

How to stay fit and healthy during coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

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always consultant with a professional before starting an exercise regimen)*

As a general rule, you always want to have an intention before starting a workout routine or program. This pinpoints what you're not good at, and therefore what you are trying to improve. I summarized a few abilities I think people at home, both young and older populations, should focus on.

Go through them and analyze which ones you excel at, which ones you are moderate at, and which ones you lack the most. I would start working on the latter, and progressively move towards the rest. This doesn't mean when you're working on one, you're completely ignoring the rest, but rather is a tool to have a specific intent with your PA.

- **Strength and core strength:** This is the amount of force a muscle can produce against some form of resistance. This resistance can come from external objects or your body weight. Your core is a set of muscles that play a key role in many movement patterns. Improving core strength may improve motion.
- **Aerobic capacity and endurance:** This is the ability of your heart and lungs to get oxygen to your muscles for their use.
- **Flexibility, Mobility, and Stability:** Flexibility is the capacity of moving through your full active and passive range of motion. Mobility is moving your joints and muscles properly in an active manner through their range of motion (ROM). Stability is maintaining control of the position and movement of your joints. People usually lack mobility and stability in their joints and lose overall movement.
- **Balance and coordination:** Balance is the ability to stay in control of your body's movement and coordination is being able to move two or more body parts with control.

Hollow body hold for strength



1-arm plank for strength



Push-ups for strength



Squat jacks for aerobic capacity (feet in-out + squat)





Dynamic-high knees for aerobic capacity



1-arm quadruped stretch for flexibility



Hip RACs for mobility



Split your body

There are different ways to think about a program or work-out. I will give you 3 easy ways that don't require you to be an expert on the subject. Focus on each for any given work-out and try to balance them throughout the week.

- **Lower body:** Waist down. Glutes, thighs, calves, and feet.
- **Upper body:** Waist up. Core, back muscles, shoulders, and pecs.
- **Full-body:** The whole thing. This is trying to actively use your whole body to perform the movements.



Equipment

Some equipment is necessary to improve some of these exercise capacities. But you can get creative with it; you're just trying to create some type of resistance. I will give you a couple of options to start with.

- **Body weight:** You're able to create resistance with your own body weight. Squats, lunges, planks, and push-ups are a great way to build strength.
- **Equipment:** External loads are also a great way to increase intensity and resistance. You can perform the same movements, but they will be a little bit harder depending on how much weight you add which can improve your adaptations. Ways to add load to your workout from home are water jugs, detergent bottles, a bag full of books, and grocery bags full of stuff. Before you start adding weight, make sure your movement patterns and your breathing are on point. Remember, technique before load.
- **No shoes:** A lot of your movement patterns are related to how you control the structure of your body with your feet. Shoes tend to give us different soles and elevations that may bring issues at some point. . Try most of your training (even barbell lifts) with no shoes and actively push down with your feet while pressing out the floor with your toes. Your ankles, knees, and hips might thank you for it.

Body weight



House material as equipment





Be the scientist of your own body

Be aware and constantly check your body. How well your body is adapting to PA changes from person to person. Keeping an eye on your weight, brain function, energy levels, and even your stool will serve as a guide.

Include a partner and the kiddos

Humans are social creatures, including a partner in exercise makes it more competitive, fun and adds accountability. This is a way to keep you engaged. If you live by yourself, try contacting friends and family via video call, social media, sending each other a pic once you complete your workout, and use other platforms to stay connected.

PA is great way to improve health in children. Scheduling exercise as a family activity and including game breaks in the middle will keep children engaged and attentive.

Set daily and weekly goals

You can't improve what you don't measure. Setting daily and weekly goals will keep you on track and aware of your improvement. Don't set yourself up for failure though; make sure your goals are SMART:

- **Specific:** "10 minutes of PA a day" or "30 reps of an exercise a day."
- **Measurable:** Using the stopwatch in your phone to measure 10' or counting each rep.
- **Achievable:** Start small. If you have been sedentary for a while, start with 5' a day. Then move to 10' and so on.
- **Relevant:** Exercises have to be meaningful and relevant to your life. I think preventing being affected by coronavirus is pretty relevant.
- **Time:** You need a time frame for each goal. Daily and weekly goals give you a time frame. You need to complete X amount of reps in a day and X amount in a week.



Balance your sitting time

A lot of people are spending more time than usual on their home desks or just sitting around during quarantine. Being aware of how much time you’re spending being sedentary can help you maintain a balance. Great tools to help you with this are using a standing desk and setting an alarm as a reminder to stand and move.



How much exercise a week?

I use the World Health Organization (WHO)’s recommendations on the amount of PA people should do.

- **Infants under the age of 1 year:** Should be physically active a few times a day.

- **Children under 5 years of age:** Need moderate to vigorous activity, 180 minutes a day.
- **Children and adolescents 5-17 years of age:** Need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA, including strength activities, at least 3 days a week.
- **Adults over age 18:** Need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity PA throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity PA throughout the week.

That said, start wherever you can. Some PA is better than none.

How to include exercise in your day

- **Schedule a block during the day for your workout routine:** If it's not on the schedule, it doesn't exist.
- **Every hour on the hour alarm:** Every hour on the hour perform a certain amount of reps of any given exercise.
- **Pay for stuff with some reps:** Before taking a shower or before watching a movie on NETFLIX, pay for it with a certain amount of reps of any given exercise.
- **Go outside:** Going outside is a great tool to start implementing PA in your life. Of course, stay safe and practice social distancing. Carrying hand sanitizer with you can be helpful as well. I usually use an alcohol-based sanitizer as soon as I walk in the house and then take a shower.