

How to Deal with Social Distancing As an Extrovert

Social distancing, or standing at least away from friends, neighbors, and strangers, is a tough but necessary precaution to prevent the spread COVID-19.<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>...

Reaching Out to Friends and Family

1. **Video chat with your friends and family on a regular basis.** Use an app like FaceTime, Skype, Discord, or some other video chatting program to stay connected. Text or call your loved ones to schedule a time to chat face-to-face. While it's not a replacement for a physical meeting, you may be able to get your social fix with a long video chat.^[2]
 1. A lot of apps give you a video chat option, like Facebook Messenger and Snapchat.
 2. If you're not feeling up to a video chat, you can always settle for a good, old-fashioned phone call.
2. **Create group chats to talk with multiple people at once.** Open your messaging app on your phone and create a new text message thread. Add a bunch of friends and family to the chat, then text away! If you're feeling isolated, group chats are a great way to feel like you're having a physical conversation.^[3]
 1. If you're having trouble setting up a group chat, try using a secondary messaging app like Telegram, GroupMe, or WhatsApp.
3. **Reconnect with friends you haven't talked to in awhile.** Think about some friends or acquaintances that you haven't spoken to in a few months or years. Use some of your home-bound time to call or message these people. While it may be a shot in the dark, you might be able to strike up or rekindle a valuable friendship!^[4]
 1. Social networks like Facebook are a great way to track down old friends and acquaintances.
 2. You can say something like: 'Hey there! I know we haven't talked in awhile, but I just wanted to check in and say hello. How have you been?'
4. **Set up a virtual reunion with family or friends.** Use a video chat platform like Skype or Zoom to set up a virtual meet-up for a small group of people. Schedule a set time to hold the meeting, then use the platform to send an invite link to your friends and family members. Log onto the program at the decided meeting time so you can enjoy a long conversation with your loved ones!^[5]
5. **Stay active on social media so you don't feel isolated.** Log onto your Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram account and check up on your friends' profiles. You can also browse each platform for funny posts, pictures, and other interesting content. Feel free to leave a friendly comment on a stranger's post if you like their content—you could end up sparking a new friendship!^[6]
 1. Some social networks, like Facebook, have a 'Groups' feature, which lets you talk with people of similar interests.
 2. The 'live' feature on a lot of social media sites is a great way to connect and interact with others.^[7]
6. **Meet up with people and stand 6 ft (1.8 m) apart.** Call or text a loved one to see if they're free to hang out or talk at a distance. Choose a spacious, uncrowded area to meet, so you don't risk bumping into other people and possibly spreading germs around.^[8]

1. Some regions have 'stay at home' orders, which frown upon people socializing in public. If this type of rule is in place where you live, don't set up any in-person meet-ups.

Communicating and Connecting in Creative Ways

1. **Send voice messages instead of regular texts.** Open your messaging app and look for a voice recorder symbol next to the text bar. Press this button to record a voice message, which you can send to the recipient. While this feature isn't a replacement for a normal conversation, it may help you feel more connected and engaged with your friends and family.^[9]
2. **Mail letters or cards to your loved ones.** Take some time to write a heartfelt note to a friend or family member, or make a special card to show that you care. As an extra touch, try making the card yourself before mailing it. You can pass the time by sending letters back and forth to friends and family!^[10]
 1. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly before creating and sending anything handmade.
3. **Enjoy multiplayer video games with friends.** Fire up your computer or favorite video game console and invite a friend to play a game with you. Use your phone or a voice chat program to talk throughout the game, which makes the activity feel more social and engaging. If you aren't a big gamer, look for some free-to-play multiplayer games online.^[11]
 1. Overwatch, World of Warcraft, and Call of Duty are a small handful of many multiplayer games that you can try out.
 2. Games like League of Legends are completely free to play, though they have a lot of in-game purchase options.
 3. You can always play an online party game like Skribbl.io.
4. **Sign up for a dating app if you're feeling lonely.** Download the dating app of your choice, like Tinder or Bumble, and see if you find any potential matches. Use social distancing as an excuse to have more in-depth conversations, instead of focusing on meet-ups. While there's no guarantee that you'll find your perfect match, you may be able to make a special connection!^[12]
 1. During the COVID-19 outbreak, dating apps are reporting an increase in quality chat conversations.
5. **Enroll in virtual clubs or classes.** Think about some hobbies that you've always wanted to try, like yoga, pottery, or some other activity. Search online for any virtual classes, which allow you to learn and practice from the comfort of your own home. If you need any supplies for your lessons, try looking for what you need online.^[13]
 1. Virtual classes are a great way to learn new things while also getting to meet new people!
6. **Arrange a movie night with your friends.** Use a program like House Party or Skype to watch a movie with some friends or relatives. If you don't want to use a voice chatting app, choose a time where you and a friend can watch a movie simultaneously. Throughout the movie, you can text your thoughts on the film.^[14]
 1. If you're contacting friends and family from different regions, make sure you specify a time zone when picking a night to watch a movie.

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

1. **Develop a regular exercise schedule.** Exercise around 150 minutes each week, even if it's from the comfort of your own home. If the weather's nice, go for a walk or jog outside so you can get some fresh air. Do your best to stay 6 ft (1.8 m) away from other people to avoid spreading germs.^[15]
 1. Ideally, try to get 75 minutes of intense, aerobic exercise each week, like running or jumping rope.

2. **Eat regular, healthy meals.** Make time for a healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner so you can stay in tip-top shape. Fill your meals with fresh fruits and vegetables, along with plenty of dairy, grains, and protein. If you don't have time to make your own food, use a food delivery app like DoorDash, GrubHub, or Postmates to get food brought to your door.^[16]
 1. Beef, chicken, and seafood are great additions to your meals! If you're a vegetarian, opt for beans and chickpeas instead.
 2. Nuts, seeds, soups, and broths are also great options.
3. **Go outside and get some fresh air.** Take some time to enjoy the sunshine, even if it's from your driveway or deck. You may find your mood increase a bit if you spend time in the outdoors, even if you're with anyone.^[17]
4. **Leave the TV on to provide comforting white noise.** Flip to a relaxing channel or program, like a TV show or documentary. Keep this show on in the background so you can hear the hum of people talking in the background. If you can't physically socialize, you can at least pretend to be in a social environment!^[18]
 1. Don't leave the news on all day, as this may have a negative effect on your mental health.^[19]

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