Breathe

First, take a nice deep breath. When we are anxious or stressed, our breathing tends to become rapid and shallow. By slowing down and taking a nice deep breath, we're better able to ground ourselves to the present moment.

Realise productivity is a coping mechanism

Mental health professionals have noted that many people use productivity as a coping mechanism, perhaps as a distraction from an underlying negative mood. Just because someone else seems to be getting a lot done doesn't mean they're any happier than you.

Acknowledge your feelings

Another way to deal with the feeling of needing to do more is to simply acknowledge it. By naming it and giving it space, you take away some of its power. Avoiding your feelings won't fix your problems, it just saves them for later.

Ask yourself what you need

Once you know what you're feeling, you can check in with yourself to see what it is you need to either feel better or cope. It could be as simple as getting more sleep, or reaching out and connecting with a friend or loved one—from a distance, of course.

How to deal with the pressure to do more during self-isolation (Part 1)

Many who are self-isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic have felt pressure to use this time to be productive—learn a new language, clean the house, or bake a loaf of sourdough daily. Seeing so many social media posts about projects people are working on can make it feel like if you're not using this time to complete your own masterpiece, you're wasting an opportunity or not doing quarantine "right". Do you ever feel like that? Here are some tips on how to deal with the pressure to do more during self-isolation.
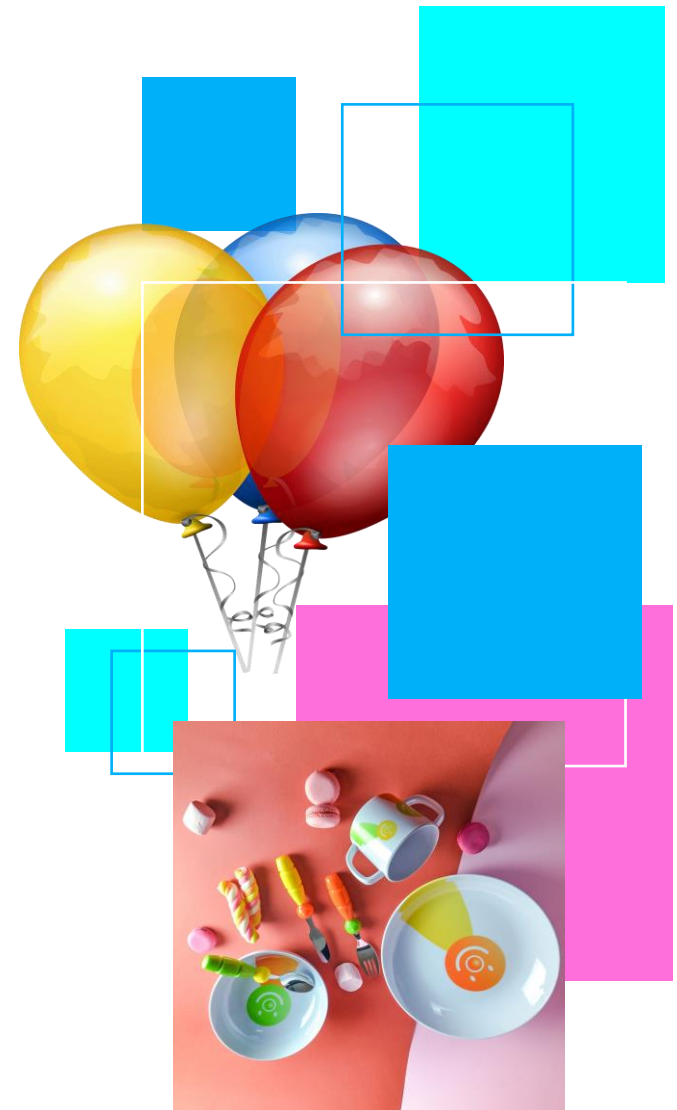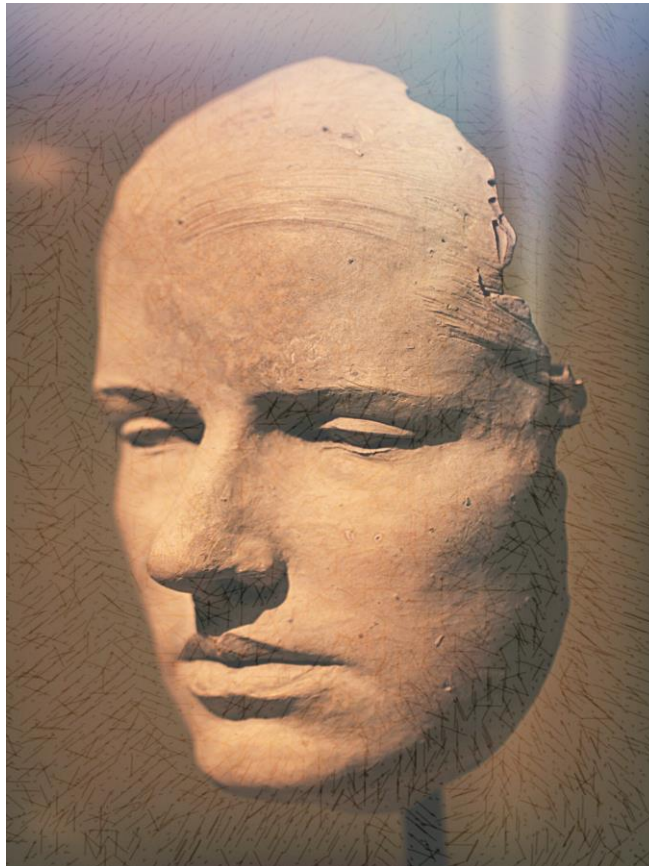
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Set small goals

If learning to speak a new language or organising your entire house feels like too much, that's perfectly OK! Set yourself smaller daily goals in order to feel a sense of accomplishment. Even just taking a shower and getting dressed can be a major feat during these unprecedented times, so cut yourself some slack.

Hydrate

It's easy to get distracted when we're feeling stressed and anxious, and even simple tasks such as remembering to drink enough water can fall by the wayside. But these basic self-care items are essential to our ability to cope with stress, so set yourself a reminder on your phone and keep a large water bottle with you during the day.

Do what makes you feel good

Mental health professionals suggest doing what makes you feel good as a means of making it through self-isolation. Keep track of the things you try in order to objectively see what is and isn't working.

Get some sunshine

Unless you're experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or have been told you should not leave your home, it's reasonably acceptable for most people to get outside for a bit of fresh air and vitamin D from the sun. Just make sure to keep your physical distance from others, and follow any local rules. Research shows that vitamin D plays an important role in regulating mood.
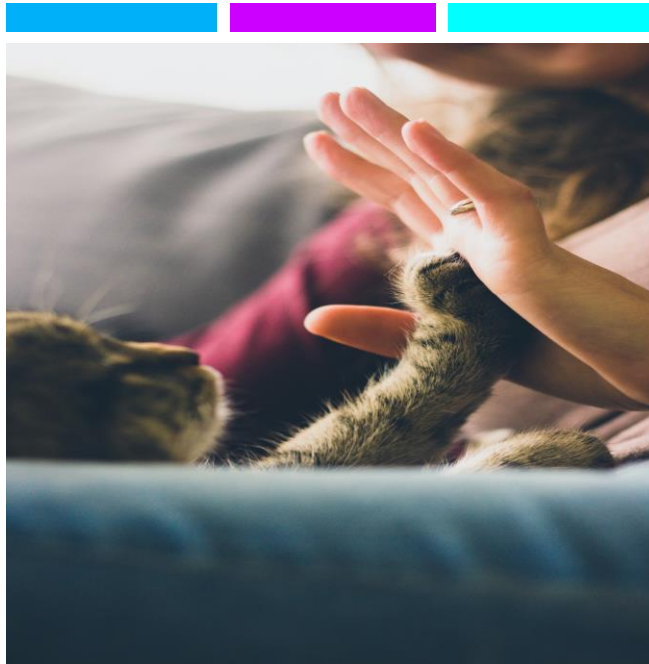
"Seeing so many social media posts about projects people are completing can make it feel like if you're not using this time to complete your own masterpiece, you're wasting an opportunity"

Make time for fun

Binge-watching trashy reality television, asking your smart home assistant to tell you a joke, and sitting down with a piece of paper and some crayons are all excellent ways to bring a little fun and play into your day, which can help reduce stress levels.

Connect with your pet

When you find yourself feeling like you should do more, take a cue from Fido or Fluffy. Our pets are oblivious to this whole COVID-19 situation, and continue to lounge, rest, and walk when they feel a need. Humans can learn a thing or two from them! Research also shows that petting our animal companions can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, ease loneliness, and encourage exercise and playfulness.