Toolkit for Thriving during a crisis
With our normal routines upended by social distancing and COVID 19, how can we create peace in the midst the storm? Here are some ideas for surviving this current crisis drawn from the experience of a NASA astronaut who survived nearly a year in space, away from his family and friends*.

1. Maintain a regular routine. Set schedules help provide structure and flow to our days. Set a regular time to get up and go to sleep. Have meals at a predictable time.

2. Schedule time for regular exercise, even if it means finding a place to walk inside the house or follow a light exercise video. Exercise helps our immune systems function well.

3. Pace yourself - don’t try to get everything done in one day. Remember there is always tomorrow. When you need a break, take one!

4. Connect with others virtually using Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts or the phone. People are scheduling daily virtual connection times with friends and family.

5. Get creative - try something new. We’ve included a list of lots of different ideas for music, arts, drama, play and learning.

6. Check in with yourself daily using these Quarantine Questions (courtesy of Brooke Anderson and Greater Good Magazine):
   a. What am I grateful for today?
   b. Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
   c. What expectations of normal am I letting go of today?
   d. How am I getting outside today? (Even if I am only able to look out a window...)
   e. How am I moving my body today?
   f. What beauty am I either cultivating, creating or inviting in today?

7. Let go of any expectation of ‘when will time of isolation end’? Focus on what you CAN control (schedule, environment, connecting with others), rather than what you CANNOT control. Stay in today using mindfulness and grounding techniques.

We are sending positive energy and support to each of you during this time. We hope this toolkit brings peace, grounding, and a little fun to your day.

* April 3, 2020 – “Astronaut Scott Kelly on How to Survive Isolation” on Sanjay Gupta’s podcast “Coronavirus: Fact or Fiction.”
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Looking for Something Fun or Different to Try?

Here are Some Boredom-Busting Ideas to Get You Started*

*These are sample suggestions to get you thinking creatively. We didn’t create and can’t endorse this content.

Consider Connecting with Others…

Local and State Resources for General Financial Assistance

Your city may have a number of local charities that have small amounts of financial help for meeting living expenses in a crisis. The best way to connect with up to date information on local resources is to call **211**. 211 can refer you to a number of local nonprofits that may be able to help. You may also schedule a phone appointment with a Support Center social worker to explore options and be referred to various agencies for emergency assistance, food and other basic needs.

Mental Health & Wellness Resources

- **Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990** offers crisis counseling and emotional support 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns during the COVID-19 outbreak. [https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

- **The Salvation Army Emotional and Spiritual Care Hotline** is a nonreligious resource for stress re COVID-19: 844-458-HOPE (4673), 9am-9pm EDT - 7 days a week. [https://salvationarmysouth.org/ways-we-help/emotional-and-spiritual-care-hotline/?s=](https://salvationarmysouth.org/ways-we-help/emotional-and-spiritual-care-hotline/?s=)

- **HopeLine** focuses on providing the community with a free and confidential crisis and suicide prevention helpline and texting service. HopeLine specializes in providing suicide and crisis intervention, supportive and non-judgmental active listening, gentle and understanding discussion of crisis resolution, and referrals to appropriate community resources. Our Crisis Line is available 24/5 Monday-Friday and 9am-11pm Saturday and Sunday. Our TextLine is available Monday-Friday 10am-10pm. Crisis Line: Call or Text | 919-231-4525 or 877-235-4525 [https://www.hopeline-nc.org/](https://www.hopeline-nc.org/)

- **The Safe Space** is a virtual home to resources and tools to provide you with some extra support in an emotionally safe environment. [https://www.vibrant.org/safespace/](https://www.vibrant.org/safespace/)
Consider Mindfulness and Grounding Exercises to Try to Quiet Your Thoughts…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention Meditation</th>
<th>Controlled Breathing</th>
<th>Mindful Moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin with a few breaths of silence, and then slowly repeat each of these intentions:</td>
<td>Control your breath...</td>
<td>Try this exercise to engage your senses and ground you right where you are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I am going to maintain a joyful, energetic body today.</td>
<td>1. Sit or lie quietly in a comfortable position.</td>
<td>Notice and say aloud five things you see, five things you hear, and five things you feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Loving and compassionate heart today.</td>
<td>2. Put one hand on your belly, just below your ribs, and the other hand on your chest.</td>
<td>Repeat this with three things you see/hear/feel, then one thing you see/hear/feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reflective, quiet, creative, and centered mind today.</td>
<td>3. Take a deep breath in through your nose and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.</td>
<td>Check out the next page for an example of this exercise!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lightness of being and laughter today, whatever it takes!</td>
<td>4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Do this breathing 3-10 times, gently and easily. Take your time.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Notice how you feel at the end of this exercise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Courtesy of the University of Michigan Health System)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5-3-1 Grounding Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 things you see</th>
<th>5 things you hear</th>
<th>5 things you feel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I see a coffee cup</td>
<td>1. I hear the lapier</td>
<td>1. I feel my feet on the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I see my water bottle</td>
<td>2. I hear my coworkers</td>
<td>2. I feel the cool desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I see a pencil</td>
<td>3. I hear footsteps</td>
<td>3. I feel the gentle breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I see the window</td>
<td>4. I hear air through vents</td>
<td>4. I feel the seam of my pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I see patterns in the carpet</td>
<td>5. I hear my breathing</td>
<td>5. I feel my bent arms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 things you see

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I see</th>
<th>1. I hear</th>
<th>1. I feel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

1 thing you see

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I see</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1 thing you hear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I hear</th>
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1 thing you feel

<table>
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<th>1. I feel</th>
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</table>
6 Steps to Relaxation: Deep Breathing Exercise

Try this breathing exercise to help improve your emotional and physical health.

1. Lie on your back to help shift your breathing to a deeper, abdominal breath.

2. Put your hands on your belly and take a deep breath through your mouth or nose. Each time you breathe in, try to push your belly out as much as possible—feel your hands rise as the belly rises. (As opposed to the popular notion that when you take a deep breath you suck in your gut.)

3. Hold that breath for a few seconds and then slowly exhale through your mouth. Try to imagine you’re exhaling through a straw.

4. After that deep breath, take three or four normal breaths.

5. Then take another deep breath.

6. Continue this for 5 to 10 minutes.

At least while you’re still learning, try to practice this form of relaxation during an already quiet time, when you’re least stressed.

To learn more about relaxation and meditation, visit the National Institutes of Health website: http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm
Consider Trying Something Completely Different…

Sometimes our minds just need a break… to focus on something different or mentally challenging. Here are lots of options to choose from. If one doesn’t work, try another…

Watch Some Animals

https://www.earthcam.com/events/animalcams/

Take a Field Trip

- Go to Mars
  - https://accessmars.withgoogle.com/
- Tour a Historical Site
  - https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china
  - https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-white-house
  - https://www.heritagedaily.com/2020/03/5-virtual-tours-of-historical-sites/126924
- Tour a National Park
- Visit a Museum
  - https://www.businesstraveller.com/business-travel/2020/04/02/these-museums-are-offering-free-virtual-tours/

Recreate Famous Art

- https://www.sadanduseless.com/recreated-art/
- https://www.sadanduseless.com/art-history-as-a-sandwich-gallery/
Watch a Play


Learn Something New

- Career Skills
- Free Courses
  - https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/ivy-league-free-online-courses-a0d7ae675869/

Stream a Concert

- Local, regional and national theaters, music centers and arts venues are streaming concerts and events via their Facebook, Instagram and YouTube pages - consider checking out the page of your favorite venue to see what's being offered. Places like Triad Stage, Grand Ol Opry, and the Metropolitan Opera all have put daily programming online for viewers to watch for free.

Try a Guided Meditation

- https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations
- https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/
Catch Up on Some Sports

- https://gamepass.nfl.com/packages?redirected=true

Learn Something New

- After spending a year in space, Scott Kelly is an expert on managing extreme isolation. The retired astronaut shares valuable advice with CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta on how to cope with social separation here on earth in the episode entitled “Astronaut Scott Kelly on How to Survive Isolation.”
- https://www.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/corona-virus
- https://www.npr.org/podcasts/

Read Something New

- https://ncdigital.overdrive.com/ with a public library card from anywhere in NC.

Learn a Language

- https://www.duolingo.com/

Play a Game

- https://www.arkadium.com/free-online-games/
- https://www.freeonlinegames.com/
Learn a Craft

- https://livingonthecheap.com/free-craft-lessons/
- https://www.skillshare.com/browse/crafts

Spring has sprung in the Healing Garden.
The little things?

The little moments?

They aren’t little.

— Jon Kabat-Zinn
5 MOOD BOOSTING FOODS

FISH
Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids, which are can help combat mood disorders. Fish that contain a high level of these fatty acids include: salmon, tuna, sardines, etc.

DARK CHOCOLATE
Organic dark chocolate with a high percentage of cocoa can help elevate mood. Limit your intake to a few ounces per day.

NUTS
Incorporating 1 ounce of nuts a day into your diet can positively impact your mood. Nuts contain omega-3 fatty acids and are also a great source of fiber.

FRUIT
Fruit contains vitamins and minerals that can help lower the risk of depression. Try to eat at least 1 1/2 - 2 cups of mixed fruit each day.

SMART CARBS
Carbohydrates are known to increase serotonin levels in the brain. Eating smart carbs such as whole grains and vegetables can help elevate your mood.
Now how about a coloring break?
DANCE
like there's nobody watching
LOVE
like you'll never be hurt
SING
like there's nobody listening
LIVE
like it's heaven on earth.

QUOTE: WILLIAM W. PURKEY
ART: CAKESQU
CHAMELEON
Symbol of beauty, safety and ability to adapt.
Chameleon teaches us to embrace change in all its beautiful colors.