

COVID-19 REPORT

RISK ADVISORY SERVICES



24th APRIL 2020

SUMMARY

- The head of the US agency in charge of developing a vaccine against COVID-19 has been removed from his position by President Donald Trump after opposing the treatment.
- The head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) says there are “worrying upward trends” in early epidemics in parts of Africa, Central and South America, and that lifting lockdowns could reignite the virus.
- The United Nations is warning global hunger could double as a result of this Coronavirus pandemic. Reports suggest that 265 million people could be pushed into acute food insecurity by COVID-19, almost double to last years total.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross has urged governments across the world to prepare and plan for mass casualties due to this coronavirus pandemic, warning that local capacity to handle dead bodies could be overwhelmed. They say this risks bodies being buried in mass graves with few records and little understanding of who died or where the body was taken.
- Mike Pompeo has intonated the US may never restore funding to the WHO to go alongside the President’s remarks of the virus coming out of a Wuhan laboratory. Meanwhile China steps in to give the WHO an extra \$30 million citing ‘multilateralism and global solidarity’.
- EU leaders are to inject billions of euros of aid into struggling economies.
- The WHO has repeated its advice that masks need only be worn by healthcare professionals.
- Doctors in the US are “astounded” after President Donald Trump’s claims that injecting bleach may kill COVID-19.

GLOBAL MAP OF CASES OF COVID-19

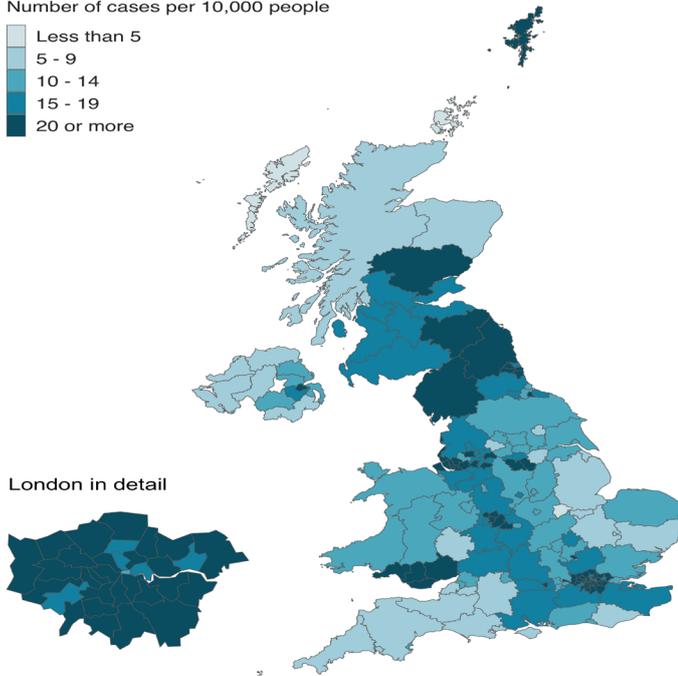
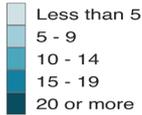


[Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 24.04.2020](#)

UK UPDATE

Confirmed coronavirus cases

Number of cases per 10,000 people



Note: Isles of Scilly cases combined with Cornwall

Source: [BBC.com 24.04.2020](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55444444)

TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES
138,078

TOTAL DEATHS
18,738

UK DAILY CASES
4,583

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR LIVE REPORTED CASES

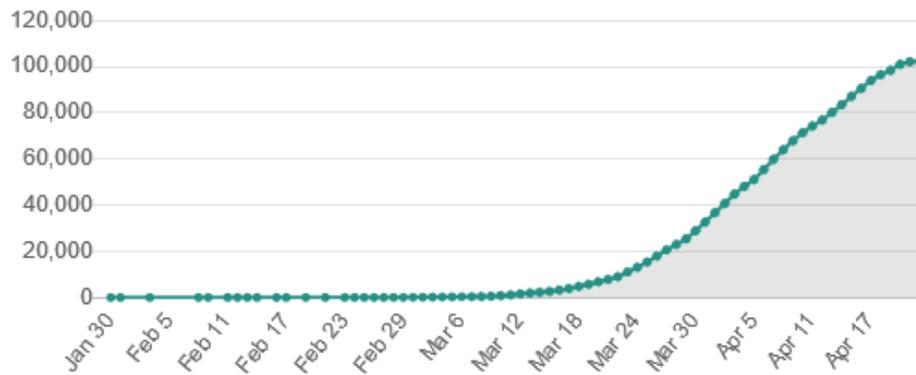
Source Public Health England 24.04.2020

- Matt Hancock has told MPs that the UK is “at the peak” of this coronavirus outbreak following 759 reported deaths on Wednesday 22nd April. He also announced widening testing parameters to include essential workers and their households. Employers of essential workers can go to gov.uk to order tests for their staff.
- Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab’s vow to hit 100,000 tests a day by the end of April has received some criticism from leader of the opposition Sir Keir Starmer as test centres are still not being used to capacity.
- Concerns over a ‘second wave’ of COVID-19 infections that are worse than the first could be expected, according Professor Neil Ferguson who sits on the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.
- A vaccine has been trialled on humans in Britain. Oxford University are 80% sure of success but are urging people to come forward to volunteer. People coming forward must be between 18-55 years old, be in good health, and are being offered up to £625. However, it could take some time to determine if the vaccine is effective.
- 20,000 volunteer households in England are being contacted to take part in a study to track COVID-19 infections and immunity to the disease. The study will seek to involve 300,000 by the end of the year. Participants will be asked to provide throat and nose swabs for the next few weeks and then once a month for a year.
- A contact-tracing app is being developed at an RAF base in North Yorkshire – alerts can be sent to phones if there is a risk a person has become infected with COVID-19.

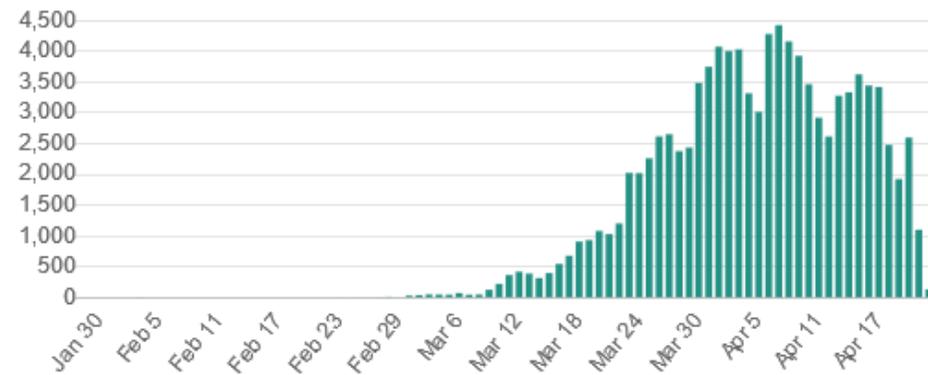
- The government's chief medical adviser has said we will have to live with some disruptive social measures for the rest of the year, which is expected by most.
- Pubs in England are asking for donations from the public in order for their businesses to survive. Some establishments have continued to trade as takeaways or convenience stores in order to bring in some form of income.
- The leader of schools head teachers has stated that schools could not realistically re-open before 1st June.
- Councils in England say they have already used up their allocation of bailout grants from the government and warn of a massive shortfall in the coming months.
- Former Prime Minister Tony Blair has announced that an increase in state surveillance is a "price worth paying" in order to combat COVID-19.
- There have been 'murder threats' to telecom engineers over the use of 5G, which has been wrongly linked to the spread of COVID-19.
- Tory backbenchers want the lockdown restrictions removed amid fears it could devastate the economy.
- Police in Scotland have criticised 'selfish' lockdown rule breakers after 78 arrests in the last month since the restrictions were imposed.
- Extinction Rebellion (XR) have widely published a return to demonstrations with 'No Going Back' as a title for a new round of action planned for Thursday 30th April. A plan is to 'fly-post' what they consider to be the companies most guilty of needlessly destroying the planet. High street businesses are deemed easy targets during lockdown, as well as targeting energy companies, fashion retailers and airlines. However, any form of gatherings during a period of lockdown is likely to draw much criticism from the public.

Source: [Public Health England](#) 24.04.2020

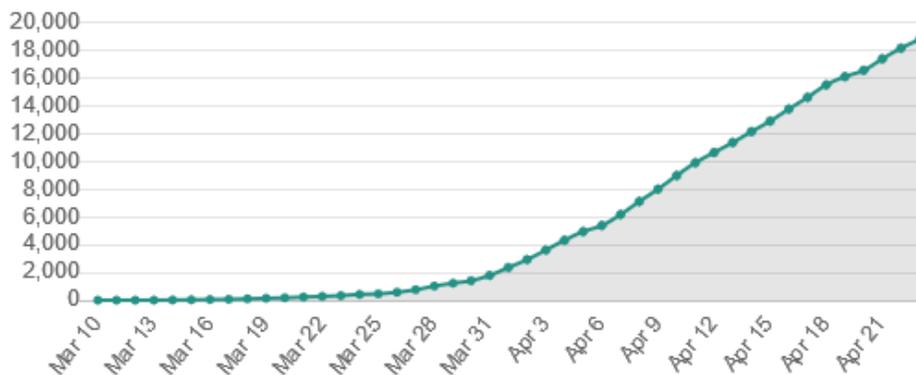
Total number of lab-confirmed cases in England by specimen date



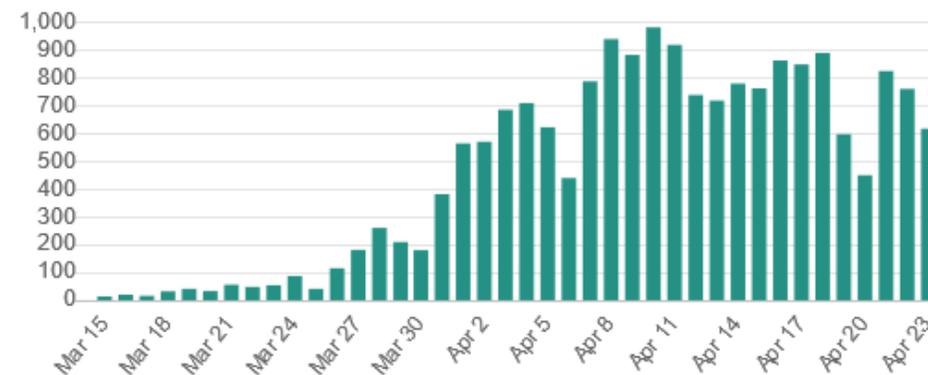
Daily number of lab-confirmed cases in England by specimen date



Total number of COVID-19 associated UK deaths in hospital by date reported



Daily number of COVID-19 associated UK deaths in hospital by date reported



WORLD UPDATES

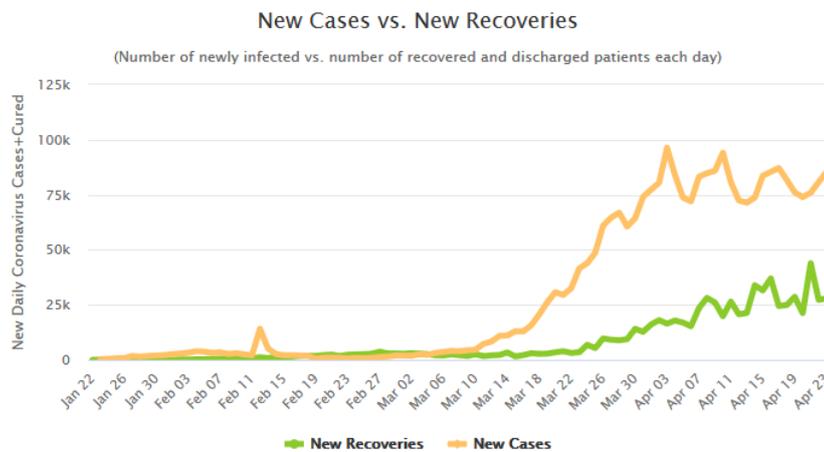


TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES
2,752,692

TOTAL DEATHS
192,261

PATIENTS RECOVERED
758,187

COUNTRIES/REGIONS
185



CLICK [HERE](#) FOR LIVE REPORTED CASES

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR GRAPH DETAILS

Source: Centre for Systems Science and Engineering at John Hopkins University on 24.04.2020

*Figures will vary between sources

Worldometers 24.04.2020

COVID -19/RAS/22nd April 2020

REGIONAL UPDATES

ASIA

China

China has reported no new Covid-19 deaths for an eighth day in a row. However, news agencies continue to suggest the official death tally may be four times higher than reported. This is refuted by Chinese officials. Sources have told the BBC that European officials are wary of directly challenging China over the figures.

Vietnam

The country has relaxed COVID-19 restrictions as cases have plateaued. Experts have said they can ease the social distancing measures due to the government's decisive response to the outbreak through mass quarantining and expansive contact tracing. Despite a long and porous border with China the nation has recorded just 268 virus cases and no deaths according to official tallies.

AFRICA

Nigeria

The country has recorded 21 new cases of coronavirus bringing the country's total to 873. The capital Abuja and Lagos are both in lockdown with the president giving only 24 hrs notice before the lockdown was imposed. There are deepening fears over how the poor are to survive with little food, electricity, and water in overcrowded neighbourhoods. So far, the virus has hit mainly the wealthy and political elite due to their ability to travel. However, in a population of around 200m, 50% live in extreme poverty, 70% do not have safe drinking water and sanitation, 69% of urban residents live in slum conditions, and 23% of the workforce is unemployed. The Nigerian government has only allocated 4.5% of spending for health, which is far less than the 15% target set out by the African Union. Furthermore, doctors frequently strike over not being paid for months at a time that creates greater concern towards the nation's ability to respond to a widespread disease. The country also suffers from "medical tourism", with those who have the money seeking health care abroad. The overarching fear is that once the virus takes hold amongst the general population it will spread unchecked with little hope of the health service being able to cope.

South Africa

The country will allow a phased reopening of businesses from the 1st May in response to the devastating effects of their lockdown. A maximum of one third of workers will be allowed to return to work but the nation's borders will remain closed and travel between provinces will remain banned. No large gatherings other than funerals will be allowed. Restrictions on the sale of cigarettes and some other goods, excluding alcohol, will be lifted and people will be allowed to exercise outdoors under strict conditions. Public transport will also resume operations.

AMERICAS

United States of America

The US has had one of its worst days as 3,332 new COVID-19 deaths were announced in a single day, with total deaths reported at 50,243.

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order to temporarily suspend the approval of some green cards in an attempt to protect US jobs so to help the suffering economy. This motion will not affect essential health workers. However, the order cannot be processed as American consulates are closed due to the pandemic. Political opponents have suggested the President is using the pandemic to push through immigration policies. As it stands visitors from China and most of Europe have been limited with America's borders closed to all but essential travel with Mexico and Canada.

Congress has passed another bill for \$484 billion in relief aid to directly help small businesses and health services affected by Covid-19. Spending from the US on Covid-19 relief has now reached \$3 trillion, swelling the US budget to record levels. 26 million Americans have filed for jobless claims in the last five weeks alone.

The state of Georgia plans to reopen today despite President Trump disagreeing strongly. Gyms, bowling alleys, hair and nail salons and massage therapists can all reopen with theatres and restaurants planned to reopen on Monday 27th April.

EUROPE

France

France has been one of the worst hit nations with over 157,000 cases, including more than 21,000 deaths and has been in strict lockdown since March 17th. Current coronavirus-related restrictions have exacerbated tensions in low-income neighbourhoods around the capital that are also known criminal hotspots. Last weekend witnessed Police clashing with rioters who were voicing their displeasure at the current situation and intent on 'taking their neighbourhood back'. While human rights groups claim Police brutality is going unchecked, the Police respond by stating they are enforcing a national lockdown protocol to save lives. However, the French Interior minister Christophe Castaner does not think that the current outbreak of violence will result in scenes similar to that of the riots in 2005 that lasted three weeks since those were as a result of very different circumstances. However, the situation remains tense ahead of the country's proposals to lift their lockdown on May 11th. President Macron has referred to the lockdown being lifted nationally but in a 'decentralised' procedure with state representatives making their own decisions based on what is happening on the ground.

Germany

The Chancellor Angela Merkel is prepared to make higher contributions to the EU COVID-19 budget to curb its effects as she believes that it is still early days in the fight against the virus stating "it's not the end phase but still just the beginning". She is trying to get other EU leaders on board with providing a much bigger budget collectively, warning that the virus could be around for "a long time". However, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands have ruled out a mutualisation of debt through so-called 'coronabonds'. She has said "there is no historical model with which to work from" and "that this is the biggest problem to face the EU since World War 2". She is keeping pressure on Germany's ministers to avoid a stop-start lockdown process and increase provisions for health care workers through European production rather than relying on global supplies, which are now stretched. She has also publicly voiced support for the WHO in disagreement with US President Donald Trump.

Germany's national airline Lufthansa is also seeking state aid to stay afloat.

Italy

A further 2,646 confirmed cases were recorded in Italy yesterday amidst 464 deaths. Some news sources are reporting lockdown could finish by mid-May with the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte advising an exit plan is coming.

Italy, Austria, and Denmark are allowing some retailers to open.

Spain

Amid condemnation for being too premature, Spain is also beginning to ease lockdown measures, approving a partial return to work.

Greece

Two asylum seekers on the Greek island of Lesbos have been shot and injured after apparently breaking quarantine rules.

Finland

Prime Minister Sanna Marin is self-isolating after someone at her residence came into close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Sweden

The country's top epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell, believes their decision not to impose a countrywide lockdown has worked as their health system has coped. Its approach has been controversial as they have seen more infections and deaths than their Nordic neighbours. However, they claim their high level of nursing home deaths could not have been prevented by a lockdown.

AUSTRALIA/OCEANIA

Australia

The Australian government is calling for G20 countries to act on wildlife wet markets, calling them a "biosecurity and human health risk". The Wuhan market where the virus is said to have originated mixed the selling of meat and fish with more exotic animals. Scott Morrison the Australian Prime Minister has said that all WHO member nations should support an independent review into the origins of this coronavirus and its spread.

New Zealand

New Zealand is one of the few countries pursuing an elimination strategy through tougher lockdown restrictions and it seems to be working, as it has one of the lowest mortality rates in the world. They have had 1,456 cases so far with 17 deaths, predominantly older people with pre-existing conditions. The Prime Minister has put this down to an effective lockdown policy that has largely been complied with. Confident the virus has not taken hold the country is now easing lockdown restrictions as of Monday 27th April, with many more businesses able to trade including takeaways, food deliveries, and the construction and forestry industries. Confidence in how the virus has been dealt with has allowed the government to now focus on bringing the economy back to normal levels and to combat increasing pressure from opposition about a possible downturn in the economy if severe measures continue. Socially though, people will still be expected to stay at home as much as possible unless for essential shopping, travel or exercise.

MIDDLE EAST

Iran

Iran has been one of the worst hit nations from Covid-19 with 87,000 cases and over 5,000 deaths. Iranian leaders are blaming the US sanctions on their country as seriously hampering their ability to cope with the virus. The US has sanctions on the oil industry and other key sectors of the economy and has shut Iran out of the US financial system. Iran blames this outside interference for their recession and their ability to obtain vital medical supplies.

Ramadan

With the world facing varying degrees of lockdown the Islamic holy month of Ramadan has begun. Ramadan is the holiest month for Muslims, in which fasting during daylight hours, and congregation for prayers with the sharing of meals with family and friends is a standard practice. As a result, **Saudi Arabia**, the **UAE**, **Egypt** and **Algeria** have reduced curfew hours. Widespread rules have been imposed banning praying in Mosques or meeting relatives and friends. **Saudi Arabia** announced last week the two holy mosques in Mecca and Medina would remain closed throughout Ramadan. **Pakistan** has allowed congregational prayers at mosques as long as worshippers keep a two-metre distance.

WILSON JAMES ADVISORY

Our analysis of the current effect Covid-19 is having on the UK economy

The impact of this Coronavirus pandemic on populations is evident and has seen many having to adapt their social and working norms. In the UK it is suggested that more than 9 million workers, almost a third of the nations employed, are expected to be furloughed with others unable to work or with reduced working hours imposed. These consequences not only reduce the national economy but inflict financial burdens on the nation's workforce, often leading to financial distress.

While many large businesses are more financially stable, smaller firms are evidently struggling with the impacts of COVID-19. People's behaviours have changed, with activities such as grocery shopping, TV entertainments, business meetings, and education all moving online, possibly instigating permanent change.¹ The future of the economy at this point is incredibly difficult to predict due to the fluid and unprecedented nature of the situation. The Bank of England interest-rate setter Jan Vlieghe has said "we are experiencing an economic contraction that is faster and deeper than anything we have seen in the past century," and that recovery is unlikely to be swift.²

Evidence from past pandemics suggests that the economic impact of COVID-19 is much less from people falling ill than from the public health restrictions and social distancing measures put in place.³ Measures to deal with this Coronavirus will substantially increase public sector net borrowing and debt in the short term due to the economic disruption. The support to individuals and businesses through the initial shock phase of this pandemic, let alone supporting the NHS, is colossal but it is hoped this will even out after the pandemic is over and the economy bounces back.⁴

However, this is an assumed scenario as there are no models to suggest what will happen as the crisis unfolds and businesses are not able to recover. Pressure is mounting on the government to give businesses hope after a warning that social distancing could last the rest of the year.⁵ The high initial cost to the government is hoped to have been compensated by what would have been a worse scenario had they done nothing. The reduction in the demand for goods and services and the ability for businesses to provide them, due to the effects of social distancing, will inevitably lead to lower incomes and a cycle of reduced spending, in turn leading to reduced tax revenues combined with increased public spending on social welfare. Public sector borrowing is therefore set to increase by £218 billion compared to the same time last year, around 14% of GDP.⁶

This coronavirus outbreak has highlighted that the key workers critical for an effective response and recovery are actually the most likely to be in low paid jobs, with poor working conditions. In the wake of an outpouring of positive public opinion towards the country's key workers in response to the national crisis, the media and opposition politicians have demanded that certain sectors of key workers working conditions and pay be changed to reflect their responsibility. Sir Keir Starmer, leader of the labour party, has called for a 'reckoning' with keyworkers often being 'overlooked and underpaid and there has to be a change'. The food and social care sectors stand out as the lowest paid workers of the 'essential workers' and are receiving on average 9% less than for similar non-key roles.⁷

The Office for National Statistics has surveyed businesses and found that the accommodation and food services sectors have been the hardest hit financially so far, with 87% of this sector, responding to their survey, reporting a substantially lower than normal turnover, along with the arts, entertainment and recreation sector. 80% of business surveyed have shown some interest in the Coronavirus job retention scheme with 24% of businesses either temporarily closing or pausing trading.⁸ According to new research, coastal and ex-industrial towns are most economically at risk from this Coronavirus pandemic, due to their lack of business diversity. The worst affected towns are those with the most amount of businesses closed down due to social distancing rules and labelled as non-essential. These are: non-food or pharmacy, the accommodation industry, the arts and sports sector, hospitality, travel and tourism, public transport, childcare and the "self-care" industry, which includes hairdressers

and laundrettes.⁹

New research has highlighted how the lockdown measures could increase social employment inequality in Britain with the self-employed the hardest hit.¹⁰ They are most likely to work in at-risk sectors where jobs are not possible due to social distancing or not considered 'essential', such as mentioned above. Those with a degree are less likely to be affected as they are generally highly skilled workers that are able to transfer their work to being home-based, highlighting the protection working from home jobs can give. However, recruitment is on hold for students entering the job market due to the current employment situation and recessionary climate, with students being told to stay in education until next year when the situation is hoped to have improved.¹¹ While London and Scotland have been particularly hard hit for paid unemployment, the self-employed sector seems to have been hit hardest in the North-East of England. The government was quick to announce the furlough scheme for paid employees but the equivalent government scheme for the self-employed is taking longer to operationalise, with perhaps one tenth of them not eligible for help from the government due to a lack of self-assessed tax return information.¹²

World leaders are urging the public not to be complacent with the lockdown as economists fear a second wave of could be worse for the economy than the first.¹³ The Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis has publicly said "one of the most damaging things for our economy would be if we came out of lockdown too early" as this would risk a second peak. While industries have said that social distancing measure in place until next year would be catastrophic for businesses, the government must weigh up health and economic concerns.¹⁴

Whilst the effect of COVID-19 on the UK economy is severe due to the restrictions imposed to prevent contamination amongst the populace, as it is for most other regions across the world, a loosening of restrictions to ease the financial burden is unlikely to be put in place unless the infection rate is proven to have peaked, and in decline, for fear of a worse and more damaging second peak. However, some countries are already allowing non-key businesses to re-open and non-essential workers to return to work to ease the economic burden. In an unfamiliar environment, only time will tell as to whether the right decisions have been made to combat COVID-19 and to lessen economic decline.



KEEPING WELL:

WILSON JAMES ADVICE ON EXERCISE

Another few weeks in lockdown may seem daunting, but keeping active through exercise, whether indoors or outdoors, is a great way to shrug off some of the issues associated with being cooped up for a long period of time. Being active helps lower stress hormones such as cortisol and promotes the release of feel-good hormones such as endorphins. Adults should aim to do some form of physical activity every day.

Keeping active can help boost your energy, protect your heart and mind, and help manage symptoms of illness or pain. It can also lead to increased focus and productivity.

There are lots of different exercises you can do while staying within social distancing guidelines. Try some from each category and find what works for you. We've provided a few links to more information or suggested exercise plans:

Moderate activities:

[Brisk walking](#)

[Riding a bike](#)

[Dancing](#)

Muscle strengthening activities:

[Yoga](#)

[Pilates](#)

Weight lifting

Using resistance bands

[Body weight exercises](#) such as push-ups and sit-ups

Vigorous activities:

[Jogging or running](#)

Skipping

Stepping (you can use stairs in or around your home)

[Circuit training](#)

If you have been inactive for a while, start slow. You can gradually build up your fitness levels by starting with exercises you're comfortable doing. You'll still be improving your health in the process, and you'll reduce your risk of falls and other illnesses. If you're exercising indoors, make sure the space around you is free of hazards to avoid injury. **Stay strong, stay positive, stay healthy.**



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