



Post lockdown anxiety

Lockdown easing is supposedly a good thing, so why I am slightly dreading it?

This week Boris announced his long-awaited 'roadmap' to ease the country out of lockdown, spelling how and when things will begin to open up. But after so long spent staying at home, navigating varying lockdown restrictions, for many the idea of going back to 'normal' feels a little overwhelming.

We're definitely not out of the woods yet and whilst we're not expecting any big, sudden changes to come anytime soon, it does feel like this could be the first step back towards normality. Yet while this feels like it should be light at the end of the tunnel we've all been searching for, it's natural to feel a little overwhelmed about what might come next..

For the best part of a year staying home has been the norm. Yes, the majority of colleagues will have left the house daily to get to their place of work, or at weekends those working from home will have ventured out for yet another walk. But for the most part, pandemic life has been hugely different from the bustling life we were used to living previously. Hence the very thought of busy school runs, hopping back on buses or trains, meeting with friends in crowded bars, or working out in a large group at a sweaty gym feels nearly impossible. Not just because it sounds utterly exhausting, but

because currently the very thought of going for a walk with a friend in a slightly crowded park is enough to make many of us feel jumpy. Lockdown has become a kind of comfort zone, a slower pace of life, less hectic – a time to take stock and take back control.

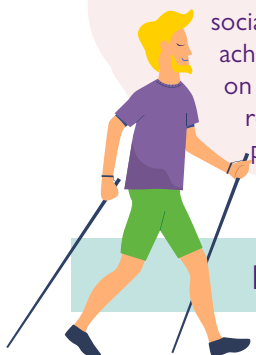
The 'Coronacoaster' of emotions we've all experienced during this period of lockdown, the incredible highs and the very low lows have at least become familiar, and the prospect of moving away from this familiarity feels like a big step. Adjusting during this period has not been easy for any of us and reverting to our 'former selves' won't be either.

It's important not to punish ourselves if we don't feel as elated as others at the prospect of getting back to normal. It's also just as important for those of us feeling elated, not to be deflated by those who are less enthused. It's ok to accept that this next phase might not be an easy road for us all, so long as we remember that we're all in this together. No matter how isolated these emotions might make us feel, they are all valid and should all be shared so we can continue to support one another as we have done so brilliantly thus far...

WALK YOURSELF WELL

Gyms are still some way off being back open again, so why not make the most of the longer days by getting outside and joining with colleagues on a 'virtual' walk from Land's End to John O'Groats. It's free to join and there's a leaderboard for the competitive amongst you; I'm currently trailing a little behind! All you have to do is sign up at [this link](#) and log your daily distance.

Be sure to share any photos taken along the way so we can share them in the CPJ Field Life & Times newsletter or on social media to celebrate our collective achievement. Michelle Thorn is kindly on hand to offer any guidance on the registration process, It's free and pretty straightforward, so don't delay, get walking / cycling / running today!



Food cravings by Elaine

I read something interesting this week about what nutrients and vitamins we are lacking if we crave certain foods. Here is a list of what we need to fight off the cravings:

Crying out for **chocolate** – You're running low on magnesium: try eating nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit.

Craving **carbs** – you're in need of nitrogen: eat high protein foods such as fatty fish, lean meat and beans.

Seriously wanting **sugary** foods – you need more tryptophan: try eating more cheese, raisins, spinach and sweet potatoes.

Overindulging in **oily** foods – try more calcium: increase your intake of organic milk, cheese and leafy green vegetables.

Starving for **salty** foods – your body wants chloride which includes goat's milk and fatty fish or silicon: try eating cashews, nuts and seeds.



Working from home and ten top tips for managing stress

by Andy Holter

Due to the pandemic many businesses across the UK have found themselves changing the way they work, and how they support their employees during these particularly challenging times. One massive change was the introduction of employees being offered the opportunity to work from home (WFH).

Last week I shared the challenges that we faced with 'change in the workplace', and home working featured as one of those changes that our colleagues within CPJ Field have faced.

This week I'd like us to look at the impacts of the stress as a result from working at home. For many the idea of working from home is a welcome one, but for others it's a stressful prospect.

The positives of WFH: There are clearly several benefits for business; flexibility and agility being two key ones.

The negatives: Self-discipline, separating home from work, distractions, loss of living space, isolation and loneliness.

Things we should be mindful of: ensure we take the health and safety recommended hourly desk breaks, take breaks for physical activity or stretching; avoid uncomfortable and impractical desks and equipment, and avoid working excessive hours.

Potential negative impacts of WFH on our mental health:

1. A feeling of loneliness and isolation
2. Lack of eating, or even overindulgence on snacks and quick unhealthy meals
3. Anxiety and depression resulting in over-thinking and paranoia
4. Increased stress levels
5. Physical impacts, such as digestive issues (diarrhoea, constipation and ulcers)

Top 10 stress solutions for working at home

Establish boundaries – The good news is that you do not have to work 9 to 5. The bad news is that some friends and family may assume you do not have to work at all! Set firm boundaries about not being disturbed while you are at the office, even if the office is only feet away. This will cut out a lot of frustration and conflict.

Claim your territory – Use your office space and equipment exclusively for work. A whole room is ideal, but a designated corner will do. If you have housemates, you'll save yourself much stress and aggravation over misplaced papers and accidentally erased computer files. Even if you live alone, you will feel more capable and confident in a professional work environment.

Find a babysitter – A home office is a great option for mums and dads who want to combine stay-at-home parenting and a career, but do not kid yourself. If you have young children and work at your paid job for more than a few hours per week, you will need some help with childcare. Home-based does not equal superhuman!

Manage deadlines – Deadlines do not automatically have to cause deadline stress. Break larger projects down and set milestones for when each step needs to be completed. Then dive in right away to ward off procrastination!

Make to-do lists – Begin each day by making a daily to-do list. Rank list items as A, B, C, or D, from most to least urgent, then estimate how long it would take to complete the entire list. If it is too long, look for items to eliminate or delegate. Once you've whittled it down to a realistic length, start working on the items in turn. If something crops up and you don't complete the list, simply revisit again on tomorrow's to-dos.

Dress to de-stress – One of the biggest perks of working at home is that you can do it in your joggers! But there is a fine line between comfy and comatose on the couch. Dress smart to think smart: put on something suitable and make a slight effort – the self-esteem boost is an excellent motivator.

Meet with colleagues – Social isolation is a major source of stress for home-based workers. Online contacts are great, but you also need face-to-face interaction. Join a networking group, or consider a coworking arrangement, in which you spend some of your work hours in a shared office space – socially distanced of course!

Take housework breaks – If you hit a mental block, don't just sit there growing increasingly anxious, take five and tackle a tedious household chore: fold the laundry, unload the dishwasher, or mop the floor. The chore should distract you from the anxiety, but not enough to derail you from the primary mental task at hand. This helps you relax and restore your mental focus. Note: if a brilliant idea comes to your mind, drop what you are doing immediately and return to your desk. The laundry will wait!

Go home at night – When you work from home, it is tempting to never really leave the office; there's always one more thing to be done. Ignore it. Learn to close the door and walk away at a reasonable hour. The next morning you will be more relaxed, refreshed, and ready for a new day at the home office.

[WATCH THIS VIDEO FOR MORE TIPS.](#)

