Embracing Social Distancing

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I bet this isn’t how you planned the start of your Summer, or the start of the decade for that matter. Summer is a time for new beginnings, blooming flowers, longer days and warmer weather. For many, Spring and Summer are a time for cleaning, detoxing, planning, and de-cluttering. Whether that takes the form of lent to get that summer body, saving money for a family holiday, or simply getting dates in the diary for those long-awaited summer BBQs. Maybe you had Mother’s Day plans, finally had Glastonbury tickets, or even your wedding booked. Or perhaps you reluctantly cancelled your birthday plans after imagining yourself in an empty venue wearing a protective mask and a party-hat.

[Coronavirus](https://info.healthshield.co.uk/covid-19-employer-and-employee-advice) might have put a stop to your social plans. But guess what? Flowers will still bloom, leaves will still appear on trees, the days are still getting longer and the weather is still getting warmer. When we feel frustrated about our cancelled plans it’s important to keep perspective and remember these measures of self-isolation are in place for our own protection, as well as the protection of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Ok, you might not be able to have that airport beer or go to that music concert, but good news! Speaking to friends and family, laughing, exercising, singing, dancing, reading, eating good food, baking, playing games, watching movies, learning a new skill, focusing on self-improvement – are not cancelled!

**Here are five things you can do whilst social distancing to have fun, stay productive and keep in high spirits in this unsettling time.**

1. **Spend time with those you live with.**

Ok, most parents across the nation nearly spat their dinner out when Boris Johnson announced that schools across the UK are closing. “What are we going to do with them?” Of course, finding childcare, comforting worried teenagers who have had their GCSEs postponed, re-juggling routines and just knowing what to do in this period of uncertainty is incredibly difficult. All circumstances are different, but where possible, we can use this time to spend quality time with those we live with. Whether that’s watching films, teaching and learning, playing games, cooking dinner, drawing, baking… even just talking. Quality time is never wasted time. If you live alone, remember loved ones are only ever a FaceTime or phone call away.

1. **Go outdoors (but be responsible).**

Don’t forget social distancing doesn’t necessarily mean you have to stay indoors all day long. Could you do some gardening, or simply sit in the garden for a while each day? Make the most of the opportunity to go outside now that we can do it much more. Getting fresh air and being closer to nature has many benefits, for both physical and mental wellbeing. Plus, it’s a beautiful time for a walk with the brighter days and flowers blooming.

1. **Learn a new skill or hobby**.

Is there something you’ve always thought about taking up? Now’s the time. Write that book, take that online course, learn a language, play an instrument, start practising yoga. Thanks to the internet, learning is more accessible than ever, and our good friend *YouTube*is a great hub for tutorials. Paint, sew, game, design, bake, cook, dance, exercise, photoshop, the list goes on! *Duolingo* is a great free app for learning a new language.

1. **Use technology to be sociable.**

Often, social media and other internet technology is criticised for ironically making people *less* sociable, amongst other negative connotations. But in these unprecedented times of social distancing and self-isolation, technology is an amazing way to stay connected and maintain a sense of normality. As well as social apps like *WhatsApp* and other social media platforms, gaming apps like *Houseparty*, *Psych!* and *Words With Friends* allow you to play games with friends from wherever you are. Why not swap out your Saturday night drink with a friend to a FaceTime with a glass of wine?

1. **Do fun things which also support your local community.**

With current supermarket shortages on products such as soap and hand sanitizer, why not do some DIY with the kids and make your own hand sanitizer? It’s cheap, easy to make and reduces the demand (every little helps). There are plenty of blogs around on how to do this. Another idea to support your local community is making cards or pictures with the kids to post to isolated relatives or a local elderly home on your daily walk. It’ll show them some love and prevent loneliness.