

Five Ways to Take Your Mind off COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Need a break from discussions of COVID-19 (otherwise known as “Coronavirus”)? Here are five ways to bring some healthy escapism into your life.

Spend time outdoors to clear your head.

While avoiding places where groups of people are gathering and keeping a safe distance from others, you can still get back to nature to refresh your mind and body. As little as 15 or 20 minutes outdoors can awaken your senses and help you feel happier and more relaxed.

Take a nature walk. Walk on a favorite trail. If you live near a park try to find a peaceful place and savor the tranquility of the setting.

Go star-gazing. See how many constellations you can recognize. Download an app for a crash course in what's up there. Or bookmark the Starstruck column on the National Geographic [website](#) for tips on what to watch for in the sky.

Practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness has been found to promote health and happiness for many people. Research suggests that mindfulness can improve your mood, reduce negative thinking, and ease stress. It can also help enhance productivity, concentration, and creativity.

Practice mindfulness in everyday life by limiting multitasking, listening closely to people, unplugging your devices, using all five of your senses, and trying progressive muscle relaxation.

Use exercise to take your mind off your worries.

Exercise can be a great distraction—and also a great way to improve your outlook

and mood.

If you're feeling the urge to plug into the news, put on your walking shoes and head out the door.

Try an online exercise routine. Try searching YouTube for "free workouts" or "exercise videos. Tired of lifting weights? Research online about strength-building exercises to make your routine more challenging.

Pursue a hobby or interest.

Look for a new pursuit that's so absorbing, you won't miss the news. Almost any fresh and fun activity can be invigorating—reading, cooking, skating, learning to play a musical instrument or speak another language. Find free lessons online.

Gardening. Try anything from a small yard cleanup task to starting a big reorganization project. If you don't have a garden you can still connect with nature by caring for indoor plants or a bonsai tree.

Give yourself some TLC.

TLC—or tender loving care—feels like the opposite of following the news. It's giving yourself the luxury of some time doing only what you want to do. It's giving yourself some pampering, so that you're able to forget about life's worries for a while. Put your feet up, make popcorn, and watch a favorite movie. Take a nap or a long bath. Savor the pleasure of making a great meal from scratch. Or turn off your devices and focus your full attention on a pet. TLC is all about giving yourself what you really need, recharging yourself and taking care of you.

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