



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

Comcare

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): Looking after your Mental Health



THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL HEALTH

The APS is at the forefront of emergency situations, such as bushfires, floods, drought and now COVID-19. The work we do is considered essential to the Australian community, which is why it is critical for APS employees to prioritise their physical health in order to protect and support their mental health. Building our collective resilience will help to build our organisational resilience.

Healthy habits such as regular physical activity, good nutrition, staying hydrated, self-care and a good night's sleep are more important than ever. We've put together some practical tips to help you get started.

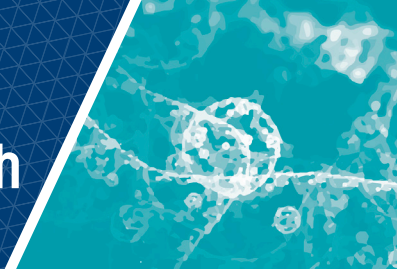


Practical tips

- **Establish a positive routine.** Put together a daily routine that incorporates a healthy balance of exercise, nutrition, work, rest and self-care. Make it fun and most importantly, stick to it.
- **Eat healthy meals and snacks.** Set calendar reminders to take breaks and eat well. Prepare some healthy food options in advance so they're on hand during the day.
- **Drink water regularly.** Keep a water bottle with you to ensure you stay hydrated throughout your day. Drinking water increases circulation and cleanses our bodies.
- **Be creative with physical activity.** Remember you just need to get moving. It can be as simple as walking, stretching, dancing around the house or doing some gardening. Regular physical activity can release brain chemicals that make us feel good.
- **Switch off and find time to relax.** Go outside when you can to recharge during the day. At night, step away from your computer or television, and unwind without technology to set you up for a good sleep.
- **Prioritise self-care.** Everything from getting enough sleep to staying positive, doing some yoga or practicing mindfulness, and showing gratitude for the things we have in our lives.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Some days will be easier than others to prioritise your physical health. You won't always be able to eat well or get time for some exercise, but you can always be kind to yourself. Get back to healthy habits when you can. The extra effort is worth it.



Use your old commute time for something positive. If you're working from home, you can use the time you typically need to travel to and from work for some physical activity or self-care practices, such as going for a run, yoga, meditation or doing an online workout class.



MAINTAINING A BALANCED LIFESTYLE



Everyone needs to stay at home more to help slow the spread of COVID-19. We need to make maintaining a balanced lifestyle a priority. The reality is we may be living and working with COVID-19 restrictions for some time, which makes our physical health and the positive impact that has on our mental health more important than ever. The mental health continuum can help you identify when things are out of balance and get you back on track.



Coping

- Staying active, eating well and maintaining healthy habits
- Focused, productive and able to maintain a positive routine
- **ACTION:** Keep checking in with yourself, stay positive and connected.

Reacting

- Skipping meals, not taking enough breaks or going outside
- Unable to concentrate, engage with others and/or stick to a healthy routine
- **ACTION:** Reach out to a close friend, family member, colleague or connect with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Not Coping

- No physical activity, irregular sleep and lack of appetite
- Unable to maintain a routine or cope with daily life and/or disconnected from family, friends, colleagues and community
- **ACTION:** Contact your GP, a counsellor or psychologist, EAP or other support services (see below).

Self help tools

- [Beyond Blue Wellbeing Plan](#)
- [Black Dog Self-Care Planning](#)
- [My Compass Self-Help App](#)
- [Mindspot Online Mental Health Assessment](#)
- [HeadGear Worker Mental Health App](#)
- [SportAus Find your 30 minutes of activity](#)

Support services

- Beyond Blue: 1800 512 348
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Services](#)

For more information

- [Australian Government](#)
- [Victorian Health](#)
- [Health Direct](#)
- [Australian Psychological Society](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)