

9 Tips for Coping with Social Distancing

GO ON A NEWS DIET

Stay informed, but take breaks. Balance CNN with uplifting podcasts or guided meditations. Extended newswatching can perpetuate anxiety (fear drives viewership). Download **Insight Timer** or **Headspace** on the App Store.

VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR

Fire up a **Zoom** call, play tunes, make a drink, and invite some friends. Offer virtual donuts on your morning meeting. Laughter is good medicine. Medical studies reveal that cancer patients have much improved recovery rates with a positive physician and support network. We all need some smiles right now.

MAKE A GRATITUDE LIST

You can't be hateful if you're grateful. Sounds corny **BUT IT WORKS**. Gratitude changes brain chemistry. Write down 5 things you are grateful for everyday. Share the list with a friend or coworker. Write an A to Z list if you are really down (Apples, Zebras, etc.). Google "neuroscience of gratitude" to read studies.

TRY LIGHT THERAPY

Light therapy is medically proven to help Seasonal Affective Disorder and depression (often used in places like Seattle). The light devices simulate an early sunrise and can help improve your mood and regulate sleep. Order a **Litebook** on Amazon.



EXERCISE EVERYDAY

The American Psychiatric Association recognizes exercise as an effective treatment for depression. Do pushups. Jog in place. In his book, **Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and The Brain**, Dr. John Ratey claims exercising every day is like "taking a little bit of Ritalin and a little bit of Prozac."

WEAR BLUE BLOCKERS

Staring at LED screens (iPhone, laptop) after 8pm can stimulate alertness and prevent you from sleeping. We need our sleep to cope with stress. Blue blocker glasses shield your eyes from LED rays that can cause insomnia.

FORGIVE

Holding a grudge? Take the high road and pick up the phone. Reconnect. Apologize. You'll feel better. They will too. An Emory University study found that bitter people had higher blood pressure and were more likely to die from heart disease than more forgiving people.

PRAY

75% of Americans believe prayer is an important part of life according to a 2015 poll. We need it right now. Atheist? Think of it like affirmations. Whatever helps. AA is known for using the Serenity Prayer, but Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote it in response to the Nazi occupation of Germany in the 30s. Works for alcoholics. Works for me. In these trying times, let us all pray,

"God, grant US the serenity to accept the things we can't change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference."