



SPRING WATCH & SELF CARE

Pause@UoB

The Pause team have been doing our own version of BBC Spring Watch, except rather than watch beavers in Cornwall or learn about shrews in Yorkshire we are waiting for the first daffodil to bloom in the garden. It may not be much but it's bringing us joy and right now that's what we all need, small pockets of joy.

It's been a long winter, longer than usual. I think everyone can agree that lockdown 3.0 is the toughest so far and the sequel none of us wanted to be in. With the cold weather and the shorter days it has been much harder to find the novelty, motivation and community that people were able to create during the first lockdown. What I hope we can do today is give you some gentle ideas of how you can find small pockets of joy and look after your wellbeing during these most trying of times.





Science Backed Self Care

Self care isn't just bubble baths and duvet days (although both of those are top notch activities), it's a vital part of maintaining our mental health. We've put together some really simple things that you can incorporate in to your day to day life that will have a positive impact on your brain.

1. Get up and go to sleep at similar times each day

Our brain has an internal master clock, the suprachiasmatic nucleus, which releases chemical messengers to make us alert and sleepy depending on the time of the day. So if we have a very erratic sleep/wake routine, we can feel tired/alert at the wrong times and that can lead to lying awake thinking about that thing you said to that person you fancied in school 5 years ago!

2. Move your body in a way that feels good

The benefits of physical activity on our mental health are huge but it's so easy to just not bother, especially if it's wet or cold. Find something that feels good for you, try a bit of online yoga in your bedroom, go for a stomp round the park or dance for 15 mins in your kitchen.

3. Expose ourselves to natural light early in the day

Our internal master clock lies directly above the nerves from our eyes and is strongly regulated by natural daylight. Working from home and not being on campus means we aren't getting this exposure and it can lead to us feeling lethargic.





4. Do something where you can see progress

Get some seeds and start a little herb garden on your window sill or have a go at a craft project, do something that grounds you personally and will help you make sense of what essentially feels like a lost period of time. You don't have to learn a whole new language but with Pancake Day round the corner it might be time to become a master pancake flipper?

5. Connect with people

At the moment it is very easy to cocoon yourself away in a burrito of solitude. I know it feels like we live on Zoom but I would encourage you to video call friends rather than just texting people. You may think it will feel strange or awkward but talking face to face goes some way to making those social connections we are all craving and no one minds whether you look like a tired mess, trust me we all do!

Pause is always here

If you are struggling during this lockdown or have anything going on that is making things tricky for you at the moment then you can always contact Pause. You can find all the information on how to contact us at

intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pause

Our group work programme is out now. Sign up on the Events section of the Intranet page

