



## **COVID-19: Activity Ideas for people with learning disabilities in in-patient units whilst in isolation**

### **Introduction**

The Learning Disabilities Professional Senate has put together this guidance that may be useful to support people with learning disabilities who are in in-patient units during the coronavirus restrictions.

The material contained in this resource has been developed by individuals or organisations and we have acknowledged these wherever possible. We thank everyone for their swift response in developing information.

The Learning Disabilities Professional Senate does not accept responsibility for any of the information in this guidance, but hope that they are useful in supporting people with learning disabilities and families and carers who support them.

Different ideas may be more appropriate for different people, and we are not recommending any specific strategies. Please look through all the ideas and choose the ones that are appropriate for your situation.

The guidance in the attached documents is valid at the time that they are developed, but may need amending as government action changes.

Please keep safe

Karen Dodd

Co-Chair – LD Professional Senate

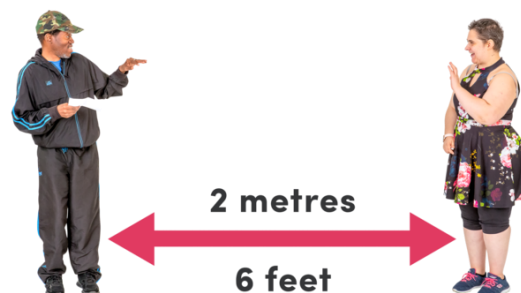
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## Social distancing

Because of corona virus we are all having to change the way we do things:

- We can only see people that we really need to see.
- When we do see people we have to keep further apart
- We have to stay indoors more to stop people catching and spreading the virus.
- We can only go out for very important things like health appointments, to get food and shopping and to do our daily exercise.



This is called social distancing and everyone has to do this.

## Self isolating

If you have any signs or symptoms of coronavirus, or have been in touch with some one who does you need to self-isolate.

- This means that you have to stay indoors and not go out. You can go in the garden if there is one.
- You can't have any visitors for either 1 week or two weeks – depends on if you have felt unwell or someone else has.

- ★ These new rules mean that our usual routines are harder to follow.
- ★ It means that some of the roles we have and the activities we enjoy have had to be put on hold for a while.
- ★ Doing things we like and enjoy is important to keep us feeling good about ourselves.
- ★ Even if we can't do the things we usually enjoy, we might be able to organise our day and do other things that we can enjoy.

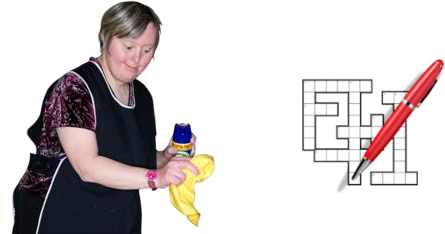
Here are some ideas and some activities that you can do whilst we are all isolating because of corona virus.

## Top Tips to keep well

1. Have a routine: Get up at the same time each day, get yourself washed and dressed, have your breakfast, do what you normally would to get ready for the day.



2. Balance out the jobs you have to do, like tidying and cleaning, with activities that you like to do, like watching a film, or doing a puzzle



3. Think about what activities are most important to you and how you can carry on doing those. You might need to change things around a little bit to do them. For example, instead of going out for a pizza you could make one with one of the staff.



4. Set yourself a goal each day and tick it off when it's done. You might write 7 goals out for the week, or one each day. They might be to try new things, to get jobs done that you haven't got around to yet, whatever you want them to be.



5. Talk with staff about what might make you feel sad, upset or frustrated about the changes. Make a plan of what you can do if you do feel sad, upset or frustrated.



6. When you can't see the people that are important to you, you can try new ways to talk to them. You can use the phone, video call, or try a group video call so you can talk to more than one person at once.



7. Take care of yourself. Eat well, have fruit and vegetables and drink water to keep you hydrated.



8. Do things that get you moving about. Try not to sit in the same position for too long. Get up and move around



9. Get a good night's sleep. Go to bed at the same time you usually do. Having a bath, listening to gentle music and deep breathing can help you to relax, ready for a good night's sleep.



10. Talk to people. Let them know how you are feeling. Share ideas and tell stories. Keep in touch.



Adapted from: Staying Well when Social Distancing, The Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2020  
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>



## Setting goals

A goal is something that you want and plan to do.

When things change, like they have now, it is easy to lose routine and motivation. Having a goal keeps us focussed and helps us to achieve things.

Good goals are things we can do.

Good goals make us feel happy when we have achieved them.

When you set a goal you have to think about:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. Why do you want to achieve it?
3. How are you going to do it?
4. When are you going to do it?
5. How will you know you have done it?



It's good to write your goal down, and write down how and when you plan to achieve it. This way you know what your plan is and you can then work on meeting your goal.

You might be able to set some goals from the ideas you see in this guide: You might have a goal to try a new activity. You might have a goal to make a card for someone you can't see at the moment. You might have a goal to make a sensory kit to give you more energy to start your day.

There is a goal sheet at the end of this guide that you can print and fill out.

## Keeping in touch

The new rules mean that we can't see people as much.

Not being able to see our families and friends can be hard. We will miss them.

There are different ways you can keep in touch if you can't see people face to face.

You can try

Video calling



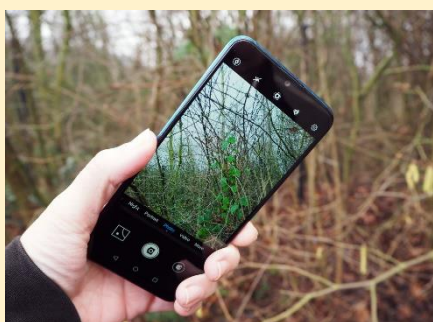
Writing a letter



Keeping a diary so you can remember what's happened and talk about it when you can see your family and friends again



You can keep a photo diary or a video diary on your phone



You can draw pictures



## Making a sensory kit

We get sensory information from all around us: what we hear, what we see, what we smell, what we taste, what we feel on our body, how we feel inside our body and how we move around.

Some sensory information helps us feel relaxed, some helps us feel excited, some helps us feel calm, some helps us get up and get going, some helps us to take our minds off things.

You can make a sensory kit to help you do any of those things.

### **What will you call your sensory kit?**

**Where will you keep your sensory kit?** Can you keep it in your room? Will staff need to keep it for you? How will staff know you want it?

**How will you use your sensory kit?** When will you know to get your sensory kit out? Do you need to be in a particular place to use it? Will you use it on your own or with someone else? Will you use it at the same time each day or will it be when you feel like it?

**What will be in your sensory kit?** Think about the tastes, sights, sounds, touch and smells you need to make your sensory kit work for you

#### **Things that make you feel calm:**

- Warm shower
- Warm bath
- Wrapping yourself up
- Rubbing creams into your skin
- Big stretches, like yoga
- Slow music with a good rhythm
- The sounds of nature
- Natural smells
- Soft materials
- Laying on soft surfaces, like a squashy mattress or a beanbag
- Being in a rocking chair or on a swing
- Low lighting
- Sucking sweets
- Chewing gum
- Humming
- Gentle walks

#### **Things that wake you up:**

- Cool shower
- Cool bath
- Being in a cold room
- Tickling the back of your hands or the inside of your arms
- Jumping up and down
- Dancing to fast music
- Singing loudly or karaoke
- Spinning round
- Bright lights
- Flashing lights
- Drinks with strong flavours like coffee
- Eating an ice pop or a lolly
- Eating spicy foods
- Walking fast or running
- Playing with a spiky ball
- Rubbing your hands over rough materials like velcro



Everyone is different, so try things out and see what works for you.

Your sensory kit might be a box that you have decorated that has things inside. It might have some bubbles, a soft cushion and some dried lavender that you use when you are laying on your bed to help you relax.

Your sensory kit might be a list of things that you do. It might say do the Joe Wicks workout on YouTube, sing your favourite song and put your after shave on.

You might want to ask staff to help you put it together. You can think together about how and when you might use it.

It can take a little while to try things out and know what you want in your sensory kit. Keep a list of what you have tried and how it made you feel. That will help you to know what to put in what sensory kit.

#### **Making my sensory kit**

##### **What did I try?**

*I did some yoga stretches I found on YouTube*

##### **How did it make me feel?**

*I felt relaxed, but a bit hot and sweaty*

##### **What was good about it?**

*I liked feeling relaxed.*

*I liked the gentle music.*

*I liked the yoga teacher's voice.*

*I liked wearing my stretchy leggings and t shirt*

##### **What wasn't so good about it?**

*I didn't like being so hot*

*My bedroom wasn't really big enough*

##### **Would I like to do it again?**

*If I did it again I think I would try it in the garden*

*I might try some sitting down yoga*

##### **What sensory kit will it go in?**

*Maybe my 'feel good' kit*

#### **Making my sensory kit**

##### **What did I try?**

*I asked Alexa to play sounds from nature*

##### **How did it make me feel?**

*Very calm. It made me go to sleep*

##### **What was good about it?**

*I liked the noise of water and birds. It made me think about being outside and laying on the grass.*

##### **What wasn't so good about it?**

*It made me go to sleep and then I wasn't tired so went to bed late*

##### **Would I like to do it again?**

*Yes, but next time I will do it when I have had my bath and am ready for bed*

##### **What sensory kit will it go in?**

*Relax kit*

Sensory Kits ideas, adapted from Tina Champagne, Sensory Modulation, 2011

## Sensory Art ideas: Shaving Foam Marbling

**You will need shaving foam, paint, a tray, a ruler and a stick**

1. Cover the tray with shaving foam



2. Use the ruler to spread the shaving foam out flat



3. Add drops of paint onto the shaving foam




4. Use the stick to make patterns in the shaving foam with the paint drops



5. Lay paper gently on top of the shaving foam



Lift up the paper, gently scrape the shaving foam off then leave it to dry

	What can you smell?
	What can you see?
	How did the shaving foam feel?


Adapted from Seldon Centre, Sensory Art Ideas booklet by Jodie Ide, Occupational Therapist

## Sensory Art Ideas: Puffy Painting

**You will need a spoonful of self raising flour, food colouring, a spoonful of salt, water, card, paint brushes/cotton buds and a microwave**

1. Mix the flour, food colouring, salt and water to make a smooth paste
2. Do this for each different colour food colouring, so you have different colour pastes
3. Paint your picture using the smooth pastes. You might find it easier to use cotton buds rather than paint brushes
4. Put your picture in the microwave and 'cook' it on HIGH for 20 seconds, until the paint puffs up and dries.



	What can you smell?
	What can you see?
	How does it feel?

Adapted from Seldon Centre, Sensory Art Ideas booklet by Jodie Ide, Occupational Therapist

## Making cards

You can make cards to send to your friends and family

All you need to make a card is a sheet of thin card:

- Fold it in half
- Decorate the front
- Write inside

There are lots of ways you can decorate your card

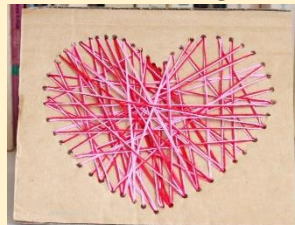
With material and collage



With different coloured paper shapes



Making patterns with holes, then threading through the holes with string or ribbon



Use fingerprints to make faces or flowers



You can create any sort of card you want to.

You can use coloured pens, coloured pencils, paints, stickers, glitter, tissue paper, pictures from magazines, things you've printed from the internet, chalk, puffy paint... anything you want to

## Things to grow: Bottle herb garden

You will need:

- Empty plastic milk bottles (2 pint size)
- 3cm wide wooden baton, long enough to fit the window
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Permanent marker pens

<p>Wash the milk bottles and take the labels off</p> <p>Cut the top of the bottle and handle like in the picture. Use the marker to draw the line to cut along.</p>	
<p>Using the sharp knife and ruler, cut two slits, side by side on the high side of the bottle.</p> <p>The slits should be 4 cm long and 1.5 cm apart.</p> <p>Use the marker to draw the lines before you cut.</p>	
<p>Then you can thread the bottles onto the baton, label and decorate them</p>	
<p>Put a little pot of herbs in each bottle.</p> <p>Put them in the sun and watch them grow</p> <p>Don't forget to water them. When you water them the water will be held in the milk bottle.</p>	

Adapted from Liberty Care Limited, DIY plastic bottle herb garden, by Polly Dawe, Occupational Therapist



## Things to Grow: Grass Heads

You will need:

- Old stockings or tights
- Grass seed
- Saw dust
- Rubber bands
- Yoghurt pot
- Things to decorate to Grass Heads with
- Glue (not water soluble)
- 



Cut a length off the tights. If it's not the toe end then tie a knot to seal one end and turn it inside out.



Stretch the tight over a cup and spoon in about 2 teaspoons full of grass seeds.



Pack the rest of the tight with sawdust. It should end up being the same size as a tennis ball.



Tie a knot in the end of the tight. Don't cut the long bit off (you need it later)



You can make a nose or ears for your Grass Head by pulling a little bit of the tight filled with sawdust and twisting it. You can hold it with a rubber band



Then sit your Grass Head in a yoghurt pot and decorate it with a face

To grow your Grass Head:

1. Hold it in a bowl of water (keep the face out of the water) and let the sawdust soak up the water.
  2. Fill the yoghurt pot up half way with water
  3. Sit the grass head on the yoghurt pot. Let the long bit that you didn't cut off dangle into the water
  4. Put your Grass Head in the sunlight
- Check the water every day and top up the water in the yoghurt pot to keep it half filled.
  - Sprinkle water on top on your Grass Head to keep it moist

It will take about a week for the grass to grow.

You can cut and style it's hair – it will keep on growing for about 6 weeks.

Adapted from Liberty Care Limited, DIY Grass Heads, by Polly Dawe, Occupational Therapist

## Ideas to get moving

Exercise and movement are often fun things to do

- ✓ They keep your heart healthy
- ✓ They can improve your mood
- ✓ They can make you feel calmer
- ✓ They can make you feel happy
- ✓ They can give you more energy
- ✓ They can help you to sleep better



You might not be able to do the exercise activities that you usually enjoy because of the new rules in place: The swimming pools are closed, the gyms are closed, football clubs are closed.

Now might be a good time to try new exercise ideas.

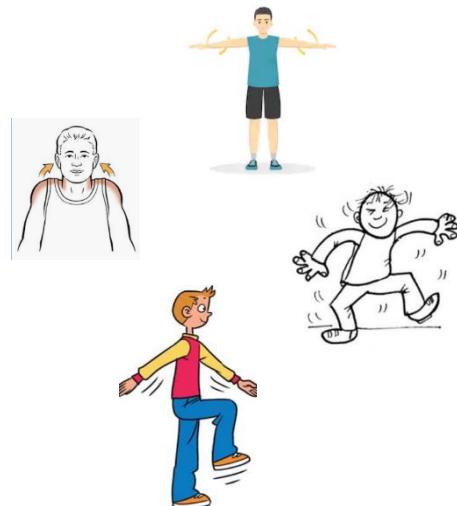
You should make sure that you are fit and well enough for any new exercise activities that you try. All the ideas in this guide can be changed around so they can be done sitting down if that is what you need to do.

If you can see people from a distance you might be able to try some new exercise ideas as a group – just make sure you stick to the rules on keeping the space in between you.



Before you start any exercise do a **warm up** to get yourself ready. You can do this standing up or sitting down

- Circle your arms 15 times each way
- Shrug your shoulders up to your ears 15 times
- Shake your arms and hands
- Shake your legs and feet
- March on the spot



At the end of any exercise do a **cool down** so that you gradually get your heart rate and breathing back to normal

- You can do some big stretches: reach up, reach to the side, reach down to the floor
- You can walk on the spot
- You can take big deep breathes in and out slowly
- You should have a drink



Adapted from Seldon Centre, Selden-cise booklet by Jodie Ide, Occupational Therapist

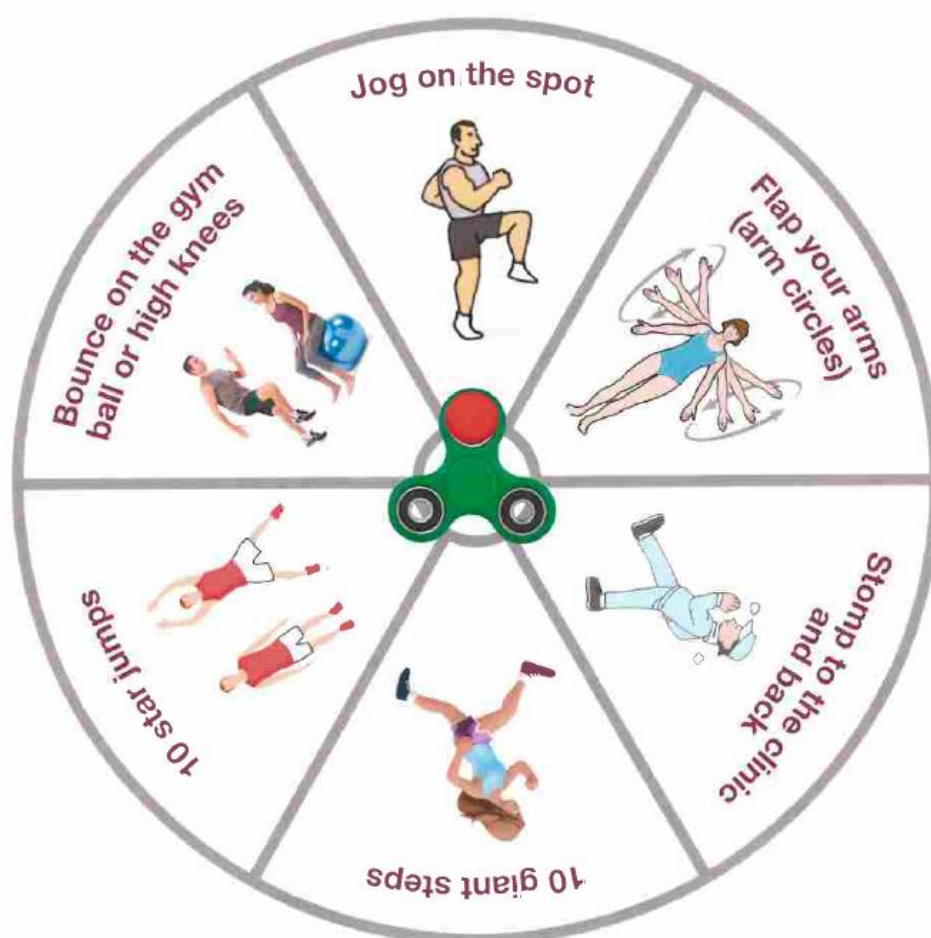
## Spin the Wheel

You can do this on your own, with someone else, or in a group (as long as you keep your distance)

You will need some card and a fidget spinner to make your wheel

- Spin the wheel to choose an exercise to do
- Everyone then does the exercise together
- Everyone takes a turn with spinning the wheel

You can make your own wheel and choose your favourite exercises



Adapted from Seldon Centre, Selden-cise booklet by Jodie Ide, Occupational Therapist

## Exercise on line

Lots of people are finding free videos and live streams to do exercise on line.

There's lots of ideas to choose from depending on what you like



There are different exercise videos on the NHS website. You can choose from different options including dancing, aerobics and yoga

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/dance-la-bomba/>

Joe Wicks does a daily work out on YouTube at 09.00

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

There are exercises to do sitting down

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/>

You can try new things like Sitting Down Pilates

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/chair-based-pilates-exercise-video/>

Or learn about and try out yoga

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/guide-to-yoga/>

You can find exercises that are for beginners if it's something new you are trying.

If you are already good at exercises you can find something that is a bit harder.

## Music and Singing

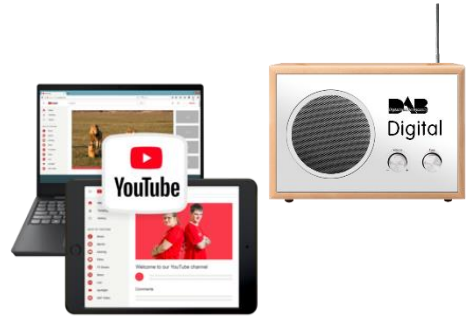
There are lots of ways to enjoy music and singing

You can listen on headphones

You can listen on your phone

You can listen on the radio

You can watch music on the internet



You can sing karaoke



You can try a new activity and join an on line choir



Rock choir has a daily sing at 3.00pm

<https://rockchoir.com/keepbritainsinging-with-rock-choir/>

The Include Choir uses Makaton whilst they sing. They meet on line every Wednesday evening at 8.00pm. You need to join their Facebook page to join in

<https://include.org/the-include-choir/>

Some of these things you can do on your own, some you can do with other people.

## Ideas for a good night's sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is very important.

It can be harder to sleep if you are feeling worried about something. Lots of people are feeling a bit worried at the moment because of corona virus.

A change in your routine can also affect your sleep. Everyone's routine is changed at the moment because of corona virus.

### Things that help us all to sleep well:

- ✓ Wake up at the same time each day
- ✓ Do some exercise in the morning
- ✓ Try to go outside during the day
- ✓ Don't have your bedroom too hot
- ✓ Don't have your bedroom too cold
- ✓ Make sure your bedroom is dark
- ✓ Make sure your bedroom is peaceful
- ✓ Start relaxing about 1 hour before bed
- ✓ Use your relaxing sensory kit

### Things that stop us sleeping well:

- ✗ Don't exercise before bed
- ✗ Don't watch screens before bed
- ✗ Don't drink coffee, tea or coke before bed
- ✗ Don't watch television in bed
- ✗ Try not to sleep in the day
- ✗ Don't go to bed hungry
- ✗ Don't go to bed too full up

### Progressive muscle relaxation

If you are finding it hard to get to sleep progressive muscle relaxation can help. This is when you tense your muscles and breathe in, and then relax your muscles and breathe out.

You start with your shoulders and work down to your toes.

There are recordings of people who can talk you through this available on the internet. You can ask someone to help you find one if you need to.

There are lots of scripts on the internet too. You might want to try one out. You might ask someone to read it while you try it.

Once you get the hang of it you might be able to do it yourself without needing to listen to someone else talk you through it.

Ideas adapted from Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, Sleep Hygiene Leaflet, 2019

## Activity Goal sheet

Name:

My goal is:.....

My goal is important to me because.....

Things I will need to achieve my goal

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

I will know that I have achieved  
my goal when .....

I will start working on my goal on

.....

I want to achieve my goal by

.....

Working on this goal has made me feel.....