

# Top 10 Tips for the Autism Community in Managing Covid-19

COVID-19 has presented challenges for us all. For autistic people, and their families, the loss of routine and structure may be particularly tough. Here are some top tips which may be useful during this time.

## 1. CREATE A NEW ROUTINE AND STICK TO IT



Routine and knowing what to expect each day is vital for many in the autism community. Just because we can't stick to our usual routines doesn't mean we can't create new ones. Put a structure on your week days and weekends and stick to it. To help you get into the swing of it – why not create a schedule and stick it on your wall. Try to do the same things at the same time and create different spaces within your home to do them.

## 2. BE KIND TO YOURSELF



Whether we are in school or work - we all want to be as productive as ever. This is a hard time though so accept that you may have good days and bad days or may not be able to do as much as you usually would. All we can do is our best.

## 3. LIMIT SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND MANAGE YOUR NEWS INTAKE



Everyone wants to talk about COVID-19. It is on every channel and social media website. Whilst it is important to be informed – it's important to stick to reliable sources and not constantly read worrying or negative stories. Set a time to inform yourself of developments and then switch off!

## 4. DOUBLE DOWN ON YOUR SPECIAL INTERESTS



If there is a particular topic or topics you enjoy there has never been a better time to indulge in them or learn more about it. Whilst you may not be able to do your favourite activities in the normal way there has never been more time to devote to them or free content such as courses, websites and videos you can access online!

## 5. AGREE OPT-OUT MEASURES WITH YOUR FAMILY OR HOUSE MATES



It is important we support each other through this time but if you are living with other people it might get overwhelming to be around others 24/7. Agree opt-out measures which everyone should respect such as having time alone in your room or a signal or sign that you don't want to chat or be disturbed at certain times of the day. We all need space sometimes!

## 6. BE PREPARED



There are lots of new and unfamiliar realities in our lives at present. We are following new and evolving rules which can be confusing. Take the time to prepare for new social situations such as shopping, travel limits or testing so you know what to expect before you go!



## 7. GET EXERCISE

For many autistic people movement is really important. Being stuck at home all day can cause anxiety and a sense of dysregulation. Be sure to go out for a walk or run or find a movement activity which helps you to relax. Now is not a time to sit still all day!

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## 8. MIND YOUR SENSES

Our homes have possibly never been as busy or crowded as they are right now. Different people are doing different activities, having different conversations or preparing different meals throughout the day. This could lead to sensory chaos! Why not use a sensory checklist to identify how you could calm your home environment or create a pop-up quiet space which anyone can use!

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## 9. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

It's ok to not feel ok. Everyone can find the present situation overwhelming and maybe your usual support network is not as easy to access. You don't have to struggle alone

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## 10. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL - WASH YOUR HANDS, FOLLOW COUGH ETIQUETTE AND OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

It's easy to worry and overthink lots of things we can't control right now. Leave that to the experts and focus on what you can do – wash your hand regularly, observe good cough etiquette and only go out when you need to!

Autism Hampshire can advise you remotely on managing at this time,  
please contact the team - 02380 766162 / [information.advice@autismhampshire.org.uk](mailto:information.advice@autismhampshire.org.uk)