

Quarantine Tips



mindhk

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The following quarantine tips are evidence-based strategies used by our Mind HK staff during the hotel quarantine period. This doesn't mean that the 21 days went by without struggles or issues, but they helped make the difficult days more manageable.

Set for success!

Like everything else in life, **it is all about preparation**. If you have someone who can drop off supplies for you (and if your hotel allows drop offs), make sure to pre-pack for your quarantine stay. Prepare all the supplies you will need during your quarantine, including any extra supplies you may need, but would rather not pack for your actual trip. Some ideas:

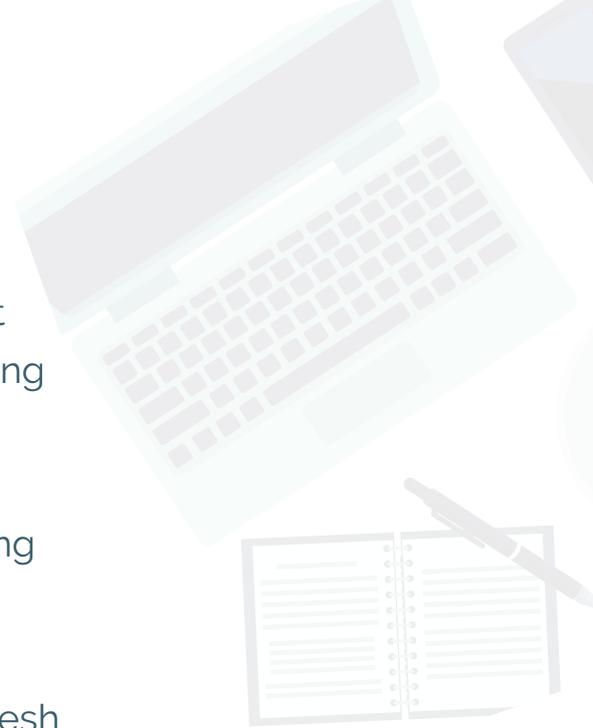
- Electronics, equipment you may need for work (e.g. an HDMI cable can help you connect your laptop to the TV in your room so you can stream content)
- Fun activities - art or craft supplies, books
- Extra clothes - remember there is no laundry
- Comforts from home - a throw blanket or pillow

Move-in Day!

Unpack and get your closet organised, **finding space to put your luggage away**. It will just make it feel a little more like home and will help to declutter your space. Studies have shown that people who maintain a clean living environment are healthier and more active. Additionally, a cluttered room distracts our visual field, making it more difficult to focus and complete tasks. You want to avoid working, or spending all your time in bed, as this can impact your sleep routine. The next 21 days will be about keeping your space organised and functional. Our spaces impact our outlook and our frame of mind.

Helpful Tips:

- Set up “zones”, like a workspace and workout area, leaving your bed for sleeping and relaxing
- Unpack and get your closet organised
- Ask for additional furniture if you need it
- Ask to remove anything you will not use during your stay to free up space
- Keep your room clean and organised. Set a weekly cleaning day, this will help you feel fresh and productive.

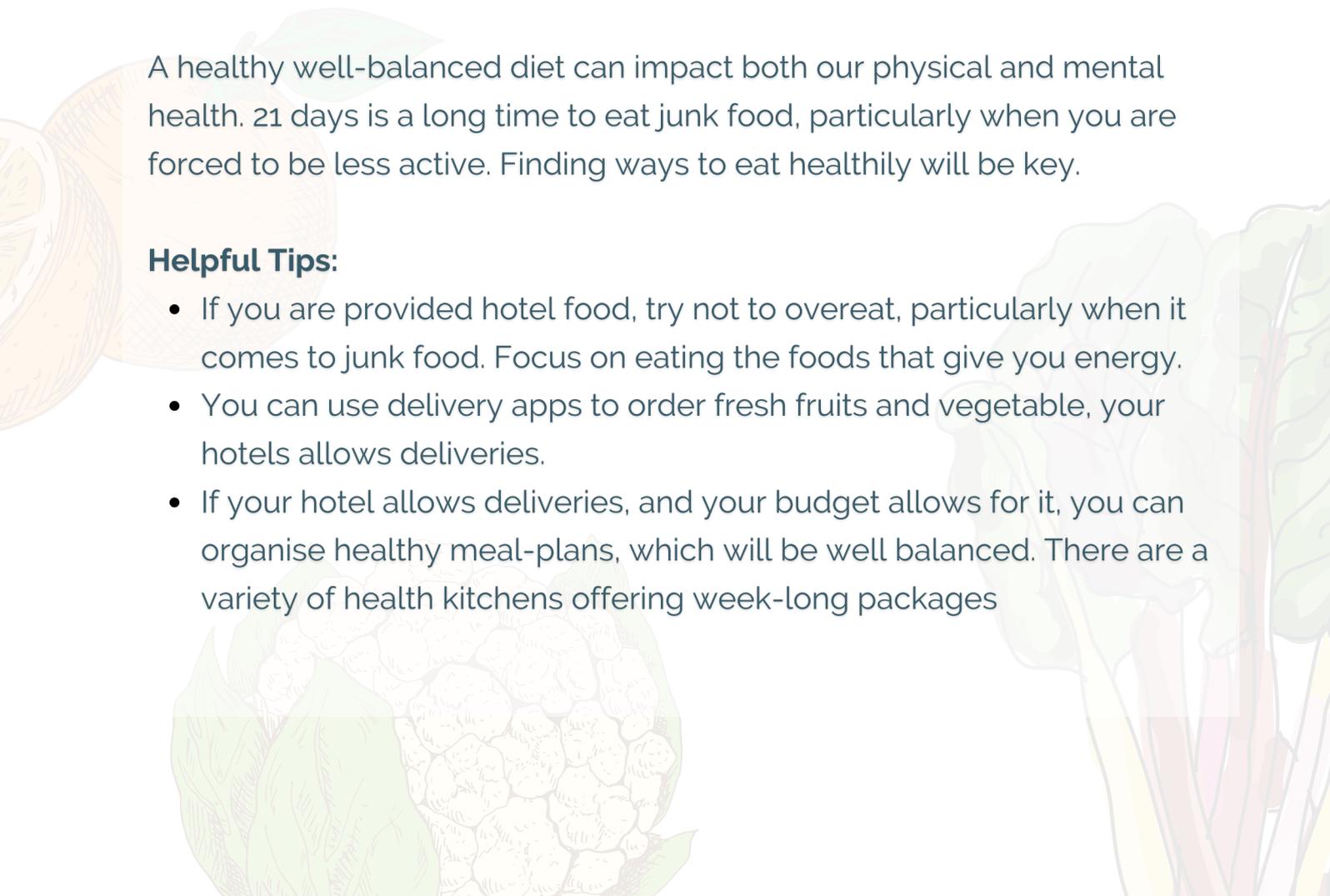


We are what we eat

A healthy well-balanced diet can impact both our physical and mental health. 21 days is a long time to eat junk food, particularly when you are forced to be less active. Finding ways to eat healthily will be key.

Helpful Tips:

- If you are provided hotel food, try not to overeat, particularly when it comes to junk food. Focus on eating the foods that give you energy.
- You can use delivery apps to order fresh fruits and vegetable, your hotels allows deliveries.
- If your hotel allows deliveries, and your budget allows for it, you can organise healthy meal-plans, which will be well balanced. There are a variety of health kitchens offering week-long packages



Happy hour?

Alcohol is a depressant and may worsen low-mood, and it can also contribute to impulsive behaviour. Indulging in a drink is fine, but avoid drinking excessively while in quarantine.

If you have a history of struggling with alcohol use, this is the time to use the coping strategies in your toolbox (see helpful tips below). If you are currently struggling with alcohol use, it would be a good idea to connect with a healthcare professional (GP/Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner) to discuss safety strategies while in quarantine, as abrupt detoxification can have negative health impacts.

Helpful Tips:

- Connect with your sponsor or support person regularly
- Connect with your supportive community
- Connect with your therapist or use the crisis hotline (see provided list)
- Positive self-talk that you would use in risky situations e.g., "I can do this. I have done it before"
- Have a coping strategy plan



Supporting resources

- AA Hong Kong: <https://www.aa-hk.org>
- Tung Wah Groups of Hospitals: <http://atp.tungwahcsd.org>

It's All About the Routine

Quarantine can feel like a time-black hole, where hours and days blend together; this can negatively impact our mental health. Routines help us create structure; they help us keep track of how we are doing and give us a sense of accomplishment. Routines have been shown to reduce our stress levels and contribute to improved sleep.

Helpful Tips:

- **Maintain your morning routines** like you would any other day, showering, changing and eating breakfast
- **Change into “day-time” clothes.** Our clothes have a major impact on our mindset and perception, so changing out of your PJs will help signal the start of your day
- **Set daily “to-do” goals.** If you are working or studying this will be easy enough. If you have neither, consider signing up for a free online course, or if you have art or craft supplies, or books, set daily activity goals
- Be sure to **carve up time for breaks**, particularly if you are working or studying, and use your dinner to signal the end of the “work/school” day
- **Remember to schedule some time to move**
- If you can, try to **include some activities in your routine that give you a regular sense of pleasure, achievement or mastery** (these can be small tasks like paying bills or tidying your e-mail inbox, or creative pursuits like doing art or listening to music). These experiences are crucial in maintaining a healthy mood.
- Similarly, **setting aside some time each day to do a mindfulness exercise** can help in maintaining balance. There are lots of great mindfulness apps to help you stay on track.



Exercise

One of the worst things about quarantine, especially when we are confined in small spaces, is the lack of physical movement. Physical activity has been shown to not only prevent mental health problems but also to be an effective treatment of depression and anxiety.

Quarantine is a stressful situation which can be anxiety provoking as well as isolating, and physical activity is an effective way to combat these negative impacts. Carve out time every day to move, this can be stretching, yoga, exercise routines ... or if you have access to equipment, time on an exercise bike or treadmill.

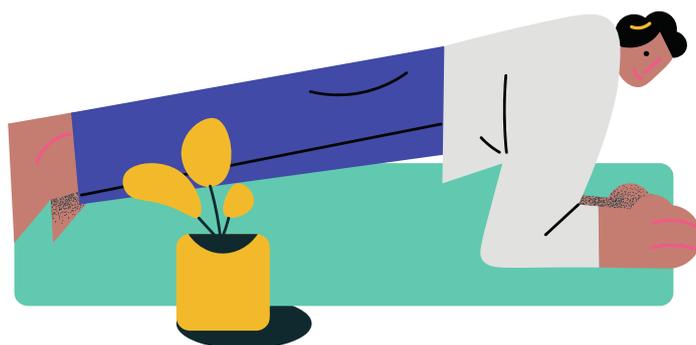
Helpful Tips:

- Have a friend drop off workout equipment like a yoga mat or resistance bands (these are great items to pre-pack if you are planning ahead)
- **Enquire if your hotel offers exercise equipment**
- **Include regular exercise into your daily routine.** Consider carving out 2 physical activity sessions, one for a more vigorous workout, and one for low impact activity like yoga or walking (if you have the equipment)
- **Remember exercise does not require equipment!** There are plenty of free exercise apps and videos on social media to guide you



Indoor workout resources

- [Home workouts with lululemon Ambassadors](#)
- [Calibrate x Move it for Mental Health Home Workout](#)



Sleep

Disturbed sleep can negatively affect our mental health and mental health struggles can negatively affect our sleep. During REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, our dream state has been shown to improve learning, help consolidate memory and contribute to improved emotional health. Sleep is part of our daily routine, and when we are put into a situation where our routines are disrupted this can negatively impact our sleep. Additionally, increased stress can also disrupt our sleep.

Helpful Tips:

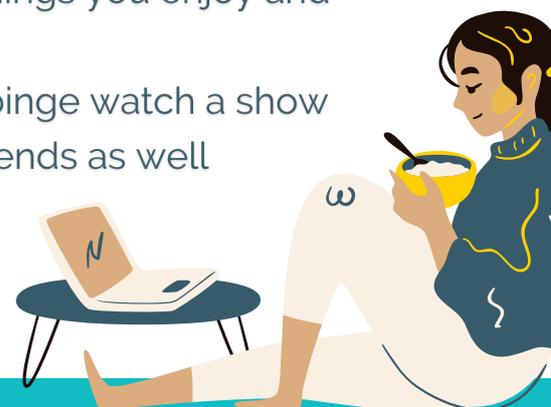
- **Stick to your set routine throughout the day**
- **Wake up and go to sleep at consistent times every day**, with flexibility on the weekend
- **Keep your bed for sleeping and relaxing**, using a working zone outside the bed
- **Avoid using screens before your bedtime**
- **Use mindfulness and meditation to help you get into a restful state**

Everybody's working for the weekend!

Breaks are important to help us recharge and reset, so take the weekend to indulge yourself. This will also help you set structure to your week.

Helpful Tips:

- Allow yourself to let go on the weekend doing things you enjoy and shutting off from work if possible
- This is your cheat time - eat fun food, guilt-free binge watch a show
- But don't forget to move your body on the weekends as well



Stay connected

Quarantine is very isolating. We are social creatures and need human connection to maintain positive mental health. Our loved ones can be a source of support and laughter, two very important commodities during this challenging time.



Helpful Tips:

- Set up virtual get-togethers with friends or family
- Ensure you are connecting with your support system regularly
- Engage with support groups/communities online



Keeping the peace with your roommates

If you are quarantining with family members, partners or friends this can be a two edged sword. Having company is definitely far less isolating but when we are confined in small spaces it can take its toll as well. High-stress situations like these can put significant strain on relationships and worsen our own stress levels.

Helpful Tip:

- **Set up a work or study schedule to avoid conflicts;** this will help control the noise level in the room
- Be kind to each other, and be kind to yourself
- **Let the small things go and pick your battles.** If you are ever in doubt, ask yourself “will I care about this in 5 hours? Will I care about this tomorrow?”
- **Have quiet time where you engage in activities on your own,** like reading or listening to a podcast
- **Take advantage of this forced closeness** and carve out time to connect. Physical proximity is not the same as emotional connection. If you are quarantining with your partner, have a “date night”. If you are with your family play games as a way to unwind.

Be kind

These are challenging times for everyone - quarantiners, hotel staff, government and testing staff. In the face of increased pressure we may find ourselves less patient and more irritable. **But this should not cancel out your own kindness and compassion.** Studies have shown that happy people engage in more acts of kindness on a regular basis. Acts of kindness can come in all forms and sizes, and since you are confined physically these acts will be limited to what you can do from your quarantine base. And do not forget to be kind to yourself!



Helpful Tips:

- **Take time to engage in an act of kindness every day** - giving advice or support, paying a compliment, saying thank you, reaching out to someone who is struggling or sending a gift to someone in need.
- If you feel yourself getting frustrated or you're in a situation where your emotions or behaviours are escalating, **take a deep breath and pause before you do anything else**
- **If you do have an outburst, which can happen, apologise to the person on the receiving end**, explaining to them that you are frustrated with the situation, not with them personally. Remember to be compassionate to others.
- Remember, quarantine is incredibly hard on you. **If you find yourself being more impatient or less tolerant than usual, don't beat yourself up about this.** Ask yourself - "what would I say to a friend if they were in my situation?".

Count your blessings

Gratitude and acknowledging everything that you have to be grateful for has a big impact on our outlook. One study found that individuals who engaged in regular gratitude journaling were more optimistic and had a more positive outlook on their lives, compared to those who journaled their irritations. Interestingly, those in the gratitude group were also found to be more physically active.



Helpful Tips

- Reflect on what you have to be grateful for every day, keeping a gratitude journal during this time can be helpful (there are some great grateful journaling apps to keep you on track)

Reminder:

Not everything is going to go perfectly well and that is **okay! This is a challenging situation, and it is important to recognise that.**



ABOUT MIND HK

Mind HK, established as "Mind Mental Health Hong Kong Limited," is a **registered S88 charity (91/16471)** committed to **improving awareness and understanding of mental health in Hong Kong**. We collaborate with other local and international mental health charities and provide online support and training programmes, based on global best practice, to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem and equip them with the resources they need. Through collaborative research, Mind HK is leading the way in understanding mental health problems in the city and providing its population with the right support and resources.

MIND HK'S MISSION AND VISION

- To ensure **everyone in Hong Kong living with a mental health problem has the recognition, support and respect they need to make the best recovery possible**.
- To provide partnership, collaboration, training, innovation and best practice to facilitate the work of all those involved in improving mental health in Hong Kong.
- To lead, promote and support the destigmatisation and transformation of community mental health care so that Hong Kong can become a global leader in the field and a model for other Asian cities.
- To research and audit these strategies and share them internationally.

RELIABLE INFORMATION ON COVID-19

Centre for Health Protection:

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

World Health Organisation (WHO):

www.who.int/

If you want to learn more about other mental health topics, please visit **our mental health A to Z**: www.mind.org.hk/mental-health-a-to-z/

If you like to learn more on **how to check in on others**, please visit: www.howokayareyou.com

USEFUL LINKS:

- [COVID-19 Mental Health Tips](#)
- [COVID-19 mental health relief scheme](#)



#HowOkayAreYou

#你有幾OK

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If you are experiencing strong levels of distress or trauma which are interfering with your life, remember that you do not have to face it alone, and that **help is available**.

For emergency support please contact:

- Emergency hotline: 999
- The Samaritans 24-hour hotline (Multi-lingual): (852) 2896 0000
- Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong 24-hour hotline (Cantonese only): (852) 2389 2222
- Suicide Prevention Services 24-hour hotline (Cantonese only): (852) 2382 0000
- More crisis support services can be found here: mind.org.hk/find-help-now
- More non-urgent support services can be found here: mind.org.hk/community-directory/



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