑ **1. Maintain perspective** - It can be a tough time that can awaken anxiety in many of us. When you feel anxious, take a few deep breaths. It's important to remember that this will pass. And remember: we have some of the best minds working on a solution every day.
- ❑ **2. Limit media intake** - It's important to keep up-to-date with news, but don't let the 24/7 news cycle control your life. Know when to switch off. Repeated exposure can increase feelings of anxiety.
- ❑ **3. Choose reliable media outlets** - There is a lot of information out there, whether it be on the television, radio or online. Make sure the information you are accessing is from a reputable source. If you use the internet, only look at reliable sources of information that are updated regularly, such as Health Canada, The Public Health Agency of Canada, a provincial health authority, the World Health Organization or The Canadian Lung Association [www.lung.ca/covid19](http://www.lung.ca/covid19).
- ❑ **4. Follow government advice** - COVID-19 is an evolving issue and recommendations evolve as we learn more. Know that the Canadian government is updating its guidelines as more information becomes known. Be sure you check official government sources often to stay up-to-date. Continue to follow social distancing guidelines (6 feet); wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and limit your outings to essential ones only.
- ❑ **5. Stay connected** - Don't let physical distancing turn into emotional distancing. Stay in touch with your friends and family regularly by phone or online via video calls or social media. You can try modern means like Zoom or Facetime so you can see each other's faces, or you can make a phone call. Whichever way you do it, try and make time to connect with someone at least once a day.

**Remind yourself that this is a temporary situation. Staying at home is not a punishment; it's protecting yourself and those around you by slowing the spread of the virus.**

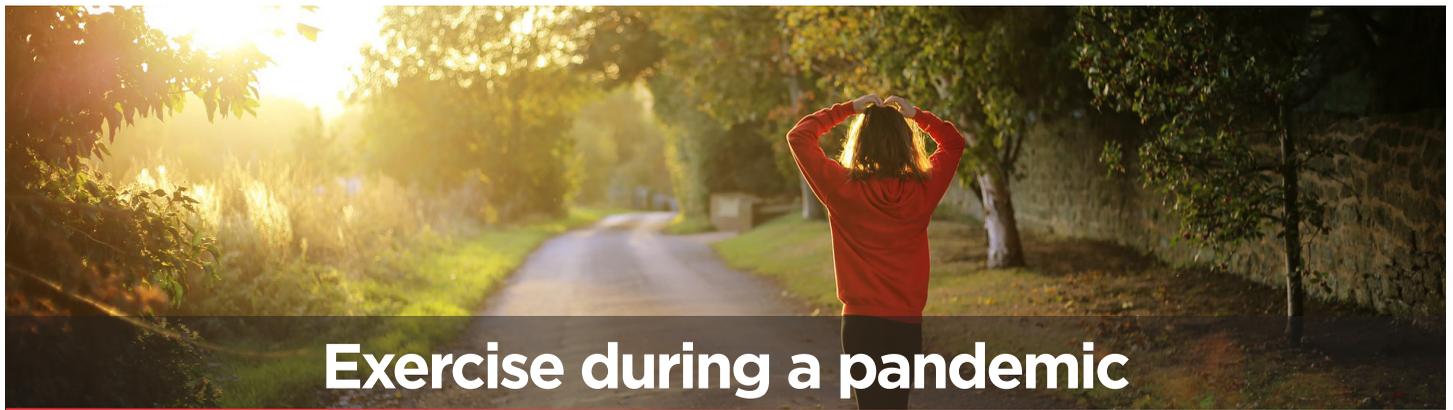


## Our top 10 tips for a healthy body

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- Breathe** - Like a baby. Inhale, so your belly fills with air as you inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth as you pull your belly button back towards your spine. Do this at least twice a day, 10 breath cycles each time. It will calm you, oxygenate your body and prepare you for a good night's sleep.
- Get up!** - Get up and walk around for 2 minutes every hour and you will feel so much better.
- Fuel your body & hydrate** - Make sure you maintain a healthy and nutritious diet. It can be tempting to resort to unhealthy comfort foods, but the comfort these give you will be temporary. Fueling your body with healthy foods will boost your mood and keep you as healthy as possible. Likewise, hydration is key to making sure your body, brain and vital organs are ready to function. Make sure you adapt slowly to the daily increase of water intake. Take it one cup at a time.
- Sit and stand properly** - Check your sitting and standing posture to make sure your weight is evenly distributed and your spine is neutral.
- Gaze** - Look up from your computer screen for 20 seconds every 20 minutes. Look as far as you can see - notice details of the walls, ceiling or out of your window.
- Get your blood flowing** - In addition to regular stretches, consider using a tennis ball under your feet and your glutes to get the blood flowing.
- Sleep well** - If you are a back sleeper, place a pillow under your knees or if you are a side sleeper, place a pillow between your knees. This will put your pelvis in a better position and your low back will be much happier. Make sure have a regular sleep schedule. Let your mind and body rest.
- Exercise** - Get your body moving. Everyone's ability to exercise is different, but it's important to find a type of exercise that works for you. It will help you stay active and boost your mental health. (See our suggested exercises.)
- Stay healthy** - If you have an existing lung disease, it is important you continue to treat your condition. Make sure you continue to take your prescribed medication and follow your action plan, if you have one. It's more important than ever to keep your body as healthy as possible.
- Quit smoking** - We know quitting isn't easy, but now may be the right time to try and quit. Smoking may expose you to developing a more severe case of COVID-19, should you get it. Visit [www.lung.ca](http://www.lung.ca) to find a resource to help you quit.

**Be kind to yourself.**



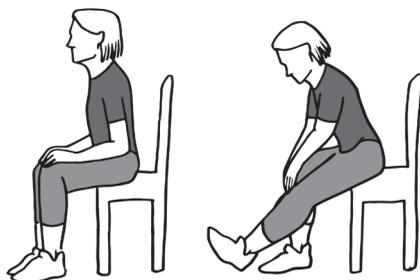
## Exercise during a pandemic

Regular exercise can strengthen your bones and your body's ability to fight off infection. It can increase your energy level, boost your mood and help you maintain or regain your independence. Exercise does not have to be intimidating. In fact, walking is one of the best ways to increase your fitness level.

### Back Thigh Stretch

Sit with your back straight, one foot flat on the floor and the other foot extended in front of you with the heel on the floor and the toes pointing upward.

- Reach down to touch your foot, calf or knee (as far as you are able without pain). Remember to bend from the hip, not from the back.
- You should feel a stretch in the back of the thigh.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds. Work up to holding the position for 60 seconds.
- Stretch the back of the other thigh in the same way.
- Repeat 3 times on each leg.



Back Thigh Stretch

### Buttock Stretch

Sit with your back straight and one ankle placed on the knee of the opposite leg.

- Bend forward at the waist. You should feel a stretch in the buttock.
- Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Stretch the other side of the buttock in the same way.
- Repeat 3 times on each leg.



Buttock Stretch

## Front Thigh Stretch

Stand resting one hand on a wall or on the back of a chair for balance.

- Hold your ankle or the hem of your pants with your hand and pull up gently.
- You should feel a stretch in the front of the thigh.
- Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Stretch the other thigh in the same way.
- Repeat 3 times on each leg.



Front Thigh Stretch

## Neck Stretch

Sit or stand with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor.

- Tilt your head to one side.
- Push down on opposite hand.
- You should feel a stretch in the side of the neck opposite the tilt.
- Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Stretch the other side of the neck in the same manner. .

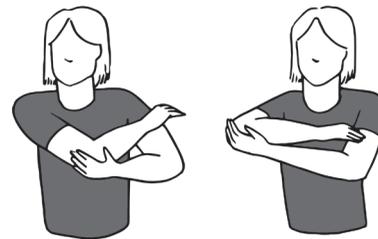


Neck Stretch

## Shoulder Stretch

Sit or stand with your back straight and one hand placed on the outside of the elbow of the opposite arm.

- Pull the elbow gently across the chest.
- You should feel a stretch in the shoulder of the arm being pulled.
- Hold this stretch for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Stretch the other shoulder in the same way.
- Repeat 3 times on each arm.



Shoulder Stretch

**Make time for activities you enjoy such as reading a good book, watching a new TV show or tending to your garden.**



### Support:

Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick,  
Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia,  
Saskatchewan and Yukon: 811

Manitoba: 1-888-315-9257

Northwest Territories: 911

Nunavut: 1-867-975-5772

Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Prince Edward Island: Facebook - @GovPe;  
Twitter - @InfoPEI

Quebec: 1-877-644-4545

Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and  
Substance Use Support:

<https://ca.portal.gs/>

### Information:

For the latest updates on Covid-19 in Canada,  
visit [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca), email [phac.info.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.info.aspc@canada.ca) or call 1-833-784-4397.

[www.lung.ca/covid19](http://www.lung.ca/covid19)

### Tip!

Next time you talk to a friend or a family member on the phone or online, introduce a Bud, Rose and Thorn game.

#### What is it?

**Bud:** Share something you're looking forward to once the pandemic ends. Maybe it's meeting up with friends or maybe it's going back to the gym. Keep that in the back of your mind.

**Rose:** Share something that you're thankful for during the pandemic. This could be a new hobby, a renewed connection with a friend or a family member or even nice weather.

**Thorn:** Share something you find challenging. It helps to talk it out. Maybe your loved one will be able to help or maybe they will be there just to listen.

**Focus on the things that you can control such as maintaining good hand hygiene, practicing social distancing, limiting negative news consumption and treating yourself and others with kindness.**

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