

# A problem shared

Your Union Advice newsletter – a little bit of help when you need it most

Issue 7.5 (April 2020)



## Some advice from your VP Mel

Hi Everyone, I'm Mel! Your Vice President Education, this means you can talk to me about all things education, academic or course related. I also have manifesto points related to social learning spaces, value for money and diversifying our education.

Everyone deals with stress in different ways and just like that, everyone destresses differently! University can bring on a whirlwind of emotions, tasks and responsibilities that can sometimes add to stress levels. The transition from living at home and studying to living on your own and studying was one that I overlooked when thinking about university, I ended up realising that I needed to find my own ways of destressing!

Here are a few of my favourite ways to kick back, relax and destress!

**Breathing exercise:** A simple exercise of trying to visualise your breath can be super beneficial! Start by putting all your stray thoughts aside and be conscious on your breath coming in and going out of your lungs, focusing on the sensation of inhaling and exhaling.

**Sit and observe:** Meditation doesn't need to be sitting crossed leg on the floor with incense and candles burning. Meditation is about quieting the mind. Find a place to sit and really observe what's around you, try not to react to things but focus on noticing.

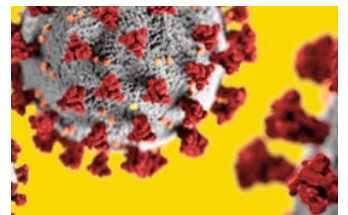


I like to light a scented candle and listen to some [meditation playlists on Spotify](#).

**Small home exercises:** Exercise is one of the best stress relievers. It helps blow off steam and releases endorphins. One of my favourite things to do now is watch Netflix and do a little home workout routine! An episode of Friends plus 3 sets of 10 squats, lunges and mountain climbers always leaves me feeling strong and energised!

**Creative outlets:** Finally, my absolute favourite thing to do when I'm stressed... is draw. Finding a creative outlet that suits you can be the key to destressing. Whether that be cooking, baking, art or photography being creative can be a super productive way of taking care of yourself.

There are lots of blogs, social media accounts and companies that have new and innovative ways of relaxing too, find what works for you and enjoy!



### Who to talk to

Contacts during these uncertain times

[Union Advice Service](#)  
[Student Wellbeing](#)

More contacts at:

[derbyunion.co.uk/covid19](http://derbyunion.co.uk/covid19)



### Tips from Student Minds

Visit the Student Minds website for their tips on how to look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak.

[Looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)





# Tips for working from home

- Get dressed as you would usually, this includes wearing shoes. You wouldn't walk around in your socks in lectures so avoid doing this now! Being dressed as you would normally, can make you ready to be more productive. Avoid your pyjamas, as those should be saved for your downtime!
- Set up a nice working area. If you can access a kitchen table or a desk, then use this. Organise this area, ensure you have all items near you that you will need. Try and brighten the area, maybe add a plant!
- Listen to music so its not too quiet, either turn the radio on or your favourite playlist. Oh and of course sing a long!
- Create a daily task list so you stay focused.
- Stick to a normal routine. Try and get up at the same time as you normally would if you had to get to your lecture or a meeting. This will allow you to keep structure and still have time to mentally prepare.
- Take breaks, walk around and get some fresh air. This is really important for productivity!
- Chat to friends or peers whenever you can. Its important to remain as sociable as possible. Keep in touch with your lecturers or other staff that you would normally see, they'll appreciate your communication too!

# Ideas for how to have fun in isolation

- Indoor Picnic
- Stargazing
- Cook new recipes
- Yoga Session
- Games night
- Gardening
- Movie day/Night
- Games tournament
- Learn a new skill
- Karaoke Night
- Start reading a book
- Drawing
- Painting
- Home Ice Cream Bar
- Facetime friends
- Workout from home, on your own or with friends.

## Top Tips for reducing stress

### Be Active

Staying fit and active doesn't mean you have to run Marathons weekly! Aim to get some fresh air at least once a day (do follow Government advice when doing so). Taking time to unwind while releasing endorphins is great for releasing stress!

### Connect with People

Send a text to a friend or relative to see how they are, facetime them if you can. Try to remain a sociable as possible at this time but do follow the guidance the government is providing.

### Take some 'me' time

Find what you enjoy doing and make time to do it! Whether that's being sociable, baking a cake or simply putting some music on, take time to look after yourself!

### Avoid bad habits

Avoid indulging in takeaways every evening, think about the negative impact this has on your ability to concentrate and feel lively! Try meal prepping over a weekend, a big tray of pasta bake can get you a long way! (See the Union Recipe Book for some quick and tasty recipe ideas).

### Help others

It can feel really rewarding helping others. Choose something that interests you and take some time (it doesn't have to be more than an hour) to help others. This is also really beneficial for your CV! At this current time that could just involve getting some items from a shop for someone who is having difficulty accessing a store.

### Aim to stay positive

While it is easy to advise to stay positive, it's not always easy to do so. Take time to jot down any positive things that are going on in your life right now. Also avoid speculation and look up reputable sources when reading about the outbreak.

### Know when to seek help

It isn't always possible to help ourselves, its about understanding how you can ask for help! Should you ever need further support you can contact the Union of Students Advice Service or Student Wellbeing for further support!

[derbyunion.co.uk/advice](https://derbyunion.co.uk/advice)

# How to beat stress at university

## Organisation!

Everyone always says that organisation is key but knowing how to become organised can be really difficult!

The important skill is finding what works for you. Would you benefit from a daily task list? Or maybe a full diary? For visual students maybe try a bullet journal, this can make your tasks feel more creative and less stressful!

Sometimes getting organised before starting key tasks is vital in getting you focused! However, the skill is not getting too distracted by getting organised!

## Time management!

Time management is a key skill for avoiding overwhelming amounts of stress. Try to avoid leaving all your work until the last minute because this means you will be immersed in bundles of unnecessary stress!

In advance of the deadline look at how many weeks you have to go until you need to submit the work. From this you can then set yourself a target for how much work you would like to complete per week. Yes, this may seem like you are prolonging the stress, however you hopefully will find that this makes it feel more manageable!

Don't forget to submit your work to Turnitin in advance of the deadline, this way you can check your similarity and see if you need to make changes.

## Speak out!

If you are feeling overwhelmed while at university the best way to combat this is to speak out!

Contact your personal tutor, module leader or programme leader and ask for extra support.

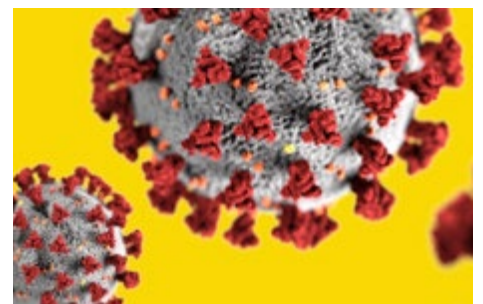
You can also seek help from the study skills service within the library as well as the student wellbeing service.

It is important to remember that if you are struggling there is no harm in admitting this and making sure you are getting support.

Don't forget there is the advice service who will always be happy to help you, whether this is just listening to your issues and helping you make the first steps to get extra support.

## Tips for self-care

- Sleep well: Aim to get 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Seems impossible? Making small changes such as turning notifications off on your phone after 9pm can be really effective! If you struggle sleeping, then try to get valuable rest. Seek the advice of your GP if this is a prolonged issue.
- Drink lots of water: This is such a simple change to make to your life and can help with your concentration and your health!
- Keep up with hobbies!
- Switch off for devices for digital detox!
- Treat yourself: It doesn't hurt to treat yourself now and then!
- Look after your appearance: Shower and get dressed to be productive at the start of the day.
- Speak to someone who you find supportive: Whether this is a friend, relative, peer or colleague. This support can be really helpful.
- Work on a personal project: Think about your targets and goals, set a personal project and you'll feel amazing working on this!



## For more tips and advice regarding coronavirus and your wellbeing

Visit the Mind website for tips and support for Coronavirus and your Wellbeing:

[mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing)

For official Government Advice on Coronavirus:

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

# Representing your Academic interests

The University's academic regulations documents contain the academic policies, procedures and regulations about your rights and responsibilities as a student at the University of Derby.

Some key times to consider within the University regulations are:

- **Appeals must be submitted within ten working days of formal publication of results or a decision**
- **Complaints should be submitted within three calendar months of the issue arising**

These documents are really helpful at supporting you if things do go wrong, they will advise you of the next steps to take and help you follow the process.

The Advice Service are here to support you each step of the way, whether that is with help drafting emails, reading statements, proof reading forms or advising you of the procedure if you are at a loose end.

All the documents we provide can be found online at [derby.ac.uk/about/academic-regulations/](http://derby.ac.uk/about/academic-regulations/)

These documents also cover; how your assessments are marked, what happens if you miss a deadline, how to apply for EECs and how to access support for your academic work should you feel you need to.

These documents also provide information on what happens if something goes wrong, or if you are accused of committing a "*suspected academic offence*".

We at the advice service are trained on how to help you within all these scenarios. However if your questions, queries or issues don't fit into these categories you can contact us anyway. We are happy to help with any problem, in many instances we can signpost you to the best possible person to assist you.

## Academic appeals

A Union self-help guide

Your Union of Students'  
Independent advice service  
01332 591507  
advice@derbyunion.co.uk  
derbyunion.co.uk/advice

Talk to  
**US**

## Making a complaint

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## Improve the advice service

Any ideas on how to improve your advice service, we'd love to hear them. Either pop them onto the ideas forum via [derbyunion.co.uk/ideas](http://derbyunion.co.uk/ideas) or contact us directly using the contact details below.

## Housing issues and Coronavirus

More info on housing issues and coronavirus

[england.shelter.org.uk/housing-advice/coronavirus](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing-advice/coronavirus)

## Your Union's independent advice service

Contact us on **01332 591507** if you need advice or help or email [advice@derbyunion.co.uk](mailto:advice@derbyunion.co.uk)

[derbyunion.co.uk/advice](http://derbyunion.co.uk/advice)