

# 17 Ways to Stay Sober When You're Stuck at Home

## Keep your recovery strong during the COVID19 outbreak.

With the spread of the Coronavirus, more and more public events are closing and, in some areas, we've been advised to stay away from crowded public places. This not only impacts our day-to-day life, but it can also impact our sobriety as well. For some of us, group gatherings are a key part of our recovery, either because we attend meetings, group therapy, exercise classes, or religious congregations.

Because we understand that sobriety has to come first, we've compiled some healthy ways you can stay connected and maintain your recovery if you are spending more time at home during this difficult time.

### 1. Attend a Virtual Support Group.

There are plenty of online options to get access to community and support, even when you're stuck at home. No matter which path to recovery you choose, your virtual support group options are (almost) endless.

### 2. Coordinate with your therapist to have phone sessions.

If you regularly see a therapist or counselor, keep your appointment, just speak over the phone rather than in person. Contact your therapist ahead of time to let them know you'd like to have a phone session (or video chat, if that's something they offer).

### 3. Talk to your loved ones, friends, and other sober folks.

Being at home doesn't mean that you have to cut off all contact with other people. You can still chat over the phone or whatever video platform you prefer. If you're feeling lonely or vulnerable, let people know that it's important for you to stay in touch. Make an effort to have person-to-person conversations rather than solely texting or communicating via social media.

### 4. Start a mediation practice.

If you have extra time on your hands, trying out (or deepening) a mediation practice is an excellent way to spend some time, since it's often something we neglect doing because we are too busy. You can download one of the many available meditation apps, like mindfulness visualizations, relaxation exercises.

### 5. Go outside and walk around the block (or yard).

If you can, take a few minutes to walk around outside, either just around the neighborhood or in your yard. While we may need to avoid crowds and public indoor spaces, taking some time to be in the fresh air is still considered okay, just wash your hands thoroughly when you come back inside. (Of course, don't do this if you are sick.)

### 6. Try video yoga.

If you've got enough space to lay down a yoga mat in your home, you can do yoga. Yoga With Adrienne on YouTube is a favorite. Any form of exercise you choose to do is great, just keep doing it!

### 7. Eat and drink water at regular intervals.

When stress hits and our routines are disrupted, we can forget to do the most basic forms of self-care, like eating nourishing meals and drinking enough water. Make sure that you're still getting the nutrition and hydration you need, and it's not just protein bars and coffee.

### **8. Start a new hobby.**

Now might be a great time to try something new, like a hobby that you've always thought you'd like but never had the guts or time to try before. Since you're stuck at home, why not? Knitting in sobriety is a popular thing to try and you can start slow by ordering a few basics online, then looking up videos or knitting groups on Facebook to get started. Another fun hobby to indulge in right now? Cooking! Not only can you indulge in foods that are good for your recovery or learning how to make the perfect cup of coffee but you can also start trying your hand at easy pantry dinners so you don't have to venture to the grocery store too much.

### **9. Limit the time you read the news and social media.**

It's important to stay informed but spending too much time online can exacerbate anxiety. Get the news, find out what's going on, but make sure you unplug afterward — this is an exercise in practicing boundaries between ourselves and the constant stream of media that's available.

### **10. Catch up on reading.**

Now's the time to crack open that book that's been collecting dust on your nightstand, take the time to read the biography that's been sitting in your Kindle library for ages, or finally check out that graphic novel you got two years ago as a birthday present. Here at the Tempest, we LOVE reading, and our staff has kindly offered some of their favorite books: *How to Not Always be working* by Marlee Grace, *The Bridgerton* series by Julia Quinn, *All About Love: New Visions* by bell hooks, *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron, *Why Religion?* by Elaine Pagels, *The Body is Not an Apology* by Sonya Renee Taylor, *The Ethical Sellout: Maintaining Your Integrity in the Age of Compromise* by Inge Hansen and Lily Zheng, *The Undocumented Americans* by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio, *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng, and *Where I'm Calling From* by Raymond Carver. Now is also a great time to start a new recovery memoir and get some inspiration.

### **11. Keep a journal.**

Writing down your experiences and feelings can be therapeutic, especially in times of transition and stress. Don't edit yourself, just write or draw whatever comes to mind. You can use this time to build a daily journaling practice, which is a great habit to start but not always easy to maintain when things get too busy.

### **12. Discover a new podcast.**

Sure, you can read... but sometimes spending too much time on the couch reading can also be too much. If you need a break, then why not instead discover a new recovery podcast? In fact, we have a great list for you! You definitely can't go wrong with any of these. The best part is that you can start binging on older episodes while doing our next suggestion...

### **13. Start your spring cleaning.**

You may have already added tons of hygge to your home in order to improve the dark winter months but, if you haven't, why not? Adding some candles, fuzzy blankets, and a good cup of tea can help get you through these stressful times. Another thing you can do in your home, though, is that you can start your spring cleaning.

Decluttering has a lot of mental health benefits and, for many of us, is a sure-fire way to relieve anxiety. So, pop in those headphones, press “play” on that recovery podcast, and get to it!

#### **14. Indulge in some Netflix ‘n Chill time.**

When you’ve made your house cozy, why not spend some quality time with your couch? You probably don’t want to do this all day, every single day but a little relaxing in front of a good television show or movie is definitely worthwhile. We suggest you try one of these comedies with a realistic portrayal of addiction and recovery or a movie that helped destigmatize substance use disorder for women or a TV show that showcases mental illness well or a show that will remind you why you can’t do it alone or even a body-positive series that will help you embrace your inner self.

#### **15. Snuggle with your fur babies.**

If you’re lucky enough to have a dog or cat or other animals, then make sure you are really lucky because now you get to get some extra cuddles in with your furry creatures. Since dogs can be a part of your recovery and even help us stay sober, those extra snuggles are crucial. To be honest, cats are pretty great for this too... and maybe so is your partner, if you’re stuck indoors with them.

#### **16. Do something to invest in yourself.**

You may not want to do a whole lot of anything right now, and that’s totally okay. Or, instead, you might want to do something from home that feels like you’re being productive. That could mean tackling your 2020 list of investing in yourself by finally checking off things like getting more sleep, learning something new, start saving money (which shouldn’t be hard since you’re not going out, right?), move your body (see #6!), or explore your creativity.

#### **17. Make sure you don’t forget the self-care.**

At a time like this, self-care is absolutely crucial to your sanity. Although all of the things on this list qualify as a form of self-care, there are other forms of self-care as well. Yes, that can definitely include something like a face mask or an at-home pedicure or even a bubble bath but it can also include things like playing a video game online (bonus: You get to talk to people so it may be some much-needed socializing!), going to bed early, or even just cooking yourself something delicious (see #8). Check out our full list of self-care ideas for those in recovery here.

Remember, it’s not just about taking precautionary measures like washing your hands (although, yes, wash your hands!), it’s also important to speak up and let others know how you are feeling. Being stressed out, scared, and anxious are all completely normal reactions, so please don’t keep everything to yourself. When we’re in recovery, we help each other by sharing these vulnerable moments, and you can always return the favor by lending an ear to a friend who is feeling isolated.