



20 things to keep you mentally healthy and well at home

We've put together our top 20 activities to keep you mentally healthy and well during the COVID-19 lockdown. They all promise mental stimulation, engagement, learning, fun and entertainment

1. Camp at home

Queenslanders love to camp at Easter, and while we have to practice social distancing by staying at home, there's no reason to cancel the campsite experience. Backyards are great spaces to utilise while in isolation, and closer to amenities than most campsites, and spending time outdoors is great for our mental health.

2. Have a picnic – outdoors or indoors

Again, getting out in the outdoors is a great way to while away some time. Bring along a picnic basket and a blanket and bask in the sunlight (don't forget to be sunsafe).

An indoor picnic is also a great idea – place lots of cushions around on the floor, add some fairy lights and get away from TVs and other screens to recharge your own mental wellbeing.

3. Easter egg hunt

What's Easter without an indoor/outdoor Easter egg hunt? And it's something the whole family can participate in. For an extra twist, you could leave clues for people to find those really well-hidden eggs.

4. Bored? Try board games

Board and card games can soak up hours at a time, create lots of fun and laughter, and are a great way to connect with each other. Scrabble, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Pictionary, Uno, Yahtzee, Articulate, What do

you Meme?, Bananagrams, and Kids against Maturity are all great options.

5. Film a family talk show

Learning new skills is great for our mental health and wellbeing. While we're all upskilling around technology to communicate at a distance, how about shooting a family news cast, talk show or movie to share with friends and family? All you need is your phone to create a great record of life during the COVID-19 lockdown. There are some great tips [here](#).

6. Progressive/bring-a-plate-dinner

Cooking is a relaxing way to pass time, with the mental health benefit of sharing a meal afterwards. In this version, each member of the household prepares a dish or course for sharing together.

7. Learn to build a website

Exercise your brain by learning something completely new and challenging. There are lots of free website builders online, along with YouTube tutorials.

8. Have a water balloon fight

One the kids will especially love, and great for spending time outdoors. There's no better way to get some exercise than by running around and getting a good soaking. Dads always make the best targets.



9. Gardening is energising

Planting and tending your garden is a really good way to boost your feel-good hormones. It's also great light exercise, and having your garden looking its best will make you proud of your efforts. Planting a potted kitchen garden means you'll have fresh herbs and produce whenever you need them.

10. Arts and crafts

Raid those cupboards and tucked-away items to find materials for arts and crafts. From paper sculpture to papier maché and paint – there are loads of ways to exercise your creative muscle and challenge your mind. It's amazing what you can do with potato stamps and paper snowflakes. Add a twist with a family art show.

11. Meditation podcasts

Most of us are feeling a little stressed. Try one of the many meditation apps and podcasts available and back it up with a hot bath to soothe your body and your mind.

12. Family film festival

Chilling out with quality downtime is great for our mental health. Each family member selects a movie to screen during the festival, and explains why it's one of their favourite movies. To add a twist, you could choose themes such as rom-coms, dramas, thrillers or action flicks. Source films through online streaming platforms, add popcorn and make it a marathon.

13. Puzzles

The satisfaction of placing that final piece is boundless. A quiet pastime that's great to do as a family, and can be done progressively.

14. Living room yoga

Yoga is good for you – for strength and balance, and for centring your mind. There are free yoga-at-home apps, but take it slowly to get the most benefit and to avoid injury.

15. Organise your family photos

There's no better time to arrange that pile of family photos. Sort them chronologically, put them in albums and add captions and stories for posterity.

16. Go for a bike ride

Exercise is terrific for our physical and mental health, and at times like this we need to enhance both. There's nothing better than the wind in your face to put a smile on your dial.

17. Start a new book

Some quality down time is important to keep us mentally healthy and strong. Reading a good book leads us to new places, perspectives and experiences without leaving home. Fiction is great for its entertainment value, and non-fiction is great for learning something new.

18. Learn to draw

There are lots of drawing tutorials on YouTube. Just grab some pencils and start. You'll be amazed how good you can get with a little practice.

19. Start an online course

Australian universities offer free online courses ranging from business, social sciences through to art and design, and humanities. You can join up at <https://www.mooc-list.com/countries/australia>

20. Look after your wellbeing

Take Yale University's online course on the [Science of Wellbeing](#). In this course you will engage in a series of challenges designed to increase your happiness and build more productive habits, working to incorporate a specific wellness activity into your life.