

## Long-COVID

Recovering from COVID19 varies from person to person, and can sometimes take many months. It is important to understand this and allow your body the time it needs to get better. You need to be kind to yourself and never compare your recovery to other peoples. Symptoms of long-COVID may include breathlessness, cough, fatigue, loss of taste and smell, muscle aches, anxiety and low mood.

Below are some tips about how to help manage some of the more common symptoms of long-COVID. For more detailed information please see the links at the bottom of the page or click on the title of each section.

It can be helpful to keep a weekly symptom diary to allow you to see subtle ways in which your symptoms have improved. If you find your symptoms are not improving or they are getting worse you should contact a health care professional to discuss this.

If you would like more information, please contact your GP and/or have a look at the following links:

<http://www.rotherhamccg.nhs.uk/New%20booklet%20COVID%20version%201%20May%202020.pdf>

<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/your-wellbeing/sleeping-well/>

<https://iapt.rdash.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/mindfulness/>

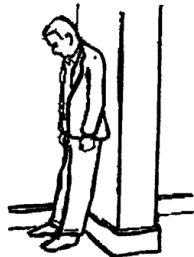
# Long-COVID

*Helping you through your recovery*

## Breathlessness

Breathlessness is a common problem after having COVID 19. It can cause anxiety and can stop physical activity, but remember that keeping active is important for recovery, so take it slow and build up gradually. Start by doing some of the following exercises at rest and build up to do them with activity.

1. Relaxed breathing: put your hand on your stomach and breathe in through the nose to the count of 2, feeling the tummy gently rise. Then relax while breathing out through the mouth to the count of 4 feeling the tummy fall. Rest and repeat.
2. Pursed lip breathing: Breathe in gently through the nose, then purse your lips, as if blowing out a candle, and breathe out for as long as is comfortable. Don't force yourself to empty the lungs.
3. Blow-as-you-go: this technique is useful when you are doing activity. Inhale before you make the effort (eg, climb a step or two), then exhale while making the effort, rest then go again. Remember there is no rush, go at your own pace.
4. Resting positions what may help ease breathing;



## Fatigue

Another common problem is fatigue. Some people may feel very tired at rest or after minimal movement following COVID 19. Here are some tips on dealing with fatigue;

1. Try to get into a routine. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning. If you struggle to get a good night's sleep, click this [link](#) for advice. Keep hydrated throughout the day and eat a healthy diet.
2. Plan, prioritise and delegate. Plan each day in advance. Think about what you need to do and what you would like to do, then prioritise these activities in their importance to you. What can you delegate? Online shopping, family to help with laundry, friend to drop a meal round? Keep an activity diary to help identify activities which you find energising, and which you find tiring. Use this to plan future activities based on your energy level.
3. Make sure to use some of your energy on things you enjoy as this can be a welcomed boost.

## Mental health concerns

During the COVID pandemic many people have struggled with their mental health. Having had COVID, these fears, anxieties and low mood can be made even worse. Please understand that after being ill, having mental health issues is normal. Don't put pressure on yourself to return "back to normal" or feel that you shouldn't be feeling the way that you are. Be kind to yourself.

Here are some simple things to try to feel more in control and some simple relaxation techniques:

1. Try [mindfulness](#) – this is being aware of your surroundings and thoughts rather than trying to empty your mind. It can help focus your mind during episodes of anxiety and panic, but has also been found to be beneficial when done every day – the more you do it the better you will become.
2. Set a "worry time" - as a fear or anxiety enters your head, write it on a list and then try to forget it and carry on with what you were doing. Then during your scheduled "worry time", look at your list with fresh eyes and allow yourself to worry if you still need to.
3. Find something you enjoy doing to schedule into each day. This could be reading a book, doing a puzzle, going for a walk etc. Start off with just a few minutes and gradually build up. If you feel anxiety creeping in try to distract yourself with this activity.
4. Contact [Rotherham IAPT](#) (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) on 01709 447755 to self-refer for talking therapies, or you can contact your GP to discuss your concerns.