

Staying Connected During Social Distancing

During a time like this, we can use technology as well as more traditional methods of staying in touch. Feeling connected, even when we're physically separated, is an important part of helping us all get through this time.

So let's shift "social distancing" to "physical distancing." While maintaining physical distance from each other is critical to slow the spread of the coronavirus, we all need to feel connected, especially now.

It's time to be creative and look for ways to stay in touch and be social. Luckily, there are many ways we can do this:

- Emails and text messages have largely replaced phone calls. This is a great time to consider also picking up the phone to hear the voices of family, friends, and colleagues.
- Video calling (such as FaceTime) can be a great way to stay in touch and see each other. For those working from home or wanting to stay in touch with larger groups of family or friends, group video conferencing may be an option as well.
- Go "old school" by picking up a pen and paper and writing a letter. Since handwritten letters are rare these days, it might bring a smile to your face to write one and a smile to the person who receives it!
- Use social media to stay in touch with friends. Share photos, fun memories, appropriate humor, and the gratitude for the people in your life.
- Have a night "out" with friends by staying in, bringing your own favorite food/drink, and connecting over a video call. If you want to support local businesses, order out for a meal.
- If you're out for a walk or jog, you may be able to enjoy a visit with friends, family or your neighbors (from a safe distance of at least 6 feet away).
- If you find yourself working from home when you're used to going to the office, make time for a call or chat with your co-workers to replace the "water cooler" chats that you'd normally have in the office. Or, enjoy a chat on a break as you walk outside (as long as you can do so safely).
- Since we're all needing to spend more time at home, use the opportunity to enjoy family meals and discussions.
- Don't forget about family, friends and neighbors who may be more isolated, especially now. Loneliness and isolation are a concern for many people, even during normal times, so make the time to reach out with a phone call. If you're able, offer help with purchasing groceries and supplies for those at higher risk so they can stay home and stay safe.

Challenge yourself: Make an effort to reach out to someone each day this week.