




## Why is a routine important?


Routine provides a sense of structure and predictability, and we feel safer when we know what to expect. So when we're organised and have a good routine it benefits our mental wellbeing. Having a good routine also helps with sleeping at night, which in turns positively affects our wellbeing.

## What do you need to incorporate into a good daily routine?

All the activities that make up your daily routine should collectively fulfil your happiness and well-being, so you must cater for many areas. These are summarised below in the picture:


**B**ody care 

- exercise
- eat healthy
- treat illness
- rest + sleep


**A**chieve 

- work
- chores
- study + learn
- set goals

**HOW TO STAY balanced**  
DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

**C**onnect 

- call/text loved ones
- journal
- facetime
- contribute (if possible)

**E**njoy 

- play
- create
- pamper
- have fun

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<https://wakeupandsmelltherosay.com/wellness-blog/how-to-stay-balanced-during-difficult-times>

## 1. Body Care

This means incorporating some body care activities in our daily routine exercise, eating well, drinking plenty of water and rest. All these things help our mental wellbeing and combat things like anxiety and stress. Fresh air and natural sunlight are important aspects of body care, so try to get outside (in a safe way) during the day. In terms of exercise, there are loads exercise videos on-line that can help you to exercise in your own home.

Here is the Defence Forces home exercise video. Try to do a few of each every day.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=JsJO3-7IV8s&feature=youtu.be>



## 2. Achieve

While covid 19 has placed some things out of our control, there are still plenty of things you can control. You can achieve a lot during this time, but first you need a goal. This starts by asking yourself what do you want to achieve? For many that might be study (especially LC2 students). For others it might be to keep up with the work being assigned by teachers.

Feeling that you are successfully meeting your goals is very good for your mental health. It helps us to feel more secure, in control and confident. So decide what your goals are, and then plan to meet them. Other non-school related goals could be to tidy your room, cut the grass, paint a fence, read a book or simply do the exercises mentioned above. The goal is whatever you decide, you are in control. If the goal is a big one, try to break it into smaller “tiny tickable tasks” that can be achieved one at a time.



## 3. Connect with Others

As humans have been programmed to form attachments with others, to be social, and to feel as though we’re part of a community ([wakeupandsmelltherosay.com](http://wakeupandsmelltherosay.com)). So while we are socially distancing, we’re going to have to get creative in the ways that allow us to feel connected. You are probably a lot more tech savvy than me, so I am sure you already have ways to communicate with others- online gaming, zoom, facetime, Instagram, Facebook, and probably loads of other ways I know nothing about. Use them. Reach out to friends and family. I spent last Friday correcting quiz answers, as my husband decided to organise a family quiz on zoom.

Also, ask yourself, is there anyone you know who would benefit from you getting in touch with them? Someone living alone, someone with few friends or family members? Giving to others is also great for our mental health.

## 4. Enjoy

Enjoyment is equally as important for our mental health as all the others, sleep, exercise, eating well, connecting etc. Sometimes we get enjoyment while undertaking these things. Some people like to cook, and this fits well with eating healthy. Others like to exercise.

Ask yourself what to do you enjoy doing and fit it into your daily routine. If you cannot access the things you currently enjoy then go back to things you enjoyed as a child. If you loved Lego before and have it put away somewhere, take it out and give it another go.



**Why have these aspects in a routine?... here comes the science.....**

These four types of BACE activities help to boost your mental health. They chemically engage the anti-stress and anti-depressant mechanisms in our brains, so that we can feel well during this tough time.

**body care** - stimulates **endorphins** (i.e., physical exercise)

**achievement** - stimulates **dopamine**

**connecting with others** - stimulates **oxytocin**

**enjoying purposeful activities** - stimulates **serotonin**

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**Why are these important?**

Endorphins, dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin are the four major chemical neurotransmitters in the brain responsible for our happiness.

**What next?**

Use the daily log to plan (set goals) for each area. Soon you will be addressing them all without even thinking

**Weekly Activity Diary - BACE**

Activity ↓	Day →							
<b>Body care</b> Exercise Healthy eating Treat illness Rest & sleep 								
<b>Achievement</b> Work Chores Study 								
<b>Connect with others</b> Friends Family Community 								
<b>Enjoyment</b> Play Fun Pleasure 