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MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY CLINICS NEWSLETTER

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Staying Active and Healthy While at Home

Teri Elliot-Burke, PT, D.P.T., M.H.S., CCC-PT, College of Health Sciences, Physical Therapy Institute

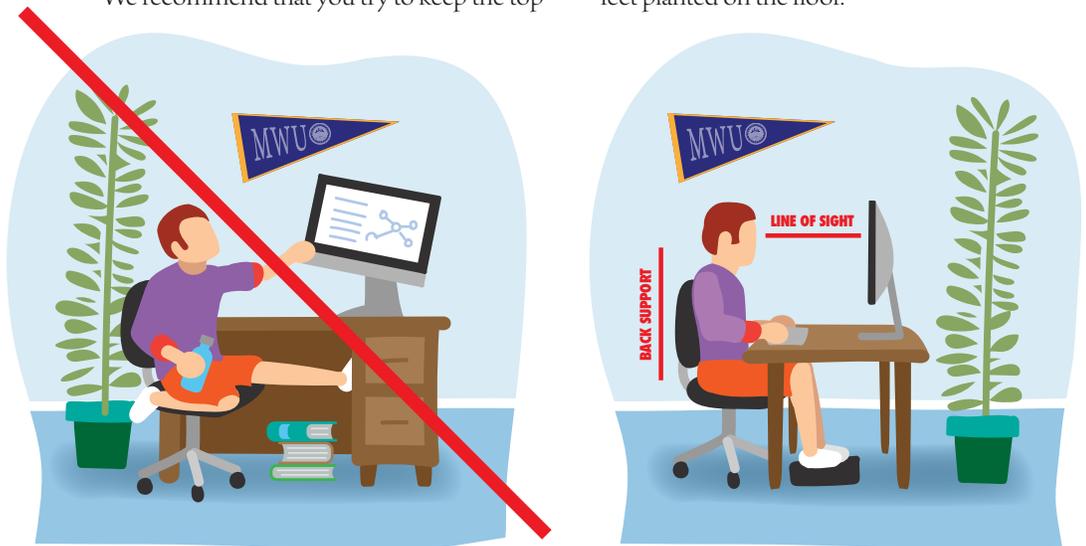
While the current virtual work environment has changed our daily routines, it is important to remain as active as possible. Moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with a variety of health benefits, including a better immune system, lower levels of anxiety, and decreased stress. All of which are especially important during this unprecedented time.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week or about 20 minutes per day. Try to schedule a time for a walk each day or take small breaks-throughout your workday to achieve your goals.

As physical therapists, we recommend certain steps when it comes to your work setup. Since June, the Physical Therapy Institute has seen an increase in patients with back and neck pain from working

virtually. Movement, stretching, strengthening, and paying attention to the computer set up are key to treating these conditions. We recommend that you try to keep the top

border of your monitor at eye level with your keyboard close to your body and elbows at 90 degrees. Be sure to sit upright with your feet planted on the floor.



Sources: American College of Sports Medicine <https://www.acsm.org/read-research/newsroom/news-releases/news-detail/2020/08/07/acsm-publishes-call-to-action-addressing-covid-19-and-return-to-sports-and-physical-activity>

Communication and Coping Skills for Children: A Guide for Caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Laura Sambrookes-McQuade, M.S., CCC-SLP, College of Health Sciences, Speech-Language Institute

During these unprecedented times it is more important than ever to lead with compassion for yourself and your loved ones in our interactions. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has developed a helpful guide to better understand and address some of the behaviors which you may have seen in your child as they respond to the stress of the social environment created by the pandemic. You can find the full list at the www.NCTSN.org.

Age Group	Reactions	How to Help
Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of being alone, bad dreams • Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors • Speech difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and tolerance • Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling • Maintain regular family routines
School-Age (ages 6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior • Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest • Sleep/appetite disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular exercise and stretching • Set gentle but firm limits • Participate in structured household chores
Adolescent (ages 13-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach aches) • Isolating from peers and loved ones • Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage continuation of routines • Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force) • Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games

The information contained in these articles is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for questions regarding any health or medical condition.

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(Continued from front cover)

Additional ways caregivers can help children cope during these times

1. Take time to refill your "cup" by taking part in activities that provide you, as the caregiver, with a sense of meaning, purpose, or fulfillment.
2. Establish consistent routines for your family around bedtime, meals, and exercise, as they contribute to stability and predictability for your child. Try using a dry erase board to write or draw your schedule for the day helps to alert your child to upcoming events.
3. Modify your daily activities to meet the demands of your day and take time to plan the amount of the time it will realistically take to complete your tasks for the day in the area of caregiving, work, and education routines.
4. Give yourself small breaks from stress inducing situations. Going outside and taking time to notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste can help quell powerful emotions associated with increased caregiving tasks.
5. Take time to respond sensitively to your child's needs by recognizing what they are trying to communicate with their behavior and providing them with language to express their emotions. Allow your child the opportunity to use "I feel" statements to describe how they are feeling.
6. You may consider providing children with a picture bank with different emotions to help them label their feelings. You can download free charts at www.rewardcharts4kids.com/feelings-chart.
7. Have age appropriate conversations about the pandemic in a safe space free from distraction.



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Sources: Initial Challenges of Caregiving During COVID-19: Caregiver Burden, Mental Health, and the Parent-Child Relationship <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-020-01037-x> • Tactus Therapy <https://tactustherapy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Aphasia-Friendly-Information.pdf> • The National Child Traumatic Stress Network https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/parent_caregiver_guide_to_helping_families_cope_with_the_coronavirus_disease_2019_covid-19.pdf