

## Suggestions and ways to reduce stress

In this current lockdown our lives have changed significantly and, in many cases, become more stressful. You are not alone, many of us are feeling the same as you, and it's ok. We all have our story, we all have some problems, and we may need some things to be sorted sooner than later!



From the NHS website, there are 5 ways to wellbeing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/>

The topics below are based around these and have been shown to help reduce stress.

### 1. Be active

Try to do some form of exercise. This won't make your stress disappear, but it will reduce some of the emotional intensity that you're feeling, help clear your thoughts and let you deal with your problems more calmly.



Carers in Hertfordshire have created this resource to help with gentle exercise at home – have a look and see if anything inspires you:

[www.carersinherts.org.uk/downloads/carer-support/coronavirus/1111-home-exercise-links-carers-in-hertfordshire/file](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/downloads/carer-support/coronavirus/1111-home-exercise-links-carers-in-hertfordshire/file)

### 2. Take control

A feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing. The act of taking control is a crucial part of finding a way forward that satisfies you and not someone else. Don't worry so much about the future, but try to do something now to prepare.

You can call Carers in Hertfordshire and speak to a Carers Support Advisor on 01992 58 69 69 during normal office hours. They are there to support you and talk through your situation. We also still offer our mentoring service, where you can talk regularly to another carer who has a similar caring role to you. Many have found this to be invaluable to think things through, and create small steps to move forward, even in this uncertain time.



### 3. Connect with people



A good support network of colleagues, friends and family can help deal with your troubles and help you see things in a different way. If you don't connect with people, you won't have support to turn to when you need help.

The activities we do with friends help us relax. We often have a good laugh with them, which is an excellent stress reliever. Now that we cannot meet with them, it is vital that we use different ways to stay in touch. Pick up the phone, write a letter, use the different types of technology to see friends and family: Zoom, Houseparty, Facetime, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts and others are all (mainly) free to use. If you need help getting set up or advice as to how to use the different systems, do give us a call (01992 58 69 69) or have a look on YouTube. If you use an iPad or an iPhone this is a very useful tutorial – <https://boldnewworld.co.uk/get-connected/>

### 4. Challenge yourself

Setting yourself goals and challenges, such as learning something new, helps build confidence, and this in turn helps you deal with stress. By continuing to learn, you become more emotionally resilient as a person. Our online workshop on resilience may help with this (it is in 6 parts so you can watch in small chunks) – we will also be adding a workshop on stress reduction soon:



[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsHclFWX1ezdmZj1F7Q-D\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsHclFWX1ezdmZj1F7Q-D_w)

Carers in Hertfordshire have also created a list of websites where you can find an incredible variety of new things to learn – have a look:

<https://www.carersinherts.org.uk/downloads/carer-support/coronavirus/1121-10-things-to-learn-at-home-while-self-isolating/file>

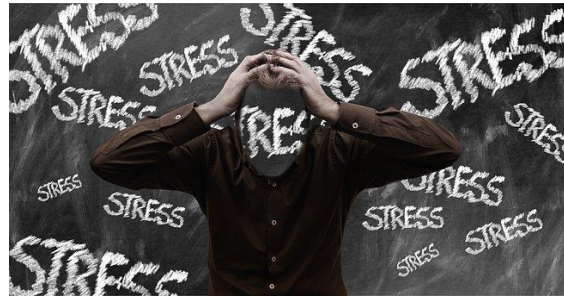
### 5. Accept that some things you can't change

Changing a difficult situation isn't always possible. Try to concentrate on the things you do have control over. And try to look for the positives in life – things for which you're grateful. Carers in Hertfordshire have listed many activities to support these topics.

Take a look and be proactive to help reduce stress, but remember, be kind to yourself:

[www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-self-isolation-activity-ideas#](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-self-isolation-activity-ideas#)

The following list of suggestions can also help if you are just feeling overwhelmed with everything and you are struggling with your caring role on top of all other changes going on.



1. **Journal your thoughts and feelings** – try writing at least one good thing that has happened each day.
2. **Organise and clean your space** – take control over what you can control. It will also make other tasks easier.
3. **Break down big tasks into small chunks** – don't think that you have to clean out all the cupboards at once. Do it one shelf or drawer at a time. If helping the person you care for get up, divide the tasks into dressing, cleaning, eating, medication etc. – you have already achieved four things rather than just one!
4. **Prioritise tasks by deadline and importance** – what needs to be done today, and what needs to be done first today? Renewing your car tax may be more important than emptying the dishwasher.
5. **Celebrate your small achievements** – you have washed up the breakfast things; you have cleaned the bathroom; you have resisted the third biscuit. Congratulate yourself with a sense of satisfaction – now on to the next task.
6. **Take a day off to reset** – difficult when caring but does everything have to be done every day? Obviously, some tasks cannot be neglected, but reading a book for half an hour instead of watching the news will feel like a rest.
7. **Focus on the things you can control** – don't concentrate and fret about things that are not within your ability to change.
8. **Take things one day and one task at a time** – always try to work in bite-sized chunks within the bigger picture.
9. **Ask for help – you don't have to do it alone** – there are many support agencies and people who can help: friends, neighbours, Carers in Hertfordshire.
10. **Tell yourself you are amazing to have got this far** – because you are.

