

COVID-19: Eating, moving and meditating are keys to staying healthy

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Dr. Elizabeth Cozine, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, offers these tips for staying healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Exercise

Gyms may be closed, but there are still plenty of options to get in a good workout at home. "If you have any sort of exercise equipment that's been gathering dust in the corner, dust it off. Hop on a treadmill, bike, whatever. Something really cool that's going on right now as part of this response to social distancing is that many app-based programs that are typically fee-for-use are offering free trials right now—for about 90 days—so try something out.

Another good option for exercise is getting outside and taking a walk.

"You do need to be distanced from your friends and family, which is hard, but certainly feel free to take your kids, your spouse out for a walk. If you're going to meet a friend for a walk—maybe a neighbor—keep yourself 6 feet apart. But get outside."

Sleep During times of uncertainty and stress, sleep is crucial to allow the body to rest and heal. Dr. Cozine says it's important to practice good sleep hygiene:

"Trying to go to bed at the same time every night, maybe sleeping in a little bit later than you normally would because you're not rushing to get to the office. And see if you can try to get somewhere between seven and nine [hours of sleep](#), which is what most adults need, and make that a regular part of your day."

Meditation

One way to help promote sleep is through meditation. Dr. Cozine says there's a lot of great evidence to suggest that meditation can improve sleep and help you better cope with stress and anxiety.

"I've found that it helps me turn off those hamster wheels of thoughts that are rolling in my brain, and it also helps me to get ready for the next step. So I'm not talking about sitting Zen, cross-legged for three hours thinking about—I don't know—like a desert or something. I'm talking about maybe five minutes where you just reset. You could do it at your desk. Go somewhere quietly."

Diet

Maintaining a [healthy diet](#) is always important, but even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic. With more time on your hands and fewer options to dine out, Dr. Cozine says this could be a good time to try some dietary changes to make a difference in your overall health. However, Dr. Cozine doesn't recommend making any huge changes to your diet during this time of stress.

"You might think about doing some things like eating more whole foods, thinking about fewer meat (dishes), reducing your processed foods, and

thinking about moving toward eating as many plants as you can."

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