

Routines, Roles and COVID-19 for patients with chronic conditions

Why keeping a routine is important

Our daily lives are disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly our routines and roles - the things we do and how we relate to others. These disruptions can impact our ability to cope with chronic conditions. Maintaining meaningful routines and valued roles can help restore a sense of normalcy and promote coping.

Seek to maintain daily routine/roles

- Commit to a regular activity pattern - that is, what you do and how you do it
- Maintain regular hours for work, meals and sleep. Continue hygiene activities as you normally would.
- Set up activities and environments to sustain engagement such as workstations, exercise areas, usual clothing/hygiene practices, minimize distractions.
- Continue to engage in valued activities at usual times for you such as exercises in the morning, coffee with a friend on Friday afternoons, reading every evening
- Try adapting any activity that you cannot perform the same way as usual. Some of your regular pursuits are better than none, and recognize you are doing your best.
 - Explore virtual platforms as options to adapt. Some examples could include YouTube yoga, family dinner via online platforms like Skype and Zoom, web-based board games, free online courses, virtual library resources
- Try finding a substitute activity, or a new one, if you are unable to continue with a preferred interest

Aim for variety and balance

- Consider the balance of your daily activities by purpose and demand. Do certain types of activity seem to dominate? What is one simple change you can make to shift the balance?
 - For example, activities you do for the purpose of enjoyment, for feeling productive/accomplished, for rest/relaxation, and/or for socializing. Demands may be physical, mental, and/or emotional.
- Avoid prolonged time in any one position or posture such as sitting. Try doing gentle stretches when watching TV, walk around the house while talking on the phone, or change up the type of chair you usually sit in throughout the day.

Create a schedule and stick to it

- A day timer or calendar app can help plan your day. A timer or notifications can cue when it's time to shift activities.
- Collaborate with people who can support you to maintain a routine. Challenge each other to stick to your schedules and follow-through on activities
- The unpredictability of good days versus bad days may be especially significant now. Devote time to using your self-management strategies to best meet your needs

Online Resources

- Free printable daily planners: <http://templatelab.com/daily-planner-template/>
- Workstation set-up: <https://ergonomicshealth.com/ergonomic-workstation-setup/>
- Sleep resources: <https://www.liveplanbe.ca/pain-education/sleep-rest>
- Online learning:
 - <https://www.skillshare.com/>
 - <https://www.coursera.org/>
- Calgary Public Library at home: <https://calgarylibrary.ca/read-learn-and-explore/library-at-home/>