

Keeping well at home

There are number of things that people can do to help stay mentally and physically well whilst at home. As a 'Friend' you could help the person you're supporting be aware of what could help them stay fit and well.

Exercise

If the person you're supporting can't leave the house, it's still important for their physical and mental health, to keep moving. Whether that's turning on their favourite song and dancing, undertaking housework with a bit more gusto, or finding a workout that works for them.

There are a variety of exercises that can be done from home for all abilities.

Below are some suggestions from NHS Wales for exercise that can be done from home. They can also be downloaded as pdfs to be given to people who don't have access to the internet.

- **Sitting exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/>
- **Strength exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/>
- **Flexibility exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/flexibility-exercises/>
- **Balance exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/balance-exercises/>
- **NHS website:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults/>

Age Cymru Tai Chi Home Programme

Age Cymru has made their tai chi work available free of charge online:

www.agecymru.org.uk/taichi

The person you're supporting can also go for a walk outdoors if they stay more than two metres from others, although many people may be anxious about doing this.

Stay connected

Connecting regularly with friends and family, and other support is important to help stay mentally well during this time.

- You could encourage the person you're supporting to maintain regular contact with their friends, family, neighbours and other support, so it forms part of their day-to-day routine. Contact could include via email, social media, phone messaging services such as Whatsapp, video calling or via telephone.
- Some older people may be using new kinds of technology, such as video messaging apps for the first time. You could help them by supporting them with setting these up, and talking them through how to use them.
- You could help connect the person you're supporting with others in a similar situation, such as helping them to join a peer support community online or by telephone.

Keep a routine

Routine is important to keep well, especially when normal routines have been disrupted due to the need to stay at home.

You can encourage the person you're supporting to look at their routine. What they can plan in regularly each day, and to consider their usual routine and if there was anything about it that was unhelpful which they could actually have the opportunity to improve now.

You can help them to plan how they would like to spend their time by;

- writing it down, putting it on a wall.
- planning activities for different days – for example, they could set a new time for a daily home workout, and pick a regular time to clean, read, watch a TV programme or film, or cook.
- leaving space for new ideas to develop (so that they can follow their interests as they arise).
- identifying habits they want to start.

Keep doing enjoyable activities

If the person you're supporting is feeling worried, anxious or low, or they're unable to access the activities they normally do, they might stop doing things they usually enjoy.

To support keeping well at home it's important to keep doing activities, or find new ones, that are enjoyable to keep the mind stimulated. You can spend time talking to the person you're supporting about what they enjoy, and what activities they may like to try.

You could also help someone feel less isolated by connecting them with activities or relevant support groups. See also: **Support groups and charities**

Ideas could include;

- Setting time aside for reading books, magazines, listening to podcasts.
- Borrowing e-books / audiobooks. If they're a library member in Wales, the [Borrowbox](#) service can help them to do this.
- Doing crosswords, or sudoku puzzles.
- Trying drawing and painting.

- Accessing free online courses and learning apps. [FutureLearn](#) and [OpenLearn](#) have free online courses.
- Writing, for themselves or to others.
- Photography, documenting the world around you.
- Check arts activities on Age Cymru's Gwanwyn <https://en-gb.facebook.com/gwanwyn.wales> and <https://twitter.com/gwanwynagecymru?lang=en>.

Get fresh air and sunlight, and connect with nature

This is important for physical and mental health and it can still be achieved without leaving their property.

- Keep windows open to let in fresh air when they can.
- If they have a garden space, try to spend time out there every day (weather permitting!) or sit on their doorstep.
- Get as much sunlight as they can, whilst also following advice to stay safe in the sun. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/health-promotion/summer-health-advice/>.
- Set up a space to sit near a window with sunlight.
- Grow some plants, or place some plants on their windowsills.

Keep up to date, but fact check

It's important that people stay connected with current events, but it can be overwhelming and cause people to be anxious or confused. Tips to support people could include;

- Being careful where they get news and health information from. Find a credible source you can trust – such as [Welsh Government](#) or the [NHS website](#) – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people.
- Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too. Trying not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources is helpful.
- They might also want to consider limiting the time they spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on their phone.
- It could be useful to set a specific time to read updates or limit to a couple of checks a day.
- They could consider taking a break or changing how they use social media. It's useful to help stay connected with people but it can heighten anxiety and worry. It might be helpful to focus on viewing particular groups or pages but limiting scrolling through timelines or newsfeeds.

If the person you're supporting needs further help and is aged under 50 or over they can contact Age Cymru Advice on **0300 303 44 98**, available 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday, or email advice@agecymru.org.uk

If the person you're supporting needs further help and is under 50, they can call Citizens Advice on **0800 702 20 20**, available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/
