



How to look after your well-being during the pandemic

Local psychotherapist Chai-Yoel Korn provides five steps to help you look after your well-being, based on research by the New Economics Foundation as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing.

Usually we tell clients not to self-isolate as loneliness and isolation can lead to poorer health and emotional well-being. At this time, however, the healthy option is to stay home and isolate. This time allows us to take a breath and develop coping mechanisms to deal with daily life better during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Connect:

- Reach out to your neighbour, family and friends.
- Speak to someone who is single, prioritising the ageing or those who have to self-isolate due to a medical condition.

Be active:

- Exercise for at least 15 – 30 minutes a day. This could be as simple as using two heavy tins from your larder to exercise to tone your arm muscles or choosing to climb the stairs more often.
- If you are privileged to have a garden, walk around it and notice the sky, plants or flowers and the ground. This will help you tune in to your breathing.

Take notice:

- Take a three-minute breathing space, build an awareness of thoughts, feelings and the sensations in your body. Focus attention on your breath and then expand your awareness to your whole body. Once you

have taken the three-minute space turn your attention to your next activity.

Learn:

- Read a new book, do a crossword or learn a new language.
- Set goals for what you would like to achieve when life returns to normal.
- Limit the amount of news you are watching.

Give:

- Be active in your community. Perhaps volunteer as a first responder if you have those skills.
- Write 5 things that you are grateful for at the beginning and end of each day.
- Smile more and remember to laugh at the small simple things in life.

If you need emotional well-being support, there is plenty of information online and my door is always open to offer one-to-one emotional support at this time. Please find me at <https://joelkornpsychotherapy.co.uk>



Yikes! Ghost seen hovering over the High Road

When Archer reader David Holt was walking home after dark last month, he glanced up and saw this ghost-like apparition hovering in one of the large trees along the High Road. By day, it's a plastic sheet that has been trapped in the branches opposite the end of Bedford Road for many months. But by night, with arms spread wide and what looks like a face, it's enough to give anyone the creeps.

Letters



Signs of hope: Elm flowers on Hampstead Heath. Photo Linda Dolata.

Comeback for the elm? Dear Editor,

As most people know, we lost most of our native elms (*Ulmus procera*) to Dutch Elm Disease decades ago, and these beautiful big trees, once so common in our fields, woods and hedgerows were rarely to be seen.

Elms were usually planted as cuttings, as they form suckers easily, and this meant that they tended to be clones, with the same genetic makeup, which is why they were all so susceptible to the disease. The disease attacks mature elms, so the suckers often survive until they develop proper bark as they mature.

There are elm 'shrubs' all over the place, lots on Hampstead Heath for example, but no mature trees as such. This morning I noticed elm flowers for the second time in a couple of days, pictured.

I last noticed these as a child in the 1960s. This means that some of the remnant plants are reaching maturity, even if they are still not spectacular trees. If they are flowering, then presumably they are also producing seed later in the year, and if they are seeding, then there is new genetic information in any subsequent seedlings.

I am happy to be corrected, or to explain the science further if anyone is interested, but I think we are seeing the recovery, albeit slowly, of the English elm.

Linda Dolata
Leopold Road, N2.

Gratitude of fire family Dear Editor,

You reported the fire at our home in Park Hall Road in your last edition. We would first like to offer our thanks to the London Fire Brigade who were magnificent. We are very grateful that they saved many of our possessions and protected our neighbours' properties.

Despite these difficult times our friends and neighbours demonstrated how generous people can be. While trying to observe 'social distancing' our neighbours offered comfort and reassurance, bringing blankets and a much-needed mug of tea while the fire burned.

Friends gave us hot dinners, washed clothes, brought sturdy boxes to move our salvaged belongings, donated clothing for my daughter, lodged our tortoise, and sent us flowers, chocolate, and wine. Most generously, one family even let us use their house overnight.

Many other small kindnesses, despite the difficulties of lockdown, remind us that the community spirit is thriving in East Finchley.

We would like to thank each and every one of you who made such a difficult experience easier to cope with.

We are now settled in our temporary home and looking forward to meeting our new neighbours once lockdown ends.

The Tomlin Family,
Hertford Road, N2.

Distance running

Dear Editor,

Paris only allows jogging before 10am and after 7pm at night "when the streets are generally at their quietest". Exercising between those hours is now forbidden. "Going for a run is good for the health, but not so good for lockdown," Hidalgo told *France Info*.

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"There are too many people out at the same time and too many joggers at peak times. Nothing is perfect: the aim is to limit risks by limiting overcrowding rather than a general ban."

The rules apply only to people jogging or taking other exercise, not to dog walkers or people taking a short walk with members of their household.

In our area please could joggers and cyclists consider using the empty roads and not narrow park paths and alleys?

Brian Ingram
By email

Three cheers

Dear Editor,

When all around us free newspapers have stopped publishing, three cheers for *The Archer*... now available in local supermarkets.

Barry H White,
Fordington Road, N6.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column. Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Take joy where we can find it

By Lottie Millett

"We need to live, not merely exist." I found myself typing these words to my mum as she spoke about the mix of guilt and relief she felt for leaving Easter Eggs outside my sister's house. She runs a group at her local chapel, for children in the village where I grew up, and had planned to give these out at their last group before the Easter holidays.

A few days earlier my mum had messaged my sister and me asking for advice on how and if she should distribute them. My sister offered to post on the local Facebook group to let people know where they would be, and also reminding people to obey social distancing rules, and only touch the one they would be taking.

All seemed pretty sensible to me. And yet my mum was left with a sense of guilt that she had made a 'non-essential' journey. I've thought about this instruction, and how the lack of clarity about what precisely qualifies as 'essential' leaves the onus on us to decide.

Trips to get food, medication, to help the vulnerable, to go to work if a keyworker, to exercise. These things are stated as essential. It seems that the (perhaps not so) implicit message is that going out for any other reason means that you are flouting your civic duty, and in so doing endangering not just yourself but everyone else.

What about all the rest of it? Is it not also essential to have means with which you can occupy yourself? Seeds and compost to plant if you're lucky enough to have a garden, those mini eggs to decorate the chocolate nest cakes you make every year, that bottle of cider that tastes sweeter than ever, to drink in the sunshine, maybe even for a moment allowing yourself to believe that things are normal.

I am not encouraging people to irresponsibly disregard the governmental advice we receive. Nor am I wanting to endorse recklessly endangering the shop assistants and delivery drivers, who check out our items and deliver our goods. We must of course do our utmost to protect them, and all of us.

However, in a time when life and death feel ever present, I wonder if we might also pursue joy and life, wherever and however, we can find it.