

## 6 Ways to Stay Active During Self-Isolation: A Guide for Older Adults

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**D**ue to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States, more people are finding themselves hunkered down at home while governments continue to implement rules to enforce social distancing among citizens. This self-imposed social isolation can exacerbate an already pressing issue among older adults in America.



The negative effects of [social isolation](#) are well-known risk factors for poor mental and physical health. Social isolation can cause you to neglect the needed stimulation to stay healthy and happy. With social isolation now becoming the norm, it is important to do everything possible to keep busy and stimulated so an already at-risk population can thrive during this time.

Below is a list of ways that you can stay active and entertained at home through physical, mental, and emotional activities. *(If possible, it is recommended that older adults call their physician to see if there are any activities that he recommends be avoided).*

## 1. Avoid Constantly Watching/Reading the News



While staying up to date with Coronavirus updates may seem useful, constantly watching the news can have long lasting negative effects. Ultimately, changes and developments just do not happen quickly enough to warrant watching the news all day. Instead the constant negativity can increase anxiety, sadness, and anger.

Limit the amount of time spent on the news and instead focus on the goal of staying healthy.

## 2. Start Your Day with Your Usual Self-Care Routines

Staying at home may seem like the perfect excuse to lay around in your pajamas all day, but this can eventually give way to boredom and monotony. Instead, you should try to wake up as if you are going about your normal activities each day. You'll feel more positive about yourself if your well-groomed and dressed each morning.

Additionally, self-care activities like showering, doing your hair, brushing your teeth, and making your bed are a good way to be active while working on your strength and balance.



### 3. Try Out Yoga!



Yoga is an age-old practice that can be beneficial to anyone across the lifespan. From young to old, Yoga is a spiritual and physical exercise for the entire body. There are many places [online](#) where you can learn simple yoga poses that are good for older adults. For those who use wheelchairs, there are many poses [for you as well!](#) Just remember to be cautious in your exercises and to not try anything that you may think is too advanced for you.

### 4. Cook Your Favorite Meals

Cooking is another activity that is an overlooked exercise. Cooking uses a wide range of movements and tools that can increase both gross and fine motor control and increase strength. Lifting pots and pans, using utensils and tools, and just being on your feet and moving around can be extremely beneficial to your physical health. And at the end you get to eat one of your favorite meals!



*Did you know that most grocery stores have delivery or curbside pick up? Some even have hours that are specific for older adults so you can shop with limited exposure.*

## 5. Puzzles, Games, and Arts and Crafts



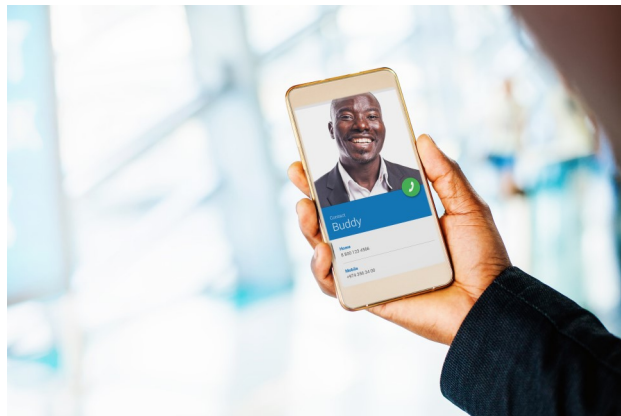
While isolated at home, it might be a struggle to find meaning in your activities. Utilizing puzzles and/or arts and crafts gives you a challenge that you can set for yourself and work towards achievement. Crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles and Sudoku are all good games that you can feel proud about completing. In addition, the critical thinking and problem-solving skills utilized to complete them will keep your mental health sharp. Don't have any puzzles at home? There are plenty on [online options!](#)

Now is also a good time to work on gifts for family and friends! Knitting blankets, making Christmas ornaments, or creating house decorations for your own home will keep you busy physically and at the end you'll have a meaningful creation for yourself or a loved one.



## 6. Use Technology to Stay in Touch with Others

While older adults are not known to be the most tech savvy individuals, it has never been easier to use technology to converse with others than it is today. If you need help, you can always call a family member or friend and have them walk you through the process or use online tutorials like [this one](#). Using Facetime on cellphones or Skype on a computer can allow you to not only speak to loved ones but see them as well. You can even incorporate something like eating a meal in your calls to make it feel like a typical family/friend activity!



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