

How to Feel Good During Isolation

Neurotransmitters

Each one of us produces a natural 'feel-good' chemical called serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that acts as a catalyst for mentally healthy behaviour. This chemical impacts on our brain and bodily functions, including our digestion and sleep. It is important because it helps us to regulate our mood, improve feelings of wellbeing and improve our happiness. Serotonin helps us to cope, feel brave, keeps us motivated and it can even help to relieve pain.

How can we improve our levels of serotonin?

I would like to introduce you to our 3P's, these will give you that constant flow of serotonin that you need to feel good. They can also help you to reduce any feelings of anxiety, worries, headaches, body aches, low mood, anger and many more. You have the power to create your own happiness through doing the 3P's each day. The 3P's are:

Positive Interactions -PI

Positive Actions - PA

Positive Thoughts -PT

Positive Interactions:

Take time to connect with others-this can be with humans and/or animals. There are lots of different ways in which we can interact in our modern world, the more we interact in a positive way with others the more we will feel the benefits of those wonderful feel-good chemicals. (Consider government socialising/distancing advice.) Do you have any other good ideas?

Ring/Facetime a friend
Sing together
Play a board game
Pamper each other
Cuddle
Exercise together
Dance together
Join an online quiz/party
Write a letter
Time with family pet
Family movie nights
Help others with learning
Reminise with old holiday photos

Positive Actions:

These are things you like doing, the things that make you smile and make you feel good. These are also the things that we don't want to do, but when we do them we feel better.

Can you come up with other things that I haven't listed? Remember we need to be creative during isolation, maybe you could share some of your ideas amongst your family and friends, perhaps via social media or facetime!

Do your school work Breathe
Listen to music Watch a new series
Bake Do some gardening
Phone a friend/relative Take some exercise Meditate
Yoga Read a book/magazine Smile more often
Watch a movie Have a bubble bath
Draw/Paint Learn something new
Tidy your room
Help a vulnerable neighbour

Positive Thoughts

When we engage in positive interactions and positive actions, we will increase the amount of positive thoughts that we have. We can also find positive quotes, affirmations, mantras and say them out loud or in our head, repeat these when we wake up, when we look in the mirror and before we fall asleep in the evening. Can you think of more?

Remember this;

The way we think determines how we feel, and how we feel determines how we behave.

I am healthy My mind is brilliant
I am making memories My soul is peaceful
I can & I will I am strong
I am in control
I am happy I am amazing
I am contented
This is a chance to relax
I have lots to offer
I love my family & they love me I choose positivity
I choose happiness I am full of energy

Some other important information to consider:

Diet

Many of the foods we eat naturally contain serotonin or include key nutrients which our bodies need to produce serotonin. A few good sources are:

Bananas, turkey, eggs, salmon, tuna, mackerel, walnuts, flaxseed, chickpeas, kidney beans, spinach, kale, yogurt and tofu.

Eating a high fibre diet rich in vegetables and fruit can also help. These foods will keep your friendly gut bacteria healthy, which in turn, can help boost serotonin levels in the body

Light exposure

Insufficient exposure to sunlight has been associated with low levels of serotonin. During isolation it is important to still spend at least 15 minutes a day in the garden or go for a short walk near to where you live (obviously honouring the social distancing rule) This will also give your body a boost of vitamin D, which plays a key role in serotonin production.

Exercise

Regular exercise has been proven to boost serotonin in our brains. The most important thing to consider is that whatever exercise we choose, we must enjoy doing it.

