

A Guide to Having Fun in Self-Isolation for Ages 0-150!

The government advised in late March that all over 70s and those with underlying health conditions are to remain at home to self-isolate in order to protect themselves and those around them from COVID-19. It's now been a matter of weeks since Gold Care Homes closed their doors to non-essential visitors to limit the risk of our residents and, of course, our staff from contracting coronavirus.

This is a difficult time for many of us, but we hope that those who are in contact with our homes will share our resilient spirit and join us in looking for the silver linings of the situation we are all facing. Our routines have been interrupted and for better or worse, we are all in this together and many ways for us to stay connected while we look after ourselves and loved ones in self-isolation.

1. *Foster an animal* – shelters are also working continually throughout this period of time and need our support. If you're isolating or working from home, you could help by fostering an animal and bringing some joy to your home and the foster animal. Pet therapy has been suggested to improve with mental health and relieve stress and anxiety and it's a great way to keep occupied
2. *Tend to your garden* – soak up some vitamin D and occupy yourself with your plants and garden to keep you active mentally and physically
3. *Clear your cupboards* – it's something that most of us struggle to find the time for in our normal routines but with time to spare, a spring clean is a great way to spend your day as cleaning is believed to help relieve stress, anxiety and depression (Anxiety and Depression Association of America)
4. *Stay connected to your loved ones* – reach out to those who you've been meaning to get in touch with but just haven't had the chance while balancing work and social life. Take the time to speak to family and friends no matter how near or far, and if you're extra technology savvy – you could video call them!
5. *Read* – it's good to be informed, particularly in uncertain times, however it's okay to turn off the news and media and sink into a good book to escape reality for a little while. Not everybody is a keen reader, in which case – there are several free audiobooks being released for people to enjoy
6. *Exercise* – there's a surplus of exercise videos and apps which are available for all abilities, for free. During COVID-19, people have also begun to offer classes for free via the web and video applications
7. *Enjoy the sunshine* – yes, we can't go out unless for exercise or an essential visit to the store, but you can sit in your garden or open up the balcony windows to let that vitamin D flood your room. Get some fresh air into your lungs and if you do want to go outside, remember to keep at least 2 metres apart from others
8. *Boost your skill set* – 'I've always wanted to learn to draw'; well there's no better time! Follow some videos online or go free for all and practise a new skill on your own. Play chess, learn card games, write that book you've always wanted to – there's no time like the present
9. *Stay positive* – it's unprecedented times for all of us but remember that we are in this together even though we cannot physically be together. This period shall pass, and we will find our normality again. Keep smiling and stay safe.

We wish you all good health and should you require professional assistance, please call 111 or reach out to Samaritans on 116 123.