

Looking after you

Wellbeing tips for carers looking after someone



Information
Practical advice
Creative ideas

About this booklet

We know these are difficult times and we regularly hear from carers how stressful things continue to be.

We have put together this booklet which we hope will be a reminder to look after yourself.

We have included tips and suggestions from our staff and carers we have recently spoken to, about ideas, activities and ways to look after yourself.

Remember, one size doesn't fit all. What is important is that you find things that work for you.

If your caring role makes it difficult to look after yourself then please get in touch with us at **Newcastle Carers**, or **Newcastle Adult Care Services**.

Newcastle Carers

☎ Carers Information Line on **0191 275 5060**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

🌐 www.newcastlecarers.org.uk

Newcastle Adult Care Services

☎ Community Health and Social Care Direct on **0191 278 8377**, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

🌐 www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/adults/contact-care-and-support-adults



Where is your focus right now?

We are all being bombarded by information, be it in the news, social media or from people we talk to. It can be overwhelming and a bit scary as there is so much unknown and such a variety of opinions.

It may be helpful to look at this notice board of reminders:



For more tips like these, see Mind's website www.mind.org.uk.

We know so many things are outside of our control and we can feel powerless and helpless. But there are things we **CAN** do to help maintain and improve our own mental health and wellbeing.

Looking after yourself is important and building something into your day, even for 5-10 minutes, may help carry you through the weeks ahead.

Time out

Taking a break is an essential part of being a carer and vital for your wellbeing.

It isn't just about going on holiday. The important thing is time away from your caring role to do your own thing, to switch off and relax.

Try planning to have some regular time to yourself.



Carers have told us that finding time to do things they enjoy, like watching TV, baking a treat or doing a quick crossword, helps them relax and cut off from things for a while.



Every Sunday I take time to paint my nails and relax on my own in a quiet room. I spend time thinking about what colour would cheer me up for the week.



Relaxation

Peter finds breathing exercises have helped him cope with stress over the years.

Deep breathing works by deliberately taking slow, deep breaths. Try the technique below for a total of two minutes at first, then build up to 5-10 minutes.

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. It may help to close your eyes
- Inhale: breathe in slowly through your nose for four seconds
- Pause: hold the air in your lungs for four seconds
- Exhale: breathe out slowly through your mouth for six seconds
- Repeat these steps



If your mind starts to wander that's ok, just bring your attention back to your breathing, counting the seconds as you go.



Here's another way to do it from Tricia...



Mindful Breathing. Imagine a balloon in your tummy. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates.

Connect

Connecting with people can help your wellbeing enormously. We know this isn't always easy but when times are difficult it's more important than ever to stay connected.

Here are some ideas...

- Pick up the phone or go online to keep in touch with family, friends or neighbours.
- If restrictions permit, go for a socially distanced walk with a friend outdoors.
- Join other carers for a virtual cuppa. **Mobilise** is a community of unpaid carers supporting each other online. They run **Mobilise Cuppas for Carers** to come together and share stories, tips, tears and laughs.



Sessions are usually every week day, times vary. You can join by contacting them at www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/cuppa

- See what online groups we have at **Newcastle Carers** on our website at www.newcastlecarers.org.uk/whats-on/



Lovely way to make space for ourselves in the week, if it didn't happen, we wouldn't have made that space.

Feedback about our online Mental Health Carers Group

Keeping physically well

Your physical health can have a big impact on how you feel emotionally and mentally. At times like this, it can be easy to forget and neglect our physical health which can make us feel worse and have a knock-on effect on our overall wellbeing.

A carer told us that going for a walk helps clear her head and gives her the time to concentrate on her needs.

Ruth found that creating a home exercise circuit helped her. Choosing activities you enjoy, that suit your level of fitness and can be done at home, such as walking up and down stairs or some gentle Pilates exercises, is a flexible way to keep healthy.



Check out the NHS website for ideas about exercise you can do at home

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-workouts/

Remember it's important to...

- ✓ Get medical help or advice if you have concerns about your health.
- ✓ Keep any appointments or procedures you have booked - unless you are told not to go.
- ✓ Go to hospital if you are advised to.

Doing something new

Doing or learning something new can have a big impact on your mood. Even small changes to your usual routine engages the brain in a different way that can help fight that 'stuck in a rut' feeling.

Carers have told us that reading a book, trying a recipe or taking up a hobby has helped boost their mood and given them a sense of achievement.

Over lockdown Claire set herself a task each week of remembering three new words from the dictionary. It helped her concentrate and gave her a great feeling if she could still remember them at the end of the week.



Could you try something new every day? Even if it's wearing something different each day, or taking an alternative route when you go out.

If you need a creative idea why not get crafty with Zoe's Tube Penguins! See page 9 and 10 on how to make these.

The Digital Resource for Carers is a great way to learn something new. It has a wide range of digital tools and key resources, including eLearning modules, factsheets and interactive guides. Visit carersdigital.org and use our unique access code DGTL5060 to create your free account.

Get creative

How to make tube penguins...

These penguin pals are the perfect afternoon activity for frosty days! Each one unique to the maker. They can be used as festive decorations, stationery holders or just little companions.

You could even follow in the flippers of the folk of Edinburgh Zoo and hold your own daily Penguin Parade!

You will need:

- ✓ Cardboard tube
- ✓ White/black and orange or yellow card, or thick paper
- ✓ PVA glue or glue stick
- ✓ Scissors



Image from Pinterest

Turn to page 10 to see how to make your tube penguin...



For more ideas see the Lockdown Creative page on our website at www.newcastlecarers.org.uk/get-involved/lockdown-creative-arts-and-creative-activities. You'll find Radiant Rainbows, Lockdown Limericks, Origami Hearts, Sock Friends and more!

How to make your tube penguin

Step one

Cover tube with glue and wrap black card around tube to cover. Trim off any excess. If you don't have black card, use poster/ acrylic paint or black felt tip to coat the tube.

Step two

Cut an arch shape in the white card and place it on the black tube to make the penguin's bib.

Step three

Cut a two inch strip of orange paper or card. Roll to create a tube and glue edges together.

Step four

Chop lines down from the top of the coloured card about one inch deep, creating a 'frayed' effect for the penguin's hair. Slot this into the top of the tube so it sticks out neatly.

Step five

Make eyes out of black and white card or use googly eyes and place above the bib.

Step six

Cut out two orange triangles and two flipper shapes and glue on to make the beak and feet.

Step seven

Using the black card, cut out two half ovals, in a similar size as the bib for the flippers and stick on.

Step eight

Add on any additional details - a bow tie? A sprig of holly? A tinsel crown?



Send us a picture!

Planning ahead

Planning for times when you are unable to care for those that you look after because of an emergency can help you feel in control and ease your worries.

Creating an Emergency Plan can give you peace of mind. As a minimum, consider bringing together the following details that can be easily accessed:

- ✓ the name, address and contact details of the person you look after
- ✓ who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency - this might include friends, family or professionals
- ✓ medication and ongoing treatment details
- ✓ care and support needs
- ✓ GP and pharmacy details

For more information about emergency planning visit **Carers UK** website at www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/planning-for-emergencies

Consider signing up to the **British Red Cross Emergency Carers Card** scheme in **Newcastle**. They can offer support if you suddenly become unable to provide care in the usual way because of an emergency.



For more information see www.informationnow.org.uk/organisation/newcastle-emergency-carers-card-scheme/

T. 0191 275 5060 **SMS**. 07874 100043 **E**. info@newcastlecarers.org.uk

Tweet: @NCLCarers **Facebook:** NewcastleCarers

Instagram: @nclcarers **YouTube:** Newcastle Carers

www.newcastlecarers.org.uk

For the latest information and advice about COVID-19 and what it means for you:

Carers UK - Coronavirus guidance for carers, including protecting your mental wellbeing and benefits guidance.

 Carers UK telephone helpline is available on Mondays and Tuesdays, 10:00am - 4:00pm, 0808 808 7777.

 www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19

NHS - advice for everyone about coronavirus, as well as advice and tips to help maintain your health and wellbeing

 www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Newcastle City Council - help, support and information on coronavirus for Newcastle.

 CitylifeLine for welfare and wellbeing support Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm, and Saturday 8am to 3pm, 0800 170 7001 or 0191 277 8000

 www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19

If you want to make any comments about this wellbeing booklet, please contact us.

Disclaimer: information correct at the time of printing, December 2020. Every effort has been made to provide accurate and complete information. We cannot accept liability for any errors or omissions.

Keeping in touch: we want to be sure that the information we send you is relevant and useful. Please let us know if you no longer want to receive the information that we send you, or if you would prefer to receive it via email. Please inform us of any changes to your contact details or if your caring role comes to an end.

Privacy Notice: this has details about the data we collect, how we use it and how long we keep it. You can request a paper copy at any time, it is also available on our website at www.newcastlecarers.org.uk.

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