



# Association of International Life Offices

Promoting the cross-border life insurance  
and wealth management industry

**AILO Guide to Mental Health During Lockdown**

**May 2020**

# Introduction

We are all living through a strange and challenging time, which is bringing stresses that we haven't necessarily had to cope with before.

AILO wants to support its Members through this period of lockdown and the information in this presentation is designed to help you.

# What does lockdown mean for me?

The impact of lockdown on our working lives means:

- We are working from home instead of going to the office
- We feel isolated and miss the interaction with our colleagues
- We might not have a great working environment
- We don't have the opportunity to bounce ideas off other people spontaneously
- We are trying to support the rest of our family at the same time as staying 'professional'
- We find ourselves in a surreal environment that we were not expecting and didn't choose
- We are wondering when this is all going to end and we feel a lack of control over our future



# Taking each of these impacts individually . . .

Impact	What can I do about it?
Working from home	Work for a couple of hours then have a break. Embrace the freedom WFH gives you by allowing yourself to work when it suits you: are you a morning person or a night owl? (But make sure this fits with your work commitments and colleagues' requirements.)
Isolation	Working on your own can be intense, which is why it's important to have frequent breaks and do something completely different, even for just 10 minutes.
Working environment	Try to work near a source of natural light and create a workspace that you can leave in place, if you can.
Sharing ideas	Short discussions by phone or Zoom etc can be used to bounce ideas off colleagues and this will help ease feelings of isolation. They will probably appreciate it too!
Supporting family	If you're trying to juggle your own work with your partner's, as well as your children's home-schooling and other needs, try structuring the family around a timetable so everyone's needs can be met. And be kind to each other.
Surreal environment	Look for the positives the current environment brings, such as: no commuting, no boring meetings to attend in windowless rooms, no need to dress smartly, you might even be saving money!
Lack of control	Try to avoid focusing on the news and focus on what you CAN influence. More on this later.

# Why do I feel so tired?

A lot of people say they feel tired, even though they're doing less. Here are some reasons why:

- Less physical activity starts to slow the metabolism and can make you feel sluggish
- It also reduces oxygen intake, meaning increased levels of carbon dioxide leading to tiredness
- Reduced exposure to daylight reduces the brain's production of melatonin and serotonin
- Feeling stressed about the virus, job and financial security and lack of control reduces sleep quality
- The blue light produced by electronic devices can cause sleep disturbance
- We might be “comfort eating” (and drinking!) instead of eating healthily
- Loss of routine and structure can be demotivating and cause anxiety

These are all perfectly normal responses to the current situation, but need to be addressed to improve the way we feel at the moment.



# What can I do about it?

You're probably doing a lot of the right things already, but here are a few to try:

- Plan a daily exercise routine, outdoors if possible, and vary your route so it doesn't become a chore
- Get as much natural light as possible
- Keep moving and do stretching exercises – and breathe! In through the nose and out through the mouth
- Try to switch off all devices (phone, tablet etc) at least two hours before you go to bed
- Plan your meals to ensure good nutrition to help your energy levels and immune system
- Limit the number of treats you allow yourself (although a bit of what you fancy may do you good)
- Avoid dwelling on the current situation and don't get too hung up on endless repetitive news bulletins
- Book calls with family and friends to keep in touch with your social network as well as your professional one
- Count your blessings and focus on the positive, because there are still lots of reasons to be happy
- Remember you're not alone and everyone else is going through all this as well

# How can I cope with the lack of control?

As intelligent human beings we're used to being able to manage our lives and it can feel very uncomfortable when significant factors that limit our ability to do that are beyond our control.

To help get things into perspective, focus on the things you can control and try not to get stressed by those you can't.

Some ideas are shown here, but think about the factors that apply in your world.



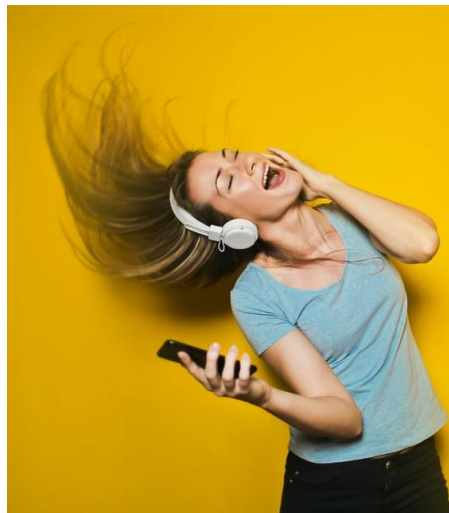
# Other things that might help . . .





# Music can soothe the soul

Play your favourite music  
Dance to energise yourself  
Sing along to relieve stress





# Get creative

Whether it's cooking, baking, painting, gardening, handicrafts or DIY, creating something will give you a sense of achievement and control





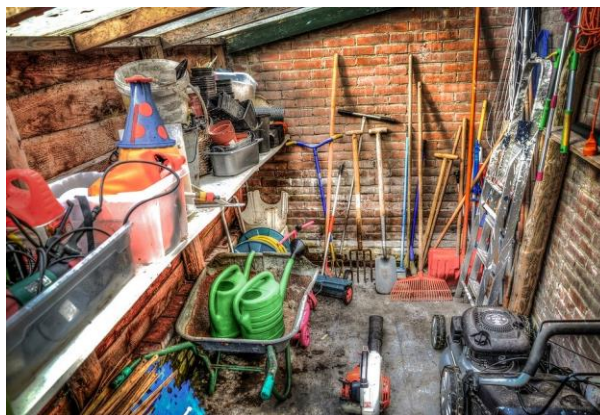
# De-clutter your life!

Rationalise your wardrobe

Reorganise your cupboards

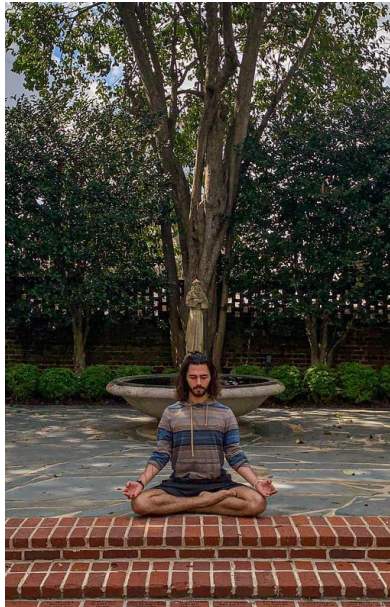
Clear out the shed or garage

Review books, CDs, vinyl, DVDs



# Relax and meditate

Make time to relax and focus on your breathing





# Think about your “happy place”

We can't travel at the moment, but think about your “happy place” and believe that one day you'll be back there!



# Do some long-term planning

Take back control by planning your future

- Financial planning
- Home improvements
- Create your “bucket list”
- Career direction and self-improvement





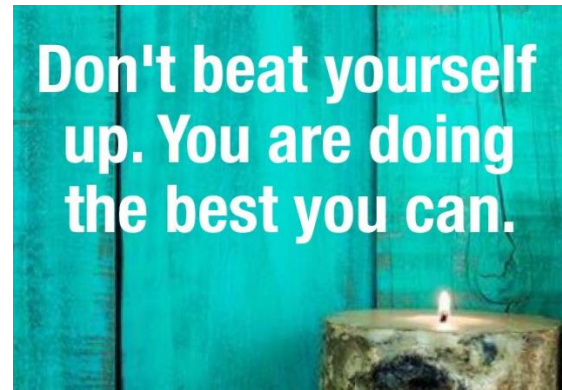
# Reflect . . .

Think about what's changed for the better during lockdown and what you've achieved.

Tick things off the to do list.

Don't beat yourself up if you've not done it all.

Count your blessings!



# And finally . . .

This won't last forever and you will get through it.

Everyone is finding this difficult and each of us will have our own reasons to feel stressed or unsettled.

If you're struggling, ask for help.

Friends, family, colleagues, employers will all want to help.

AILO wishes you, your families and loved ones good health during this strange time and we hope the information we've gathered here has helped you in some way.

STAY SAFE.







# Thank you

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