

CAMHELPS

CamHelps provides you with tips and resources to support your mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic



TOPIC: Keep Moving

The links between physical and mental well-being have been known for a long time. When people get active and moving about, the body responds by releasing serotonin, a chemical in the brain that acts like a natural mood booster. Exercise is also an excellent way to lower anxiety and stress, set and achieve reachable goals, and creates the time and space necessary to help gain clarity and perspective. The benefits of physical activity are also known to contribute to the prevention of primary and secondary diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression, and osteoporosis.

Under normal circumstances, going to the workplace provides some degree of daily physical activity. We move ourselves from the bus stop or parking lot to our workplaces, some people commute by bicycle, and even going to meetings and going to classes provides some level of activity throughout the day.

But these days are not normal as many Camosun employees have transitioned to working remotely during this time of physical distancing. As a result, we may be getting less exercise throughout the day than before. People might be fearful of venturing beyond their doors out of an abundance of caution, or even fear. Regular routines that had included physical activity may be disrupted.

This week's CamHelps article focuses on ways that exercise can be part of your remote workday while respecting social distancing protocols. A big thank you to **Megan Lambeth, Camosun College Recreation and Fitness Coordinator**, for her contributions to this article and for the many suggestions on how to support your mental well-being by investing in your physical well-being.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are lots of ways to ensure that your mental well-being is supported by regular physical activity throughout the COVID-19 situation. Here are some ideas to get you started:

WORKING REMOTELY TIPS

- If you find yourself sitting for extended periods of time, take regular stretch breaks.
- Make sure your remote workstation is set up to be as ergonomically supportive as possible.
- Move your body frequently. Wiggle your toes. Flex and relax your fists. Raise and lower your arms. Stretch your legs. Remember, you are working remotely...not sitting through a long distance flight.



MOVE YOUR BODY

- Get your cardiovascular system working by doing a variety of exercises such as skipping, jumping jacks, running the stairs, burpees, dancing, jogging on the spot, or workouts where you do a combination of aerobic exercises with strength training activities. The list is almost endless and really ends with the limit of your imagination. Findings suggest that getting twenty to forty minutes of aerobic activity can result in a reduction of anxiety for several hours.
- Strength training can be a bit more of a challenge if you do not have any equipment, but here are some exercises you can do using the natural resistance of your own body weight.
 - Bodyweight squats or holding a wall squat
 - Push-ups (full body or from knees)
 - Walking lunges
 - Dumbbell rows (using a gallon milk jug or another weight)
 - Planks
 - Triceps dip (using elevated surface such as stair)
 - Abdominal crunches
- Don't forget to warm up and cool down after your workout. **If you feel pain in a joint like back, neck, shoulders, or knees, stop doing whatever it is that is causing the pain.** If it has been years since you were active, it is important to let your body get adjusted to a new routine
- If you have a hard time holding yourself accountable, it might help to find an online community or workout partner (i.e. someone you live with) or a friend you can text, or phone, while you are working out. If you are using online communication, try to add a video-based component as research has shown that being able to see the other participant's body language and facial expressions generates a greater sense of social presence making for a richer experience.

There are lots of examples of how to do these common exercises on YouTube or you can reach out to a Camosun Fitness Centre attendant for some one-on-one support.

GET OUTSIDE

We are fortunate to live in a place where there are lots of opportunities for getting outdoors while respecting social distancing obligations. Getting outside and into nature has been endorsed by Dr. Bonnie Henry (BC's Provincial Health Officer) as an important part of maintaining mental well-being. Just remember to remain socially distant, stay home if you are unwell, wash your hands, and keep your hands away from your face.

Enjoy the outdoors, but keep yourself and others safe.

ENJOY YOURSELF

Most importantly, make exercise fun! Finding out what physical activity you enjoy is important to your journey of increasing physical activity. From gardening, to hiking, to yoga or even a simple walk around the block, there are several ways one can become more active.

RESOURCES

Ergonomics & Stretch Break Ideas

- [Take a Stretch Break](#) [PDF] from Homewood Health
- [Stretching at the Workstation](#) from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
- [Laptop Ergonomics](#) from the University of Waterloo
- [How to Make your Computer Workstation Fit You](#) from WorkSafe BC

Exercising Safely

- [BC HealthLink's tips](#) for keeping safe while working out

Simple Home Exercise Options

- [Manulife's Turning your Home into a Gym](#), a list of easy ways to exercise at home
- [Homewood's Home Gym on a Shoestring](#) [PDF], simple steps for an effective workout at home
- [Homewood's Best Home Workout Moves](#) [PDF], tips for working out at home

Targeted Online Exercises

Cardio

- Jenna Howe, Camosun College Fitness Centre Attendant, will be offering online Cardio Blast and Zumba classes. If interested, please [email](#) her.
- [Cardio Exercises at Home: 19 moves for all fitness levels](#)
- [Keep Dancing with Ailey: Online classes and live classes on Instagram and YouTube](#)

Strength

- [Marketwatch's database of free workouts from Peloton, Nike, and others](#)
- [At Home Partner Workout with Matt Fisher: Bodyweight Only \(Beginner\)](#)

Stretching & Yoga

- Live '[Stretch and Breathe](#)' sessions with Camosun College's Tersia Fagan (Mon & Wed @ 11:30 am)
- [Laura Benson's Yoga Videos](#)
- [Do Yoga With Me](#)

For more online exercises, check out the *Healthy Together!* '[Staying Active at Home](#)' resources page.

Camosun Fitness Centre

Camosun College Fitness Centre Attendants are available and happy to help answer questions, design basic fitness programs, and check physical form.

- To contact individual trainers for one-on-one support:
 - Alan Poole: Poolea@camosun.bc.ca
 - Andrew Lai: LaiA@camosun.bc.ca
 - Danny Harris: HarrisD@camosun.bc.ca
 - Jenna Howe: Howej@camosun.bc.ca
 - Joel Swets: Swetsj@camosun.bc.ca
 - Brent Hall: Hallb@camosun.bc.ca
- Learn more about our Fitness Centre trainers by reading their [Fitness Centre trainer biographies](#)

If you are experiencing a mental well-being related emergency or need urgent support, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911



WORKING REMOTELY RESOURCES

[10 General Tips for Working Remotely](#) | [Remote Work Guidelines](#) |

[Tips for Workplace Leaders in Supervising Remote Workers](#)



MORE INFORMATION

Questions about Camosun's Employee Wellness resources – including suggestions for future CamHelps – can be sent to healthytogether@camosun.bc.ca.

Frequently check Camosun's [COVID -19 information page](#) and [FAQs](#).

Workplace Leaders looking for support with managing remote workgroups can contact Nancy Ali, Organization and People Development Specialist (AliN@camosun.bc.ca)

