

MITC
Music Industry
Therapists & Coaches

**GUIDE TO
ANXIETY
RELIEF
& SELF
ISOLATION**

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This guide has been put together by Tamsin Embleton, Laura Newton and Type40 with help from Helen Buffett, Emmaline Rasmussen, Marcus Blacker, Mike Exeter, Adrianna Irvine, Heather Findlay, Rose Romain and Ellie Giles. All of whom gave their services, insight and advice for free. Thank you, everyone!

Introduction

This guide is a free, supportive resource geared towards helping you move through the bizarre, surreal and anxiety-provoking circumstances we find ourselves in due to covid-19. It's been put together by myself, **Tamsin Embleton**, an ex-venue/festival booker turned psychotherapist who specialises in working with musicians & music industry professionals. I am a co-Chair for the **Association for Electronic Music's Health** group and the founder of the MITC - **the Music Industry Therapists and Coaches**. The MITC are practitioners who worked previously in and around the music industry (at record labels, in studios, radio, in live music, in management companies) before retraining in our respective fields. We advise and train music companies and charities and also work one-to-one and with groups therapeutically. We work in person in the US & UK and online (yes, that was a shameless plug in the very first paragraph!). Let's get them out the way early, eh, then we can get down to business... Here's another one: we've teamed up with a host of world-wide specialists to write a book called the Touring & Mental Health manual (out 2021) helping touring professionals navigate the highs and lows of touring including: performance anxiety, addiction, relationship difficulties, conflict and resolution, fitness on the road, nutrition, optimal performances, media training and cancel culture, flight anxiety, loneliness, disrupted sleep, hearing & vocal health, crisis management, the post-tour blues, and much much more. Sign up to the mailing list on **our website** and we'll keep you posted on freebies, publications, training and workshops (more info at the back of this guide).

INSIDE THE ANXIETY RELIEF & SELF-ISOLATION GUIDE

This guide offers you two things:

- + Anxiety support (for yourself and for children geared towards developing self-awareness, resilience and helping you build a tool-kit to use whenever necessary)
- + Tips for self-isolation (including tips for home-working, nutrition and exercise).

Due to time restrictions, the focus is on providing day-to-day support. The deeper causes and issues underlying persistent anxiety disorders are out of this document's remit. So, if something resonates with you or you feel compelled to explore it deeper - do. Suggestions are peppered throughout and also at the end in the Resources section (where you will also find music industry specific advice). If you feel you need more in-depth support or want to explore things further with a therapist or coach, **contact us** or find yourself a therapist online. As with all mental health advice - pick what works for you, discard the rest. There is no one-size-fits-all solution - you are a unique and complex individual, find what works for you.

So, plugs aside - what does the guide contain? Well, we have some anxiety relieving techniques and thinking points from me (Tamsin), some breathing techniques that will engage your parasympathetic nervous system and reduce your anxiety symptoms, care of Marcus Blacker label manager of Chapter 24 records (and also a breath-work coach). Emmaline Rasmussen of Sound Nutrition (US) is going to help you to stock up and nourish your body and tips from Grammy-award winning record producer Mike Exeter (Black Sabbath, Judas Priest & more).

ANXIETY

Times of uncertainty and instability are inherently stressful. They threaten our sense of safety. It can be overwhelming when strong emotions, such as fear, surface causing a myriad of emotional, cognitive, and physical responses. Figuring out what's happening internally for you, noticing your reactions and implementing helpful coping strategies will make you, your family and your community feel stronger.

“The experience of stress has three components. The first is the event, physical or emotional, that the organism interprets as threatening. This is the stress stimulus, also called the stressor. The second element is the processing system that experiences and interprets the meaning of the stressor. In the case of human beings, this processing system is the nervous system, in particular the brain. The final constituent is the stress response, which consists of the various physiological and behavioural adjustments made as a reaction to the perceived threat.”

Gabor Maté

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a physical, emotional and cognitive experience. When anxiety is triggered, the body undergoes changes such as an elevated heart rate, rapid/shallow breathing, increased muscular tension, hot/cold flushes and digestion difficulties. The mind is more agitated and/or fearful, often 'over-thinking', generalising, ruminating, jumping to conclusions, catastrophising, with 'black and white' thought patterns (perceiving things as 'all good' or 'all bad') or becoming stuck in negative thought-loops. Sometimes people also experience intrusive thoughts or images.

Why does this happen? Well, your body has registered a threat and it's gearing up for a fight, flight, freeze or flop response - raising the heart rate, altering the breath, tensing the muscles and scanning the area for signs of danger. It's important to remember that when you're anxious your usual thinking capacity is impaired. You will find it harder to reflect, think clearly and keep your longer term goals in mind. You might also feel chaotic, impulsive or reactive, with urges to self-soothe in ways that offer temporary relief but are ultimately harmful to your body (such as substance misuse, disordered eating patterns or self-harm).

When feeling anxious, or under-threat, your spidey-sense (i.e. your brain's alarm and threat response system) has gone into overdrive and by that I mean that it's sensitised and may not give you an accurate reading of how safe you are in your immediate surroundings. This means that it no longer serves you in the way that it should. An over-active alarm system is as problematic as a completely inactive one. Where you want to be, is somewhere in the middle: with an efficient alarm system that goes off when there is a nearby genuine threat.

Our goal, then, is to help you find the middle ground. We need to help you regulate the body and mind helping you feel calmer and more able to think clearly, make decisions and act upon them.

-
- + If you are reading this, you've reached for care; now the question is - can you take some of it in?
 - + Can you care enough for yourself to really, truly give yourself what you need during this time?
 - + If you do, after this is over, you will find that you've learnt a lot more about yourself, become more resilient and grown in ways you least expected. **YOU GOT THIS!**

PANIC ATTACKS

WHAT ARE PANIC ATTACKS?

A panic attack is a sudden and intense physical and psychological experience of extreme anxiety that manifests in symptoms such as feeling frightened, breathless and sweaty with a dry mouth, dizziness, disorientation, shaking, nausea and a rapid heart beat. Panic attacks distort your thinking as well as giving you physical symptoms, heightening negative thoughts (filtering out the good thoughts), provoking catastrophising, over-generalising or 'all-or-nothing' thinking (where things seem all good or all bad).

The first thing to remember if you are having a panic attack is that **you are not in immediate danger**. Nothing bad will happen to you during this time. It might seem as if you're going to have a heart attack or that you can't breathe, but this is not the case. It will pass.

When our bodies are in a heightened state of anxiety, it can be very hard to think your way out of it, so the first thing we need to do is to help your body to feel calmer and safer - slowing down your breathing and lowering the heart-rate. You can reduce your symptoms using this simple technique called EGO.

COPING WITH PANIC ATTACKS

E is for Exhale: bring your heart rate down by elongating your out-breath.

- + Sit up straight and open out your shoulders, allowing you a greater capacity to breathe.
- + Take a breath in and then elongate your out-breath.
- + Repeat this for 3-5 minutes.
- + You can listen to calming music, or follow a breathing app like iBreathe (choose the 4-7-8 breathing exercise, which will help to bring your heart rate down and manage the anxious feelings and can also be effective for sleep difficulties).
- + During the exercise, some people find it helpful to visualise breathing out **chaos** and breathing in **courage**.

G is for Grounding: bring your attention to your body.

Grounding is a way of bringing you back to the present moment. One way of doing that is by focusing on the sensations of the body.

- + How do the points of contact with the floor or chair feel?
-

-
- + Start with your toes and gradually move your attention up through your body to the top of your head.
 - + What sensations can you feel in each area of your body?
 - + Soften any areas holding tension (jaw, forehead, shoulders, tummy - wherever you feel it).
 - + Guided body scans, such as this one, can also be effective for active minds that need something to do..

Other grounding techniques include drinking a very cold glass of water or using your senses to bring you back to the present.

More grounding techniques here:

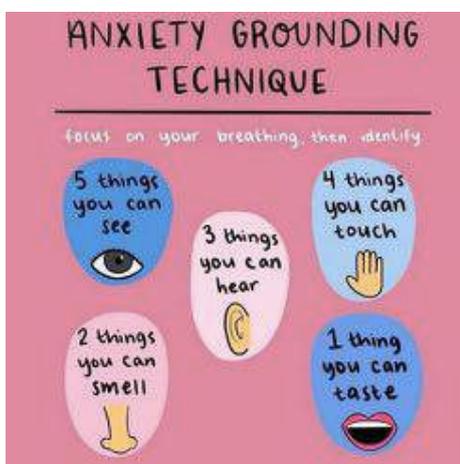
<https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques#mental-techniques>

And here:

<https://www.livingwell.org.au/well-being/mental-health/grounding-exercises/>

O is for Orientate: move your focus to where you are.

- + Notice any sounds around you as you sit and re-centre.
- + What can you see?
- + Focus on an object in your surroundings and explore it; try to describe it as best you can. How might it feel, what texture does it have?
- + How heavy is it?
- + After that, stretch out any remaining tension.



When you are feeling more yourself again you can reflect on what might have triggered the panic attack. The trigger may be a situation, a feeling, an object or a person.

BREATHWORK

BY MARCUS BLACKER OF LIFE & BREATH



The answer to calming anxiety is right under your nose ... Notice how when you feel stressed, anxious or afraid your breath becomes short and shallow, whereas when you feel calm and content your breath is deep, full and relaxed. The way we breathe has a direct impact on our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Our breathing is the only process in the body that is both completely automatic and also completely under our control, and as such, it offers a wonderful opportunity to steer the body-mind system.

A major component of the stress response system in the body is the autonomic nervous system, a control system that acts largely unconsciously and regulates bodily functions such as heart rate, digestion and respiration, as well as our hormonal, glandular and immune systems. The autonomic nervous system has two main branches: the sympathetic (or "fight/flight/freeze/flop") system and the parasympathetic (or "rest/digest/recover") system. In general, the sympathetic nervous system prepares the body for action by increasing heart rate, blood pressure and blood sugar, releasing stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol and dilating the pupils. The parasympathetic nervous system, on the other hand, has a calming influence on the body, slowing it down by lowering the heart rate and blood pressure, simultaneously promoting digestion, the uptake of nutrients, rest and regeneration in the body.

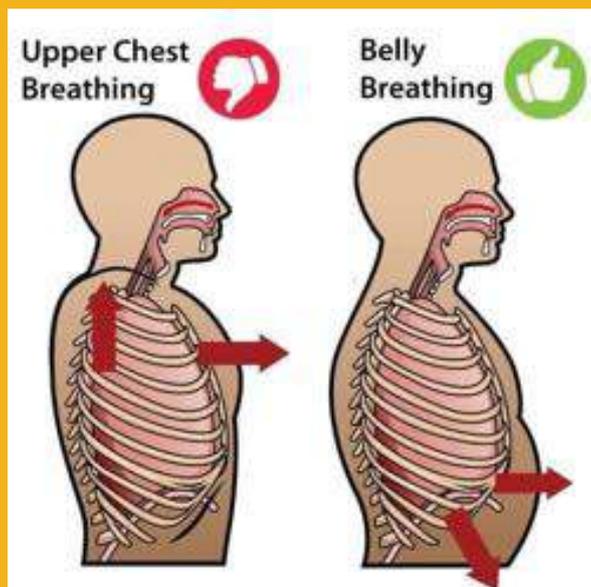
One of the keys to managing your state of mind and stress level lies in being able to activate the calming parasympathetic pathways of your nervous system. Consciously breathing in the ways described below instructs the vagus nerve to apply the brakes on the body, stimulating the rest/digest/recover response - reducing anxiety and stress and increasing relaxation. By simply becoming more aware of our breath, without seeking to consciously control it, we can also have a bit of distance from anxious thoughts and feelings - this breath awareness is a form of mindfulness meditation.

-
- + Start progressively, breathing consciously and in a relaxed way for three seconds in and three seconds out, until it feels comfortable.
 - + Then move on to breathing for four seconds in and four seconds out and progress at your own pace, up to six seconds in and six seconds out.
 - + Taller people might want to breathe even more slowly. Once you feel comfortable with the practice you can apply it in a wide range of situations (sitting, walking, etc).

Following the "3,6,5" approach - 3 times a day, 6 breaths per minute, for 5 minutes at a time - is a great start and if you can apply the practice daily for a few weeks, you will reap the most benefits. Even better, 20 minutes per day for a period of 21 days will rebalance and recalibrate the nervous system and install the coherent breathing reflex as a default practice (see **this article**). Even one minute of coherent breathing will help lower cortisol levels, boost the immune system, make you calmer and stabilise your heart.

See **here** for a more detailed overview of coherent breathing, as well as this simple **Quick Coherence® Technique** from the HeartMath Institute.

3. Diaphragmatic Breathing (a.k.a. "Belly Breathing")



A third method for controlling anxiety is to breathe slowly into the belly.

- + Lie on your back with knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
- + Put a book or some other weighted object on your belly. When you inhale, lift the book up with your breath.
- + When you breathe out, let the book settle down again. Breathe rhythmically, and as you are breathing in and out, see that the book is moving up and down.

While sitting: place your hands over your belly button and interlace your fingers very lightly. When you inhale, the breath should cause your hands to move apart. When you exhale, the hands should come together again.

While standing: place your hands on each side of your waist, above your hips. When you exhale, squeeze your hands toward your midline, and squeeze your fingers together. When you inhale, you should feel the breath moving your hands apart and spreading your fingers open. Gradually apply more pressure with your hands and fingers, in order to resist the expansion, and inhale against this external pressure.



Marcus Blacker is the owner and label manager of Chapter 24 Records, but these days his main focus is on working as an Integrative Coach and Breathwork Therapist with his new Life & Breath business. Contact Marcus if you would like to book a one-to-one or group session.

<https://lifeandbreath.coach/>

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

One of the challenges of Covid-19 is that there is a threat but that the threat is hard to identify or detect as early symptoms are familiar and ordinary, hard to quantify (which can trigger fear of the unknown) and we're unsure of when things will return to normal (leaving us with feelings of uncertainty). It can increase health anxiety and uncover death anxiety (which the existentialists would suggest is always present though not always in our conscious awareness). It has disrupted the routines, plans and structures that bring shape to our lives and challenges our sense of being in control. It confronts us with our own limitations - which is a hard reality to face. The dust is yet to settle and we are collectively and individually still figuring out how to process and cope in the face of a pandemic.

Helping to identify what it is that you're feeling and how you respond to stress will give you a clearer sense of what's going on inside so that you can start to come to terms with what you're experiencing and figure out the best way forward.

MAP IT OUT

1. Identify Triggers

- + When, how and where is your anxiety most apparent?
- + At what time of day?
- + Is it worse/better before you've eaten or exercised?
- + Check it against **H.A.L.T.** - is it heightened when you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?
- + Is it impacted by who you speak to, or the media you consume?
- + Are there any trigger words for you?
- + Is it visual, such as when seeing pictures of empty shelves, people in masks, or a red flashing light next to an update?

Note down the triggers you identify. Noticing the triggers and early signs of anxiety can help you manage them better. Reducing exposure to triggers is important. There is a lot of misinformation, opinion and speculation flying around - ensure that you only check credible sources. Turning off smart-phones news notifications and limiting the number of times you look (once or twice a day is plenty) can help. Perhaps you also need to think about particular relationships and either agree to reduce how often you speak about Covid-19, or gently let some people know that you're taking a break from talking about it, or from social media for now. If you need to 'mute' a WhatsApp group, then do; or reduce your social media time: do. If you need a weekend (or longer) without viewing any news sources - give yourself that. Putting in place boundaries is really important and can help you stem the flow of anxiety leaking in from outside.

2. What happens in the body?

- + What happens in your body when you feel triggered?
- + Does anything change? If so, what?
- + Where do you feel it and what happens to that area?
- + Tension, tightness, tummy issues, headaches, increased tinnitus, sweating or hot/cold flushes?
- + What about your breathing? Is it shallower, more rapid or are you holding your breath?
- + How is your posture? Are you slumping or curling your body in towards itself? If so, fight the urge to collapse.

Think of your body as a barometer for how you are doing inside. Learn to listen to the signals it is sending you. If you need a period of rest, allow yourself that. If you feel agitated, engage in calming activities to bring yourself back into a tolerable range. Likewise if you feel your body 'collapsing' or shutting down (longer than a rest period) think about how you can get moving to bring yourself back into your comfort zone.

Our body is often way ahead of our minds in terms of registering anxiety. Learning the language of bodily communications can help you notice early warning signs and start to address them early on. If you have a headache - give yourself a break from screens. If you are holding tension - stretch it out or massage that area. Heightened anxiety is a restless internal state which is why some people find exercise particularly useful. Not only does exercise release endorphins but it also helps reduce stress and rebalance energy.

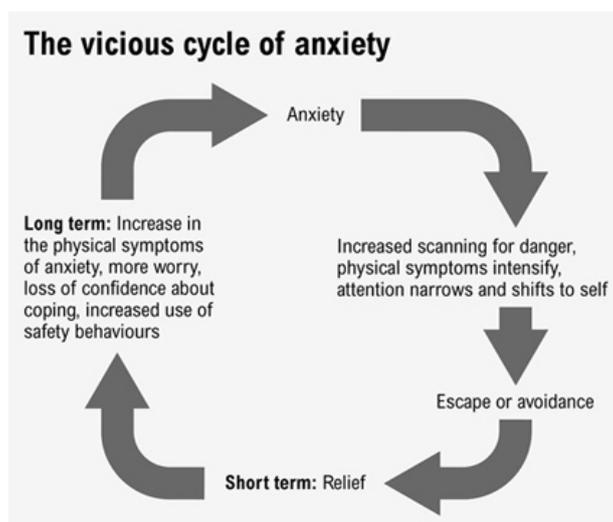
3. Identifying unhelpful thought patterns

Identifying unhelpful thought patterns

- + Is your thinking rigid, black & white, catastrophizing or ruminating?
- + Are you generalising, using a lot of 'should's'?
- + Are you finding it difficult to think or concentrate?
- + Is your impulse to hide, to block the world out, to sleep, to drink/eat/smoke or consume something in excess?
- + Have you felt like this before? If so, when?

See if you can **replace a limiting thought with a helpful one** e.g.

- + *"I can't cope and I'm not going to get through this" with "I'm finding this hard right now but there are tools and support that I can use to help me manage"*
- + *"I should work but I can't concentrate or get anything right" with "this is a stressful time and I am doing my best"*
- + *"I worry about things all the time" with "sometimes I worry, but I know I can also laugh and enjoy life"*
- + *"I'm a failure because I can't protect my family" with "I am a compassionate person. I care about my family and I have put sensible measures in place" ur breathing? Is it shallower, more rapid or are you holding your breath?"*



4. Self-soothing vs Self-care

Self-care and self-soothing are related but distinct concepts. Self-soothing is about reaching for some in-the-moment comfort. It doesn't resolve difficulties in your life, but it tends to feel good and temporarily reduce or replace stress. Self-soothing might include:

- + Positive self-talk (telling yourself it's going to be OK if you're having a wobble)
- + Treating yourself to your favourite food
- + Binge-watching a TV show
- + Running a bath
- + Reading

-
- + Buying new clothes (or pedal boards, whatever floats your boat)
 - + Having a massage

Self-soothing provides momentary (or immediate) relief from emotional and/or bodily states of stress. It can involve healthy (or at least, non-harmful) activities or it can be unhealthy (or harmful) ones. Some people attempt to relieve pain or distress by soothing in unhealthy or risky ways that don't bear long-term health or goals in mind. Some examples of this include consuming excessive alcohol, legal and illegal substances, compulsive sexual behaviour, gambling or disordered eating patterns. They provide temporary comfort or distraction from difficult or absent emotions such as feeling fear, out of control, shame, disappointment, loneliness and frustration, as well as bodily experiences like anxiety or lethargy. The problem is that these self-soothing methods worsen difficulties in the long-run and are often harmful to the health of the individual.

When comfort-seeking is ritualised and compulsive we call it addiction. Addiction has roots in trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and inconsistent or inadequate care-giving that has not prepared the individual with the internal resources to help them regulate.

"Self-care is self-esteem in action"
Mandy Saligari

Self-care, on the other hand, is quite literally taking care of yourself and meeting your own needs, with longer term goals in mind. We tend to learn (or not learn) the skills of how to take care of ourselves during childhood and adolescence. Self-care reduces the stress in your life, not just the stress occurring in the moment. Self-care is:

- + Seeking care for physical or emotional difficulty
- + Exercising
- + Meditating
- + Getting enough good-quality sleep
- + Nourishing your body
- + Managing your finances (as much as you're able to)
- + Engaging in community activities
- + Pursuing and maintaining healthy relationships (with appropriate boundaries and room for both partner's voices, needs and emotions)

Sometimes healthy self-soothing can act as a necessary step to bring the body and mind back into a tolerable state before engaging in self-care, allowing our bodies and minds to calm enough so that we can consider what we need to do to take care of ourselves longer-term.

5. Worrying

So you find yourself worrying and worrying and worrying some more. But does it actually help? Do you tell yourself that worrying is helping you, somehow, to work out what's happening? Remember that your thinking capacity is impaired when you are anxious so worrying is unlikely to be serving you. In fact, it's probably increasing your fears by focusing only on negative outcomes. Worrying keeps you feeling stuck and in a hyper-aroused state where you're not thinking clearly. In doing so, it distracts you and gets in the way of your day-to-day functioning. When thinking about this you may become aware that worrying is acting as a barrier and protecting you from feeling something that is deeper and harder to feel (such as anger, grief, pain, shame or disappointment).

ADDRESSING ANXIETY

1. Make a plan

Arm yourself with the facts from proper sources and figure out what you would do if you or a loved one gets sick.

- + What can you put in place on a daily basis and longer term?
- + Who can you speak to?
- + Think about the practical - mortgage companies, banks, landlords and see what's available to you.

Positively plan for the future: What would you like to do when this is over? Is there anywhere you would like to go? Things you'd like to do? Use the time that opens up to fine-tune your future plans and use them to hold on to hope. Remember that there are opportunities out there that you are not aware of yet, it's important to be optimistic.

2. Turn around and face your fear

Figure out what your current fear is made of. What's inside of it?

- + Is it fear or dread of the unknown?
- + Uncertainty?
- + Loss of control?
- + Loss of status?
- + Job insecurity?
- + Financial anxiety?
- + Food shortages?
- + Loss of status?
- + Health anxiety?
- + Fear of losing loved ones?
- + Fear of being alone?

Or perhaps it's some sort of god-awful power-combo. When we allow our fear to chase us around it snowballs, becoming bigger and scarier in the process whilst pushing us further into dark and difficult places in the mind.

Slowing down, looking at your fears square on, naming them and accepting them reduces their power (Dr. Dan Siegal says you've got 'to name it to tame it'). Can you come to a place of acceptance? **Remember: this is not how things will always be, but it is how they are for now.** Think like Camus and embrace the absurdity of life in the knowledge that things will change.

3. Forgive your limitations

Coming to terms with our own limitations can be tough (especially for the perfectionists out there! **Thomas Curran's TED talk on Perfectionism** is great, by the way). Sadly, we can't protect ourselves against all human suffering, nor can we alleviate it (that one goes out to all the compulsive caregivers!). Your limitations are not a personal failure, it is just part of the human condition. Be kind to yourself.

Acknowledging choice and agency (both ours and other people's) is key to reducing overwhelm and bringing your anxiety levels down. Keep in mind that acknowledging the limits of what we can control does not mean relinquishing for what we are responsible for. There are also things that are within reach, including:

- + How you choose to cope
- + How you stay connected
- + How and when you reach for help
- + Your personal hygiene
- + What information you expose yourself to
- + How you structure your day
- + How you stay connected
- + How you take care of your immediate environment
- + What you plan for the future

Facing our fears also confronts us with what has been there all along, underneath everything. That right, folks! Our own limitations, our own mortality and the uncertainty and precarity of life (*...and a career in the music business - eek*). This can feel abrasive, shocking and frightening, but **don't underestimate your ability to face these fears, accept them, forgive yourself for our limitations and move forward in full awareness of them.** Whatever it is and however heavy it feels right now - feelings can and do change, this is undoubtedly challenging but it is bearable and you will get through this. In fact - you already are...

Serenity Prayer

*'God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference'*

by Reinhold Niebuhr

4. Remember that this will end and it's not your fault.

It's important to bear in mind that this stressful period is not one you could have foreseen or prepared for and it WILL end. We're not sure when, at this point, but each day is another day closer to the end. **Take one day at a time**. If the day doesn't go so well, remember to be kind to yourself, there's another day tomorrow.

5. Moving through fear

The antidote to fear is hope. You don't need to feel sunny all day every day (unless you're a kids TV presenter) but if you can tune in and foster occasional flashes of hope, it will help you to reduce the fear that you feel. **Positivity needs to be stimulated**. Now, that doesn't mean ignoring bad or difficult feelings (that's not helpful, or realistic), but it does mean putting time and effort into engaging in activities and relationships that help you feel good feelings.

What are you hopeful for?

Write a gratitude list - of all the things, small and large, that you feel grateful for today. I'll start: I'm grateful for the snowdrops in the that my cat has chosen this moment in time to stop being such a meanie (honestly, it's been 11 years and finally he's chilled the f*ck out...). What can you make in the space that's opened up? This is an opportunity for you not only to **BE** creative but to **LIVE** creatively. That doesn't mean feeling pressured to write your opus - it's a stressful time, so be realistic.

And that, my friends, is the key to resilience - rolling with the punches. Resilience is not ignoring what is happening to you, instead it is accepting reality, giving space to feel whatever comes up and then adapting, learning and growing despite the current circumstances. It means picking yourself up, dusting yourself off, offering yourself some self-compassion and engaging in a bit of trial-and-error. Fancy giving it a whirl?

The opposite of feeling powerless is recognising and acknowledging your **strengths**.

Write them down - how have you coped with adversity in the past? What are the parts of you that you are proud of, that you like or that have served you well? These are skills that you can engage with to remind yourself what you're capable of. It can build you back up when you're feeling a bit wobbly. Nothing is too small - it all counts! Be generous.

6. Making meaning out of adversity

Viktor Frankl's remarkable account of his life in Auschwitz (in his book - **Man's Search for Meaning**) illustrates the importance of nurturing hope and making meaning even in the most brutal, unimaginable, tragic circumstances. Not only did he manage to write a hopeful book about Auschwitz (!) but in it he shows that if we make meaning from our experiences, create communities and find purpose, we can survive even the most psychologically challenging situations.

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Viktor Frankl

7. Connection is crucial

Be proactive and seek out support and companionship for yourself. Who can you speak honestly and openly with? Who can make you laugh? Who is supportive? Think about who really 'sees' you, who gets who you are and who you feel most comfortable talking with. Stay connected with friends, colleagues and family through Google Hangouts, Zoom, Skype, online communities (such as 12-step meetings or online support groups) or gaming (suggestions for games in the self-isolation section). *"We are all recovering from something"* **Rose Romain** (coach and recovery specialist). Friends outside of the industry can offer comfort during times of difficulty and they can remind you of the other parts of you and your life, aside from your role in the music industry. They can help you retain perspective during adversity and remind you not to tie your self-worth solely to your career. Try to be honest when they ask you how you are doing.

8. Take responsibility for your communication

Reaching for support is important but it's important to also be responsible for the messages you're sending out into the world. Is it giving you relief to share your anxiety on social media? Perhaps, but maybe that's sparking anxiety for someone else. Stress and anxiety can make us feel irritable. They tend to turn our focus inward, meaning we're not always as aware of how we are impacting others. Be mindful of this. If you are regularly discussing your worries with someone, check in with how they're finding it (to ensure you're not just off-loading). Make it reciprocal. Be aware that sometimes people need space (that's not necessarily a rejection of you and your needs).

If you don't feel you have someone you can speak openly and honestly with and you need somewhere to take your fears, find a therapist or counsellor. They will help you make sense of things and help you to feel less alone.

9. Have boundaries

Caring for others can improve self-worth, regain perspective and help us feel useful and connected but a constant stream of energy going one way is going to leave you depleted, drained, irritable and exhausted. You are not responsible for how other people cope emotionally (unless they're your children). There is a limit to what we are able to offer whilst maintaining our own internal emotional state. Good boundaries help you to support yourself (and support others when you have the resources to do so).

ANXIETY TOOL KIT

Sustained or ongoing anxiety increases the stress hormones in your body. When stress is chronic it can impact your immunity and lead to a myriad of health difficulties later down the line. The tools below are geared towards helping you to create a sense of inner safety and reassurance in order to reduce these hormones and regulate your emotional and bodily experiences. There are resources throughout this guide and also in the section for children and self-isolation. Read it all, make a note of what you'd like to try and if it works - add it to your 'tool kit' (which is a list, basically).

Disclaimer: there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Find what works for you.

First things first: prioritise self-care.

The greater the stress, the greater the need for support. It's that simple. If you want to cope better, support those around you and reduce your anxiety then you need to implement healthy, therapeutic practices. Self-care helps us regulate our emotions, manage our energy cycles and have some much-needed alone time so we can rebalance and feel separate from the emotional needs of others. It helps reduce the likelihood of compassion fatigue, which is especially important to bear in mind for caregivers. **Self-care is not indulgent, it's non-negotiable!**

Reduce stimulants

Anxiety/stress means your body is already dealing with amped up hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. You don't need caffeine or other stimulants on top of those - they can tip you over the edge from 'coping' to 'not coping' by heightening feelings of agitation and anxiety. This includes **blue light from devices for a couple of hours before bed**. **Pzizz** is a great app used to help encourage relaxation and sleep for bedtime or daytime naps.

Write it down

Feel the disappointment, fear, shame and anger. Identify and articulate what the pain is for you. At some stage you could write it out, in narrative form to help you make sense of what has happened to you. If unhelpful thoughts are buzzing around your head, **get it out and get it down on paper** or record them in a voice-note and then throw it away. Burn it, if it feels good (/ is safe to do so).

Get curious: which part of you is anxious?

Reflect on the part of you that gets anxious. Do you feel like you're in an 'adult' place, where you can think clearly and make good decisions? Or do you feel younger, perhaps overwhelmed, frightened and in need of a stable, caring adult to take the lead. If you can consider the anxious state as a child or adolescent part of you, you can start to think about how you would show that part some care and help create a sense of safety (you can look at the supporting children section for some ideas). 'Zooming out' and developing a capacity for reflection will give you a little bit of distance from the anxiety, which in turn will slightly reduce it. Now engage with another part of you - a caring adult part to take care of the overwhelmed child/adolescent part. **What does that frightened child part need right now?** It can be difficult to know how to care for ourselves

if we haven't experienced consistent, available and attuned caregiving as children. Perhaps you are more comfortable showing others care, but not so used to directing it inwardly. If that is the case for you - be patient, be kind, allow yourself time to learn this new skill (you don't have to get it right the first time).

“

Beneath every behavior is a feeling. And beneath every feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behavior, we begin to deal with the cause not the symptom.

— Ashleigh Warner
Psychologist

edurotia

Positive Self-Talk

Positivity needs to be cultivated and that takes a bit of effort (especially for those who have survived trauma, unresolved loss or adversity in the past). Find a reassuring phrase that works for you and repeat it to yourself. I quite like this Morning meditation which contains some helpful mantras e.g.

'This is temporary. It will pass.'

'I've got through tricky times before, I will get through this.'

'I'm stronger than I think I am.'

Identifying an Inner Critic

Beating yourself up when things go wrong will

worsen how you feel (sounds obvious, doesn't it?). We are not born with inner critics, they grow from painful relational experiences - phrases that have been directed at you along the way and internalised (sometimes from caregivers, sometimes from bullies, peers, partners, the media or people in positions of power). Think of the inner critic as a 'not me' part. Don't battle with it as that usually stimulates the opposite effect (making it stronger). Instead visualise yourself turning the volume down on the inner critic and building in some positive self-talk and use the Dream Team below as a counter-balance.

Remember that thoughts aren't facts!

And, furthermore, they don't have to be engaged with. You don't need to give negative thoughts your full attention. When you engage with them they tend to spiral. Take a step out - notice what has happened to your thinking and that means your capacity to reflect on all possible outcomes is limited. See if you can get some distance from the negative thoughts when they come up and view them as balloons floating by.

Your inner Dream Team

Internal anchors is a concept I first came across on Babette Rothschild's trauma training. It involves conjuring up internal supportive figures to help us feel stronger in the moment. An anchor isn't necessarily someone you know now - it can be a figure from your past, a character in a book (one client of mine used Gandalf and one had Mrs. Doubtfire), it could be a popular figure or mentor (I nominate Brian Eno & Deborah Francis White!) or a person you have encountered (a teacher, mentor, social worker or friend). The trick is to find someone kind, wise and supportive

SUPPORTING ANXIOUS KIDS

Children are often very receptive to changes in their environments - they pick up fluctuations in atmosphere and changes in mood. Think of them as little sponges - they can soak things up, but don't forget they can also recover, with a little help from the adults who take care of them.

The current circumstances may be challenging but it is also an opportunity to help children to develop strategies that aid them in the future. Anxiety or stress responses in children includes:

- + Regressive behaviour, such as thumb-sucking or bed-wetting
- + Becoming more clingy, needing to be close or have more contact with a care-giver
- + Increased irritability, defiance or angry outbursts
- + Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- + Difficulty sleeping
- + Becoming withdrawn or sullen, preferring to play on their own or avoid contact

In times of stress it's important to offer **increased** support, love and attention. Creating a sense of safety is key. You can do that by being calm, emotionally and physically available (even more so than usual) and by being responsive to your child's needs. Encourage and invite your children to talk openly with you about how they feel. If it's hard for them to put their feelings into words, help them find the words 'it sounds like you might be feeling X?' 'Are you feeling this, or, is it more like that?' (see the 'emotion wheel' diagram below). When your child expresses their feelings - acknowledge what they've said, validate their feelings and offer them reassurance. Keep checking in with them, regularly.

Keep in mind during this time that it's your job to soothe and contain your child's fear, even if you are feeling frightened yourself. Seeing a frightened caregiver is very distressing to a child. Role-reversal - i.e. care-seeking from your child is unhelpful as it puts the burden of caregiving responsibility on the child. Also consider your tone and what adult conversations can be overheard in the home.

Rejecting a child's calls for comfort or denying, minimising or dismissing their emotional expressions is unhelpful in the moment and, if repeated, will lead to poor mental health later down the line. Teaching kids to bottle up their feelings does no one any favours (except maybe you, in the moment, if you're finding it hard to tolerate). Suddenly having children milling around 24/7 can be tough going so give yourself a break - we don't get it right every time and furthermore, kids don't need us to! Children don't need you to be perfect, they need you to be present as much as you're able to be. What we are striving towards is being a "good enough" caregiver (Winnicott). Attachment theory tells us that "good enough" means that we need to be attuned roughly half of the time for 'secure attachment'. Sounds do-able, right?

Ruptures in your relationships with your children are inevitable - **what matters is how you repair the rupture** (and that's on you as the adult to instigate). When you're not able to provide

your attention, or when ruptures happen, make up for it in an appropriate like-for-like way - spend time together, show genuine interest rather than buying presents.

It can be really hard to respond to a child's needs when we're strung out, frustrated, frightened or overwhelmed so please do take care of yourself, both for your own benefit and also so that you are able to care for those around you.



How to help children

Limit their exposure to media and news sources.

If it's triggering for adults, it's definitely difficult for children. Don't forget that what frightens and overwhelms a child might not frighten and overwhelm an adult.

Be a role model

Show your children how to cope and take care of themselves by modelling it yourself. Take breaks, do exercise, eat well, laugh, create and keep contact with friends.

Be truthful.

Give relevant but age-appropriate information if your child asks about what's going on. If a child needs to understand what would happen if Mum or Dad got sick, give an appropriate explanation with the focus on care (for yourself and for them) and how you would keep in touch. Don't promise what you can't deliver.

Keep as regular a schedule as possible

This keeps things predictable and 'held' at home in terms of bed time, nap time, dinner time and calling grandparents time. Keep a sense of normality by marking any notable family events such as birthdays or religious holidays your family usually celebrates. If you usually make pancakes on Pancake day - make pancakes!

Have fun!

Time for fun, playful activities is essential. Build a den. Have a picnic. Invent stories. Talk about (the good times) when you were a kid. Make potions or perfume. Draw each other. Do an 'Art Attack'. Make a dancing playlist together (they know about Prince, right?). Camp in the garden. Make playdough. Our family fav entertainment company - **Dantastic Productions** are hosting daily free online children's parties **check them out here**.

Stress-reduction techniques

Having some mindfulness or quiet time together is very important. Try doing some yoga, having a long wind-down routine to get ready for bed (without screens). **Breathing exercise to reduce anxiety in children** (featuring Common! Who doesn't like Common? No one, that's who. If you know, you know).

Encourage social contact (online/over the phone/writing letters)

Help your children to develop their communication skills across other platforms. Having regular check-ins with family members or good friends. Bring back pen pals!

Community support

Many of our neighbours are struggling at the moment and as a result there are community projects popping up. Volunteering is a way of channeling those frustrating feelings of helplessness and it also builds feelings of self-worth and connection to the community. If there are schemes such as letter-writing, care-packages, dog-walking or shopping for elderly

neighbours, find something that you and your child might enjoy doing together.

Making a grounding object.

Anoint a special object together - this works in the same way that a transitional object like a 'blankie', a worry stone or a special teddy works. Invest it with some special 'power' and use it as a calming device to ground your child when they feel anxious. Make the object something replaceable so that you're not hunting through Amazon at 3am trying to find a replacement. If it's soft, don't wash it (it'll lose its power!).

Get outside

Go to the park, go to the woods, go for a walk. Find a waterfall. The Great Outdoors isn't going anywhere and unless you are housebound/isolating it's an important grounding resource with many notable benefits.

Weighted blankets

Some children find weighted blankets very helpful for anxiety. You can find them online although they can be quite expensive (although I'm unsure of what I'm comparing that to... non-weighted blankets, maybe?). If you're feeling crafty, there is always the option to make one yourselves.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

- + SparkleStories.com 'Stories to Settle Fear of the Coronavirus'
- + Tom Percival's Ruby's Worry: A Big Bright Feelings Book (part of a series)
- + Dawn Huebner's 'What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety'
- + Big Life Journal 'Growth Mindset Printables Kit' (ages 5-11) worksheets & activities designed to build resilience & overcome fear of failure
- + Educational resources
- + Neil Gaimon's Mouse Circus
- + Dantastic Productions Free Interactive Virtual Kids Events
- + 'The Body Coach' Joe Wicks has set up P.E. 9am Mon-Fri UK time via YouTube.

And for adults:

- + Phillipa Perry - The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read

SELF-ISOLATION TIPS

WITH MIKE EXETER, RECORD PRODUCER

Introduction

Working from home means that many of the workplace features - such as daily contact with people on your way to work, with colleagues, bandmates or managers, regular hours, physical movement, access to greenery, sunshine and fresh air and the differentiation between work and home - are compromised. To maintain (or improve) your well-being, you have to adapt to the current circumstances - finding new ways to recreate, replace or simulate these factors.

Working from home also offers some benefits - you might have more time to cook, to read or listen to podcasts or engage in leisure activities. The flexibility of working from home can offer a sense of agency and freedom, but at times you might feel distracted, demotivated, restricted or isolated.

“Those who are well-resourced, feel comfortable spending time on their own and have tools to go inward may find self-isolation easier than those who don’t.”

Kristen Gilbert, Occupational Therapist & DJ

The home-working environment

For some people there will be restrictions on leaving home for a number of weeks or months, meaning that access to green spaces is limited or stopped completely. If you have the funds available, look into purchasing some indoor plants. Numerous studies have shown that bringing plants into offices improves air quality, overall employee wellbeing, cognitive function and productivity whilst reducing stress-levels & sick days. So, think about how you can bring the outside in. No doubt there are many clever ways of growing vegetables in small spaces, if that sounds appealing. You could also consider investing in some 10,000 lux SAD lights/bulbs. SAD lights simulate sunshine, helping to regulate circadian cycles by reducing melatonin and increasing serotonin levels (which is why they are thought to improve mood and energy levels).

Routine

Disorganisation can lead to feeling overloaded, frazzled and overwhelmed. Those who set routines tend to feel more organised, productive and find it easier to wind-down. Routine is key - it reduces stress and anchors us in our day. Divide your day into blocks and figure out how you want to use them. Include time away from screens. Stay open - try something out, reflect on whether it worked and adjust it until you find a balance that works for you. It may be you need to revise it later down the line - don't berate yourself if you don't stick to it.

Fatigue

Be aware that your energy levels and enthusiasm to work will fluctuate when living space. Tiredness is impacted by how much you move, what you eat, your sleep patterns, screen-use and various other factors. Figuring out what contributes to fatigue for you, is key to finding a good balance. Maybe you realise that lots of online video conference calls in a row tire you out?

In which case prioritise the essential calls. Ensure you factor in tech and media breaks.

'Cabin fever'

Cabin fever is thought to be the result of two things: feeling socially disconnected and being bored, so building in some brain stimulation and leaving room for variety will help combat this (activities below). Set reminders for regular breaks and social contact. Marking the end of the working day with a ritual can help you feel like you're leaving your work-life and moving into recreation time.

Activities to stimulate the mind/brain

- + Moog and Korg free synth apps
- + Games such as Chess, Scrabble, Sudoku can all be found online
- + Learn to dance online with Steezy or swing and charleston with Sugar Push Vintage
- + Learn a language with Duolingo
- + Share your skills at SkillShare
- + Watch a Masterclass
- + Neil Gaimon's free downloadables
- + 2 months of free Adobe Creative (for budding photographers)
- + Hobbies such as painting, knitting, playing music or making playlists etc
- + Read/Listen to ebooks, audiobooks and podcasts

Go easy on yourself

It can be hard to think and retain information when we are stressed. Not every day is going to be productive. **Celebrate small victories.** For some people, the space that's opened up has already provoked internal pressure around self-improvement and 'making the most' of the spate of online courses and opportunities that are being circulated. Bear in mind that an **international crisis does not have to be your most productive time!** This does not have to be the time you write your opus or study neuroscience (note to self...). Think about how you are measuring this idea of 'self-improvement' and what it might suggest about your current feelings of self-worth. Slowing down, reflecting and recuperating is crucial to your well-being. **You are enough already, just as you are.**

Being alone

According to Donald Winnicott, the capacity to endure and value time alone emerges from a secure relationship with a reliable, emotionally available and responsive caregiver. It is an important marker of psychological development. We develop that capacity during childhood through the presence of a reliable and available caregiver. Though a bit of alone time is important for everyone, elongated periods of isolation can be detrimental to your psychological and physical health, compounding or amplifying feelings of loneliness, overwhelm, depression and boredom. There may be feelings of shock, emptiness, loss or anger at what is no longer available, or shame around not having the support that we really need and crave. If that sounds familiar can you figure out what it is that you have lost and the feelings that it brings up for you?

Loneliness isn't about physical proximity, it's about not feeling seen or deeply connected to. So, you can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely. Our brains are wired for social contact - it's a basic human need. For some, current circumstances may mean they can put words to feelings of loneliness more easily. Johan Hari's book/audiobook 'Lost Connections' gives a good overview of the main causes of depression in digestible non-clinical language. Think about who you can check in with and who you want deeper contact with. Remember that different friends or family members can offer different things - we rarely get everything we need from one source. Who can offer guidance and support? Who can make you laugh? Who gets your current work circumstances? One challenge will be keeping up communication after the initial wave of enthusiasm wanes. If you are in a managerial role, keep up regular contact with those you work with - check in with them, find out how they're doing, let them vent and ensure you have adequate support yourself.

There are many mentors, coaches, **therapists and counsellors** who work online. There are also many groups on Facebook and perhaps locally that can help you feel connected to your community. There are online groups for anxiety and addiction where people can offer peer support (see the Resources section at the end of this guide for more information and links). It takes courage to be vulnerable and to reach out. Brene Brown has researched, written and spoken extensively on vulnerability - find **some of her work here**.

The importance of space

Finding space for yourself within your relationship is equally as important as moments of connection. One of the difficulties with long-term relationships can be a sense of 'merging'. This can have a detrimental impact on sexual intimacy. We need to view our partners as separate beings from us in order to keep desire alive. If you are self-isolating with your family, figure out ways to get a breather or space when you need it. Share responsibilities, offer support, allow each other the time to engage in individual activities. Recognise resentment when it bubbles up as a signal that it's time to take a breather and recalibrate. **Esther Perel's relationship therapy podcast** has some great insights into relational dynamics.

Differing responses

We all respond differently in times of stress and it may be that you and your partner find different aspects of this situation difficult, at different times and express that in different ways. Living in a restricted space puts added strain on relationships. Feeling disconnected (through not receiving the emotional response we were hoping for), or uncertain, triggers our defence systems which surface in a variety of ways such as becoming critical or blaming, distant or withholding or amplifying and demanding that our needs are met. These defences often push our partners further away or lead to arguments. Try to tune in to the needs you have as individuals and show appreciation for the perspective, effort, and support your partner contributes. Be accessible and available, where possible. Remember to request, rather than demand support. Sue Johnson's 'Hold me Tight' book - sheds light on common relational communication strategies and suggests how to reconnect or stay connected.

I spoke with Record Producer **Mike Exeter** (Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Cradle of Filth & Cyndi Lauper) about how he copes with working long hours in the studio alone, here's some of Mike's top tips:

Create a routine (keeping a sense of normality and structure)

- + Get up at a regular time
- + Get showered and dressed as if going to work. Working from another space in the home can be really helpful in differentiating between 'work time' and 'leisure time'.
- + Learn to dance online with Steezy or swing and charleston with Sugar Push Vintage
- + Set up regular times to talk to people, check in on friends and family.
- + Don't beat yourself up about not being able to get as much done - these are strange and uncertain times!

Limit access to social media but don't shut out the outside world

- + This will give you more time to do positive things and keep the brain active
- + You will lessen exposure to triggers which can have negative effects.
- + Listen to comedy shows or positive podcasts instead of scouring Facebook and ultimately worsening the helpless feelings.

Keep your physical health a priority

- + Our mental health is very much linked with our gut health. It's not a coincidence that uneasiness and uncertainty is felt in the pit of our stomach - there is a massive amount of research into the microbiome which is physiologically linked to the brain.
- + We must make every effort to drink water and eat something even if we don't particularly feel like it. Physical health supports mental health.
- + If it's possible to keep a sensible distance from others whilst going for a walk then do it - raising the metabolism helps boost the immune system.
- + Serotonin comes from the gut and natural sunlight - it is important to keep our levels healthy.



Mike Exeter is a Grammy award-winning record producer and mixing engineer (and a thoroughly nice chap).

www.mikeexeter.com

HOME WORKOUTS: THE BASICS

BY HELEN BUFFETT (TECHNOGYM)

When it comes to exercising at home there is already an overwhelming amount of information out there, from apps to YouTube videos, created by fitness professionals and influencers demonstrating various routines you can do to keep in shape without leaving the house! Many people who are into fitness will probably already have some basic equipment at home and an idea of how they are going to adapt their routine. So, I'm going to focus this resource on those of you who suddenly find yourself confined to four walls and are in urgent need of some stimulation.

A great starting point is the standard health organisation guidelines which can be found on the NHS website: **The NHS Workout Guide**

During this period of uncertainty, if any music professionals would like a FREE home exercise plan, or would like to know more about the equipment and services we offer at [Technogym](#), I'm happy to offer additional support, while also signposting you in a direction of experts from across the fitness industry who can share tailored advice for people at all levels.

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Please contact me directly at hbuffett@technogym.com

Taking into consideration the most up-to-date **WHO** guidelines, if you can get outdoors for a walk and run safely on your own, please do so. Get some fresh air, put on your favourite playlist, an audio book or even catch up on the podcast that you've been putting off for ages.

Getting Motivated

"Fail to prepare, prepare to fail"

Goal Setting: Don't overwhelm yourself by committing to 45 minutes to an hour of squats & crunches, be realistic & know your limitations. If you're struggling to get motivated, commit yourself to the length of an ad break or 10 mins. If you can combine cardio & strength exercises effectively, you really can achieve similar results in a much shorter time if you're consistent (this is how High-Intensity training / HIIT works).

1. Schedule

Plan it for an allocated time like you would a meeting, make it part of your daily routine (3-4 times a week) *Ensuring it's at least an hour after food or before you have breakfast

2. Dress for the occasion

Get out of your PJ's & dress for the task ahead.

3. Make some space

Try not to smash your TV! Create a decent work out area. *Professionals recommend a minimum of 36 sq ft for HIIT, but for exercises such as Yoga & Pilates you could get away with less, simply

use your best judgement.

4. Plan your Routine

Do this in advance so that you can keep up the momentum & make sure you include a warm up. (This includes making sure you have the right playlist if you're not opting for a video-led class!).

5. Focus

Get in the zone and try to remove any distractions for your allocated workout time.

Log & Review: You may not know it yet but recording your progress can be really motivating. Take a picture so you can visually monitor your form ... and keep away from those scales! If you're not able to use wearable tech or subscription apps, try logging your workouts on **STRONG**.

Important: Don't forget to hydrate regularly & try to eat well (Please see nutritional advice in the next section)

Warm up & Stretching

Dedicate at least 10 minutes to this before you start your workout (or whatever your doctor recommends). Stretching in combination with breathing exercises is not only the best way to get your body ready for exercise, but it is also an excellent way to meditate and relax. Many music industry professionals on both the artist or business side regularly find themselves hunched over something, whether it's a guitar, a computer or a production desk. Stretching is an excellent way to improve your posture and ease that poor back.

Opting for a video guided yoga class is a fantastic way to combine calm & serenity with fitness. Why not try these channels to start: **Yoga with Adriene** or **Yoga with Tim**.

Choosing your Routine

You'll find an overwhelming amount of fitness influencers offering you access to their content through their apps and social channels. The content is updated regularly and can be tailored to all fitness levels. Within reason most exercises can be adapted to the home environment so keep it interesting and mix it up.

Check out these to start:

Free YouTube Channel: **The Body Coach**

Free YouTube Channel: **Roberta's Gym**

APP: **SWEAT with Kayla**

APP: **Nike Training Club**

APP: **CENTR**

**As a disclaimer I'd like to be clear that I'm not here to push anyone in any direction. I firmly believe that choosing a routine or training guide is down to personal preference. Shop around and take advantage of the FREE trial periods that most of these leading fitness apps are offering you.*

Community

There are a lot of fitness communities you can join that will share great tips and keep you motivated. Why not create your own mini community and coordinate fitness activity with friends - schedule a Skype "workout" meeting maybe?

Check out- **My Fitness Pal**

Know your limitations & have fun

As I've alluded to before there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to offering fitness advice. If you do have any pre-existing injuries, please seek professional advice ahead of doing any physical activity.

Keeping fit really doesn't have to feel like a chore. If you're not up for a HIIT session, why not just put on your favourite tunes and allocate 20 minutes to dancing around the living room in your pants!



Helen Buffett is a remarkable human who served in the army before joining the music industry at Universal. She is now heading up multiple projects at Technogym.

<https://www.technogym.com>

NUTRITION

by Emmaline Rasmussen (Registered Dietitian & founder of Sound Nutrition)

Introduction

Periods of self isolation often make it difficult to motivate ourselves to eat well and exercise; however, proper nutrition (along with exercise) can have a direct and profound impact on our immune system as well as our mood. Instead of rushing to the market and stocking up on shelf stable snack foods, try this holistic approach to eating well while quarantined inside. The foods below all fit within a Mediterranean diet, which has been shown to promote longevity, benefit mood and anxiety disorders, assist with energy and concentration, and reduce risk of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and dementia.

What to eat to boost mood and assist with stress management:

Healthy anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats have been shown to improve our mood. Focus on fatty fish like salmon, along with plant-based omega-3 sources like walnuts and flax or hemp seeds. Other healthful plant based fats that support mood include extra virgin olive oil, almonds and avocados. Natural energy enhancers like coffee and green tea have been shown to support mood as well, but limiting the amounts is important to prevent anxiety. And when it comes to protein, lentils and turkey are both great choices. For sweet treats with mood boosting benefits, try dates and dark chocolate, along with lower sugar choices like blueberries.

It's easy to gravitate towards processed snack foods and packaged candy/sweets because they have a long shelf life, but resist this urge and try to only keep healthy choices available to stay well during this time. Avoiding sugar and processed food can naturally assist in preventing slumps in mood or energy as well.

Finally, limit alcoholic beverages as excessive alcohol intake (beyond 2 standard drinks in a day for men or 1 for women) wreaks havoc on the immune system, amongst its other damaging effects.

1. Stocking the pantry

- + Dried herbs and spices (especially immune boosting Rosemary, Oregano, Garlic, Ginger, Cayenne Pepper)
 - + Extra Virgin Olive Oil and vinegar
 - + A couple cartons of low sodium broth/stock for making homemade soups
 - + No salt added or low sodium canned diced tomatoes and tomato paste for soups/stews/chili
 - + Nuts (preferably unsalted) like walnuts, pecans and Brazil nuts
 - + Seeds like flaxseeds or chia seeds
 - + Nut or seed butters like almond butter, natural peanut butter (free of hydrogenated oils), or sunflower seed butter
 - + Dried beans/legumes or canned (no salt added)
 - + Whole grains like brown rice, oats, and quinoa
 - + Canned soups (low sodium) that are broth based and are rich in vegetables and beans (such as lentil soup rather than creamy soups)
 - + Whole grain crackers
 - + Popcorn (light sodium)
-

-
- + Dried fruit
 - + Raw honey (ideally Manuka honey)
 - + Coffee & tea

2. Stocking the freezer

- + Frozen vegetables
- + Frozen fruit - especially fruits like berries and pitted cherries, which are high in antioxidants and won't keep long in the refrigerator
- + Frozen individually wrapped fish filets (such as wild salmon or cod)
- + Frozen poultry such as chicken breast
- + Frozen low sodium meals that are rich in vegetables, whole grains, and high quality protein like chicken or beans

3. Stocking the refrigerator

Do your normal grocery shopping (produce, meat, etc) with enough to last a week, plus extra of the following foods (look for foods with as far out expiration dates as possible)

- + Eggs
- + Milk or non-dairy milk
- + Yogurt (unsweetened) or non-dairy yogurt (unsweetened)
- + Tempeh or tofu
- + Hummus
- + Kombucha or Kefir for healthy probiotics (in addition to yogurt) and more beverage options aside from water

4. Produce with a longer shelf life

- + Citrus like oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits (these can also be refrigerated to extend shelf life)
- + Cabbage (should stay refrigerated)
- + Whole carrots (refrigerate)
- + Squash (refrigerate to extend shelf life)
- + Root vegetables like sweet potatoes
- + Onions and garlic



Emmaline Rasmussen is a Registered Dietitian and the Founder of Sound Nutrition, an organization that provides nutrition and wellness services for musicians and creative professionals. Sound Nutrition offers a variety of wellness packages that include everything from rider review and tour bus stock selections to sending dietitians, yoga teachers, and massage therapists on the road to support artists in living longer and more productive careers. Follow @SoundNutrition.co on Instagram and visit www.soundnutrition.co for more information.



RESOURCES

FINANCIAL ANXIETY

If you are keen to safeguard your income from medical incapacity, one option is to explore personal (not business) income protection insurance. It can be as little as £20 a month to cover your core living costs in the instance of illness/accident where you can't work. Some advice from a broker that was received on 17th March 2020 was that although insurers are changing their stance daily, some are still covering in full. The ever-helpful **Citizen's Advice Bureau** has some impartial information.

Undisputed king of the financial world, Martin Lewis, has a dedicated page on his Money Saving Expert site to **Coronavirus Tips** and also has released a free guide about **Mental Health and Debt**. For a more in-depth exploration of solid advice for your concerns and further resources he has also established a stand-alone website called **Money and Mental Health**.

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS & SERVICES

The fabulous **Very Well Mind** has also pulled together their list of the best online anxiety support groups, which can help if you are looking for advice and solidarity in real time. You can click on the link to check out the list and wider site, but to save you time (we're good like that) you can also see them listed below (all links & descriptions **Very Well Mind**)

Turn2Me - Hosts free online support groups for anxiety, depression, stress management, suicidal thoughts and feelings, and more.

Mental Health America In addition to their forums, they offer screening tools that can help you identify if you might have a mental illness, such as anxiety or PTSD.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America Provides extensive information and resources on anxiety, as well as an anonymous online peer-to-peer support group.

7 Cups of Tea Free One-on-One Support. Also offers support from peers, trained volunteers, and paid professionals.

TheTribe Peer-to-Peer Support Group. You'll have access to a blog where you can share your story, speak your mind, inspire others, or just vent.

Daily Strength The anxiety forum is active every day and the site tells you how many members are currently online.

SupportGroups.com Unlike some sites that only allow you to join one group, SupportGroups.com encourages you to join as many groups as you like.

My Black Dog is a free mental health online chat service. All their volunteers are people who have experienced mental illness; they are sympathetic and understand what you are going

through. Below are some links to excellent, accredited organisations that can offer support, practical information and resources should you be suffering with anxiety and you would like to access further help.

MIND

Samaritans

Sane

Young Minds

No Panic

CALM

Anxiety UK

The Calm Zone

USA

The Crisis Text Line is the only 24/7, nationwide crisis-intervention text-message hotline. Text HOME to 741-741. Text HOME to 85258 (United Kingdom)

Samaritans USA is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in distress or at risk of suicide throughout the United States.

Call toll-free at 1 (800) 273-TALK to connect with a branch in your area.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call toll-free at 1-800-273-8255.

Canada

The Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone is a free, confidential 24/7 national crisis-intervention text-message service. Text CONNECT (English) or PARLER (French) to 686-868.

MEDITATION, MINDFULNESS & BREATH-WORK

Morning meditation

Mindfulness based self-compassion

Short body scan meditation

The Buddhist Centre offers meditation online, and a list of additional online meditation resources [here](#).

Meditation Chapel is an international interfaith meditation community with more than 40 online meditation groups meeting each week using internet video conferencing.

iBreathe is an app to guide you through breathing exercises. Whether you are struggling with stress, anxiety, insomnia, or are trying to meditate and relax, iBreathe provides an easy-to-use interface (and it's free!)

Headspace is an app that teaches you how to meditate.

Stop Breathe Think - Check in with how you're feeling, and try short activities tuned to your emotions. They also have a version for kids to 'help them discover their superpowers of quiet, focus and peaceful sleep' - which I'm sure many of us can agree would be helpful

Relax Melodies aims to make you fall asleep in minutes by helping you combine Soothing Sounds, Bedtime Stories, Sleep Meditations, and SleepMoves.

More suggestions here:

Insight Timer

Palouse Mindfulness

Jefferson University Hospital

Tara Brach

UCLA

Buddhify

ONLINE ADDICTION SUPPORT

Passenger Recovery is putting their Music Industry 12 step meetings online.

This space is focused on discussing powerlessness, acceptance, change and growth, in order to regain sanity. To rid ourselves of the bondage of self through community with others. To provide relief, and a reminder that we are not alone, from anywhere in the world. A reprieve, of like-minded industry people, focused on staying sober based upon the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. We share a common language and this is a space for the power of two or more alcoholics/addicts to come together. Format: Step discussion (focused on readings from across all 12 step literature).

<https://www.passengerrecovery.com/meeting.html>

Tuesday : 16:00 (GMT), 11:00 (EST), 08:00 (PST)

Link to Zoom Meeting ID: <https://zoom.us/j/5432688005>

All 12 step fellows are welcome

Alcoholics Anonymous - Great Britain 0800 9177650

Digital Dayhab - online treatment for problematic drug and alcohol use.

UKNA | Narcotics Anonymous in the UK 0300 999 12 12

GamCare - (gambling support, advice and information) 0808 8020 133 24/7

ARTISTS & MUSIC INDUSTRY RESOURCES (mainly UK)

Arts Council has a page featuring the latest guidance from the Government on the coronavirus outbreak for their funded organisations and projects which is being updated as the situation develops.

BAPAM - The British Association for Performing Arts Medicine offers specialist health support for performing artists including work-related injuries and pain, tension, voice problems, hypermobility, performance or career-related anxiety and other psychological issues.

Back Up Tech provides financial support to entertainment technology industry professionals who are seriously ill or injured or to their surviving family members.

Backline and **Tour Health Research Initiative Union (THRIV)** have joined forces to create an online music industry support group, titled Come Together: COVID-19 Crisis, to help working professionals navigate the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Format: 60-75 min of open share and then a meditation/grounding exercise. Sessions are Mondays and Thursdays at 5.30pm ET / 2.30pm PT / 9.30pm GMT. Join via the Vevo-Zoom link here: zoom.us/j/789801804

Freelance Artist Support - a blog dedicated to navigating the precarious world of freelancing.

Help Musicians - Music Minds Matter “If you work in music and are struggling to cope, or know someone who is, talk to us. It doesn’t have to be a crisis, or about music. We have trained advisors that are here to listen, support and help at any time.”
Call 0808 802 8008 24/7 or email them at MMM@helpmusicians.org.uk.

MMF - the world’s largest professional community of music managers has a factsheet for their members which includes advice on insurance, travel & visas, and touring.

MusiCares is a charity set up by the Grammy Awards. It has launched a **COVID-19 Relief Fund** to help our peers in the music community affected by the Coronavirus pandemic

Music Industry Coffee Break. Set up by a number of UK music industry professionals including Meenal Odedra, this Zoom hangout gives an opportunity to check in over coffee. Thursdays, 4pm GMT via zoom.us/j/5432688005

Music Support Music Support is a registered charity founded and run by people from the UK music industry, for individuals in any area of the UK music industry suffering from mental, emotional and behavioural health disorders (including but not limited to alcohol and drug addiction). Call 0800 030 6789 Mon-Fri: 09:00 – 21:00 / Sat-Sun: 10:00 – 20:00

Musicians’ Union - plenty of news and regular updates on pertinent information, and the option to join a dedicated email list for coronavirus updates featuring the latest advice and resources for all musicians.

Music Venue Trust has produced a page containing some solid advice for venues affected by Covid-19.

PRS Foundation has the latest coronavirus advice for their grantees and applicants who may be concerned about the potential impact the pandemic will have on their funded activities, for

recent applicants unsure of how this might affect decisions and the grant-making process, and for potential applicants.

Resident Advisor has put together a page on how to best support the electronic music community. It contains a list of useful resources such as petitions, where to donate, and how to give and receive help effectively.

UK Music is an industry-funded body, established to represent the collective interests of the recorded, published and live arms of the British music industry. They have released a statement detailing their discussions with Government Ministers and officials about the potential impact of coronavirus on the music industry.

Virtual Music Events Directory - Cherie Hu has built a comprehensive, up-to-date resource for anyone seeking guidance on how to stage alternative music events in this moment of significant upheaval for the industry.

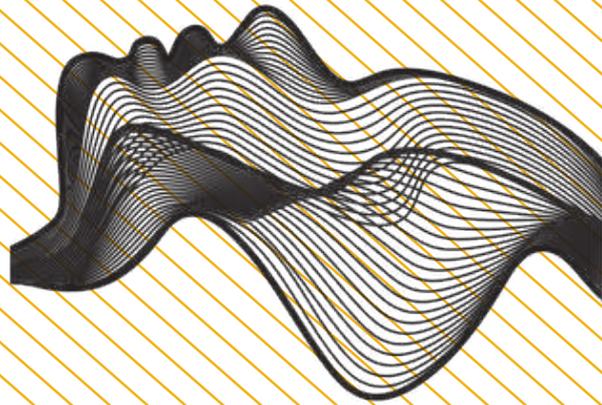
If you're looking for information on how your business might be officially affected and / or supported by the UK government, their page is [here](#).

INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR



Tamsin Embleton is an ex-music industry festival and venue booker, tour manager and artist manager turned attachment-based psychotherapist and touring researcher who specialises in working with musicians and music industry professionals. She is a co-Chair of the Association for Electronic Music's Health group and the founder of **the Music Industry Therapists and Coaches (MITC)**, a group of psychotherapists working in the UK, US and online. Tamsin has been featured in **Rolling Stone, Vice, The Guardian, IQ magazine, DJ Magazine**, CMU, Refinery 29 and Metro. She has spoken for BBC Introducing & Help Musicians, the Association for Independent Music (AIM), IMS College - Malta, Amsterdam Dance Event, War Child UK, Paris Electronica Week, the Association for Independent Festivals (AIF) and Point Blank Music School.

Backed by Live Nation, Tamsin is writing the Touring and Mental Health Manual, a book offering in-depth advice and guidance to help touring communities cope with the myriad psychological difficulties that can arise during or as a result of touring. Co-writers on the manual include **CeCe Sammy** - vocal & performance coach (Pop Idol / American Idol, America's Got Talent, X Factor, The Voice, the Grammys, Eurovision), **Dr. Lou Cox** - writer of 'Ego: the ghost in the machinery', **Dr. Dianna Kenny** - the world's leading Music Performance Anxiety expert, **Dan Portanier** - personal trainer to Coldplay, Chrissy Hines, Keith Flint, **Paula Hall** - sex, porn and love addiction expert and founder of the Laurel Centre, **Jodi Milstein** - conflict & resolution band therapist (previously of ACM records and management teams for Korn, Soundgarden and Lionel Ritchie), **Whitney Showler** - psychotherapist (previously Warners & then worked with Linkin Park), **Adrianna Irvine, Heather Findlay** and **Nanette Zumwalt** covering Addiction & Functional Recovery, **Dr. Aida Vazin** writing on Stress Management, **Gladys Akinseye** - Clinical Audiologist discussing hearing health, psychotherapist **Sital Panesar** writing about sexual health and many many more.



MITC
Music Industry
Therapists & Coaches

Written by Tamsin Embleton.
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