

## Staying fit in the pandemic

One of the things deemed essential enough to continue in the pandemic is a daily opportunity for outdoor exercise. This is because inactivity, particularly during a stressful or difficult time, is not good for the body or the mind and exercise is one of the best ways to relieve stress, clear minds and even aid good sleep.

This opportunity to exercise will look different for each and every one of us. For some it is a stroll to the end of the street and back, for others it might be a dog walk through the forests, for others still it might be a 10K run; each of us know our preference and our limits. Whatever your ability is in this regard the task group would like to encourage you to take up your opportunity to exercise daily.

We are acutely aware that some of you will not be able to leave the house. Taking some time outside in a garden if possible is a good option, but there are many ways to get exercise without even leaving your front room. TV personalities and YouTube stars are falling over themselves to produce videos encouraging us to get active in our own homes; even Mr Motivator has returned to our TV screens! All energy levels are catered for: from a [workout for the whole family](#), to a [dance class with Oti Mabuse](#) for single people or couples, to [chair exercises](#). For Oti's dance class be sure to click on the videos for adults as she is also doing dance classes for children each day.

Thinking about what you eat and when is also important as most of us become less active than usual. We are allowed to shop and are encouraged to shop for a week at a time where possible. Planning your meals, making sure to get lots of fruit and vegetables and not stocking up on too many unhealthy snacks might be a good idea.

Your mental wellbeing is just as important to look after as your physical health. Yesterday we sent out advice on establishing a new routine, but there are other things that you can do to keep a healthy mind. Physical exercise in the fresh air is one of those, but so is making sure you speak to people via phone or video call. The constant news about the impact of the virus around the world can be troubling, so whilst it is good to stay informed, there may be a time where it would be better to switch off and change your focus. Similarly, social media can be good for maintaining connections but it can also be a terrible source of anxiety, fake news and angst. Think carefully not just about what you chose to read, but also what you write and put out in the public domain.

Maintaining a regular time of prayer and Bible study can help you establish a daily routine, and can also remind you that there is someone bigger than even this, and that He wants to meet with us where we are.

Please, if you are starting to become anxious or worried about your health in any way, do contact the group via the [coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org) email address or phone someone who has pastoral care over you.

## **Social media use**

It has been good to watch how social media platforms have been used in new and exciting ways to engage with communities. It can, as we know, also be used for harm and we would want to advise against any use of social media which may promote upset, angst or discord at this time. If the powers and authorities make decisions which you disagree with, you should be able to voice your concern, but please remember to always do it in a way that is factually accurate, remembers that they too are under stress and strain, and above all is loving and kind.