

USING THE WHEEL OF WELLBEING TO HELP YOU STAY POSITIVE

written by [Australian Mens Shed Association](#) 30 March 2020



Wheel of Well-being

It's easy to feel anxious, overwhelmed or even a little down at the moment. But, there are things you can do to boost the way you're feeling.

In these strange, uncertain and frightening times, how is it that some people 'keep calm and carry on', while others panic without dunny roll?!

The answer might surprise you. According to Stanford University psychologist Kelly McGonigal, stress doesn't always lead to a fight or flight response, it can actually increase caring, cooperation and compassion. In her book, [The Upside of Stress](#), she calls this the "[tend and befriend](#)" response, highlighting that stress does not just engage our self-preservation response, but the chemicals released in our brain can also unleash a powerful instinct to "protect our tribe," even at the expense of our own wellbeing.

Think about it: the selfless acts of heroism shown by our volunteer firefighters during the bush fires. And now, our amazing health workers working tirelessly to keep us safe, often at the expense of their own health and wellbeing.

Read more: [How to transform stress into courage](#)

This WoW update will explore the notion of resilience further and share ideas, actions and activities designed to keep us happy and well during these difficult times.

They will be organised around the [Wheel of Well-being framework](#), which represents six universal aspects of well-being: body, mind, spirit, people, place and planet.

Watch the video: [Learn more about the Wheel of Well-being](#)

Build your resilience, boost your mood: Activities to get you started

Each WoW blog, we will suggest a short clip or video for you to watch. We will also encourage you to try activities from each sector of the Wheel of Well-being. Work through them to figure which ones make your heart sing! Once you find activities you enjoy, work them into your life and create some 'habits of happiness'. Here's a few ideas from the Wheel of Well-being to get you started:



BODY: Get active

Do some form of regular physical activity, even if it's only 10 minutes a day.

Try: Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, do gardening, dance, just move!

Why? Exercising makes you feel good and promotes a healthier mind and body. Take the time to discover physical activities you enjoy, and that suit your level of mobility and fitness.



MIND: Keep learning

Your mind needs to keep active too, give it a regular workout.

Try: Something new or challenging. Rediscover an old interest, sign up for that online course, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or cook your favourite food.

Why? Learning and challenging the brain helps create new pathways in the brain and can prevent or delay dementia diseases. Setting challenges you enjoy whilst learning can also boost your confidence and fun factor.



SPIRIT: Give

Do an act of kindness – it's contagious, now that's something we want to spread!

Try: Organise groceries for an elderly neighbour, do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone/smile/volunteer your time. Look out, as well as in.

Why? Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.



PEOPLE: Connect more!

Making sure we connect to other becomes even more important as we self-isolate.

Try: We can't replace the value of face-to-face connections, so we need to think creatively and make an extra effort to stay in touch. Letters, notes, phone calls, Skype, Facetime, Viber, Zoom, WhatsApp... whatever! Just connect.

Why? We are hardwired to want social connections; they are the cornerstones of our lives and essential to good mental wellbeing.



PLACE: Take notice

Take time to notice the good things, however small.

Try: Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, savour the moment, whether you are walking, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.

Why? Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



PLANET: Care for the whole world

We are a global community – both connected and interdependent.

Try: Do what's right for our global community – self-isolating, caring for others, sharing our supplies or washing our hands frequently. We are all in this together.

Why? With small steps we can do almost anything we choose. If we have learnt anything over the last few months it's that we face the same challenge wherever we are in the world and we all need to play our part in tackling it.

Find your perfect-match activity here ...

Not sure which activity is right for you? Start here ...

It's a good fit if:

- It feels natural to you, you will be more likely to stick at it.
- You find it enjoyable because it's interesting and challenging.
- It's something that you value doing, so even when it becomes challenging you will still do it.

Not such a good fit if:

- You keep doing it just because you feel guilty if you don't.
- You only do it because you are forced to someone else or your situation.

And finally, stay safe, stay well and wash your hands!