

6 Tips for Coping in Turbulent Times

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to major changes in how we live our lives. While anxiety about the situation is normal, it doesn't need to rule your life and you can act to stay positive, boost your resilience and grow your inner strengths. All of which will serve you well when we move past this crisis and life gets a reboot. Here are six tips and a range of resources curated from credible sources that will help you manage the anxiety and feel better resourced to cope with the present situation.

1. Check the facts

You can keep up to date with advice from the **UK Government [here](#)**. You can also **[sign up for e-mail alerts](#)** from the **UK Government**, which will notify you when the situation changes, without having to check news outlets constantly.

2. Looking after yourself and others

Make sure that you take sensible precautions and comply with **[NHS advice to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#)**. Here are a range of excellent free resources from credible organisations:

- [NHS – Every Mind Matters](#)
- [NHS – Change 4 Life](#)
- [Greater Good's Free Guide to Well-Being During Coronavirus](#)
- [Mind, the mental health charity](#)
- [Action for Happiness](#)
- [Thrive Global](#)
- [Campaign to End Loneliness](#)
- [Sleep Council's 7 Steps to a Better Night's Sleep.](#)
- [UK Government advice on supporting children and young people](#)

3. Nail working from home by creating structure and rhythm to your day

The **Harvard Business Review** has removed their paywall on articles relating to a range of work and wellbeing related issues due to the COVID-19 outbreak. **[You can sign up here.](#)**

Try time chunking tasks using the **[Pomodoro Technique](#)**. Spend 25 minutes on a task then take a 5-minute break. Repeat maximum of 4 times then take a longer break. Start again with your next task. Communication is key. Let others know when you're focused so you're not interrupted.

Replenish your energy. You might like to try the free online workouts offered by Joe Wicks, the Body Coach. He has developed created the **[P.E. with Joe](#)** channel on YouTube with a special series just for kids. Wicks is donating the advertising revenue generated during this crisis to the NHS with over £80,000 raised so far.

4. Feed your mind: suggested reading list

- Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being by [Dr Martin Seligman](#) (2011)
- Seven Ways to Build Resilience by [Dr Chris Johnstone](#) (2019)
- The Happiness Advantage by [Shawn Achor](#) (2011)
- Radical Compassion by [Tara Brach](#) (2019)
- Positivity by [Barbara Fredrickson](#), PhD (2009)
- The How of Happiness by [Sonja Lyubomirsky](#), PhD (2007)
- Self-Compassion by [Kristin Neff](#), PhD (2011)
- Feel Better in 5 by [Dr Rangan Chatterjee](#) (2019)

- How to Have a Good Day by Caroline Webb (2016)
- Mindset by Dr Carol Dweck (2017)
- Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth (2016)

5. What to watch: inspiring TED talks

- https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_the_new_era_of_positive_psychology
- https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work
- https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance
- https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve
- https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care

6. Take control of what you can and let go of what you can't

In life there are all sorts of things that concern us. These issues can be seen as following categories:

- things that are of concern to us and over which we have no control
- things that are of concern to us over which we can exert influence but cannot control
- things that are of concern to us and are completely within our control.

Human beings are wired to be on alert to things that might be harmful or dangerous and take evasive action, and so we have a natural inclination to worry about everything that concerns us, even if it is outside our control. This phenomenon is called the negativity bias. In normal times our negativity bias can be triggered by a badly worded email, delays in travel or a difficult conversation. This can result in bad moods, frustration and create a cycle of stress.

All of which are bad enough, but in a crisis, our negativity bias can go into overload. This can magnify the primitive survival instinct of fight, flight or freeze. When this happens, we can tip into patterns of behaviour that are driven by fear and anxiety. This is one of the reasons why people panic buy, look for someone to blame and conspiracy theories about the outbreak start to circulate. Gain perspective by focusing on what you can control and don't waste your energy on anything else. Here are some examples:

I cannot control:	I can control:
Others negativity and lethargy	My positivity and energy
If others follow the rules of social distancing and other recommendations for staying safe and well	My social distancing and follow other recommendations for staying safe and well
Others reaction and behaviour to the situation	My response and behaviour to the situation
Foretelling the future	The way I deal with the present circumstances
Avalanche of news and stories on social media	My consumption of news and social media
Others selfish actions or lack of compassion	My kindness, compassion and grace
Disruption to my normal routine	Create a new routine to help me adjust
Being unable to socialise in person with friends, colleagues and others	Choices I make to keep in touch using technology such as Apps, video conferencing, the telephone and writing letters.