

Tips for dealing with the corona quarantine

The summer semester has been postponed, exams are being cancelled, and the library is closed. These changes along with many others related to the security measures taken in light of the corona pandemic can be unsettling and stressful. These are normal reactions to a crisis and affect many.

There are a few things that you can do for your mental health despite the current restrictions. Here you will find a compilation of activities that you can do on your own to prevent boredom and low spirits from setting in. We encourage you to try one or two of them out.

1. General Information:

You are not alone

- Worries and fears in the current situation are perfectly normal. Talking about these worries and fears with others can help (a telephone helpline “Telefonseelsorge” is free of charge and available 24/7 at 0800/III 0 III or 0800/III 0 222; please note that the counseling service is in German).
- Remind yourself that this unusual situation is temporary and that the precautions taken are very important.

Tips for dealing with the corona quarantine

Structure is important

- Keep the same routine and daily structure as you had before. If this isn't possible, make a new one.
- Always get up and go to bed at the same time. Eat regular, healthy, and balanced meals.
- Don't spend all day in your pyjamas or sweatpants. Get dressed in the mornings as if you are going to class or to work.
- Be able to differentiate between the days of the week (e.g., Thursdays are "pizza nights", Fridays are "movie nights" etc.) so as not to fall into the "daily grind".
- Set a daily goal for yourself and make a plan.
- If you are doing home office, take your breaks at the same time you normally take them at work. Spend your lunch breaks with your colleagues via video chat. Clearly separate work and free time.

Stay active and healthy

- Be sure to get enough exercise and fresh air (regularly air out your room/apartment).
- Get enough sleep. Drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, drugs, or medication.
- Plan daily, positive, and enjoyable activities. Make sure you have a good work/life balance.
- Do not watch Netflix, YouTube & Co. on a permanent loop.

Tips for dealing with the corona quarantine

Stay in touch with friends, but also set up boundaries

- Continue to stay in contact with friends, acquaintances, family, and neighbours through social media.
- If you live with others, create spaces where you can be alone. Do not avoid addressing conflicts.

Reliable information

- Inform yourself about the corona pandemic through reliable serious sources (e.g., the Robert Koch Institute, the World Health Organization, or the Federal Ministry of Health).
- Limit the amount of time you spend looking at/reading the news (e.g., only two times a day). This helps against worrying and low spirits.

2. Ideas for activities at home

Most are doable with others via video chat

- read (you can borrow books over the public library's e-lending platform)
- write poems/stories or in your journal
- listen to audio books/podcasts (i.e., via the city library's online "Onleihe" service. Various providers are also currently offering their services free of charge)
- watch a series, movies, documentaries, musicals, or concerts online (currently many live streams or recordings are being offered free of charge. For example, you can find compilations [here](#) and [here](#))

Tips for dealing with the corona quarantine

- watch a play online (e.g., [here](#))
- make an online visit to a museum or gallery (e.g., [here](#) or [here](#))
- record podcasts/read poems out loud for others
- play video games
- keep a sense of humor, i.e., telling jokes, watching comedies
- bake and cook (e.g., try out difficult recipes)
- plan to meet up with friends over video chat to eat together or have a cup of coffee
- write letters, postcards, e-mails in order to make others happy
- phone friends and family
- clear out/organize your closet, desk, cell phone, or laptop
- clean the house
- complete the tasks which have been at the top of your to-do list for a while
- organize photos (i.e., “best of’s” from your last vacation) or compile a photo album
- learn something new (language, a sport, meditation,...) over YouTube, for example
- start that hobby that you have been putting off
- read texts for the university (many publishers offer their journals and e-books free of charge for a limited time [here](#) and [here](#))
- research internship opportunities
- dance around the apartment (you can find a compilation of various concerts and DJ performances [here](#))
- crafts, painting, knitting, crocheting, sewing, DIYs
- prepare gifts
- daydream
- sing
- listen to music/make music (e.g., play an instrument by an open window)

Tips for dealing with the corona quarantine

- solve puzzles, sudokus etc.
- rearrange your room
- go for walks
- go out in nature either alone or with your flat mates
- hang papers with hangman, tic tac toe, short messages etc. up in your window and see which of your neighbors play along
- offer help and support to others, especially those who belong to at-risk groups (older neighbors, acquaintances)
- see if volunteers are needed (e.g., to sew and donate protective masks)
- test out perfumes, deodorants, shower gels
- self-care: take a bath, paint your nails, do a face or hair mask
- try a new look/hairstyle
- be silly for a day (e.g., opposite day, etc.)
- do puzzles
- exercise (this is possible indoors with help from YouTube for example. Many studios also offer live streams of their classes)
- arrange to do home work-outs over video chat with friends. One person leads and the others follow
- plan your next holiday
- sunbathe at the window or on your balcony
- plant flowers or vegetables. Challenge: planting seeds from fruits you have at home (avocado, grapefruits, lemon, apple, mango...)
- play charades with friends via messaging services
- write a letter to yourself which you can only open on a special occasion (e.g., graduation) or after a certain period of time (in half a year); write e-mails to your future self

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3. If you are suffering from serious mental health issues

In the current situation, many people are concerned about their own health, the health of their family and friends, finances, the future etc. In the long run, this can lead to an increase in depressive moods, fears, and other psychological problems. If you were already suffering from mental health issues before the outbreak of corona and its restrictions, this could lead to a worsening of your symptoms. If you think our tips are not sufficient, you may need professional support.

The Mental Health Services' offers for JGU students:

- During the nationwide 'contact ban' you, as a JGU student, are eligible to receive help from the Mental Health Services. We will continue to support you by [phone and video chat](#).
- [Here](#) you can find information on coping with psychological stress (i.e., depression, rumination, sleep disturbances).
- Currently, JGU students also have free access to the Mental Health Services' online services with helpful tips and exercises for promoting relaxation, planning projects, changing thought patterns, sleeping well, defining your values and goals, and managing stress. Simply log in via your ZDV account at <https://moodle.uni-mainz.de/> and click on the links "Studium und Lehre" -> "Psychotherapeutische Beratungsstelle" and then choose your desired module (please note that the counseling service is in German).
- For more calmness in your studies, you can find tips on various topics (e.g., Well organized, Strengthening self-esteem and Promoting relaxation) at www.me-at-jgu.de (please note that the counseling service is in German).

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Psychotherapeutic and/or psychiatric treatment

If you are currently in psychotherapeutic and/or psychiatric treatment, you should be aware of the following:

- You can continue to visit psychotherapeutic practices and psychiatrists. These visits fall under the regulations concerning doctor's visits and are considered a "necessary medical service". Many practices have also started offering video consultations.
- If you have been prescribed medication, continue to take it. You should discuss any changes with your doctor.
- If you notice a worsening of your symptoms due to the current situation or due to other reasons, please contact your doctor or family doctor. In urgent cases you should contact your local psychiatric clinic (for Mainz: Untere Zahlbacher Str. 8, 06131/172920).