

## Tips from IOM China colleagues on how to creatively cope with covid-19

*“We have been working from home from early Feb. There has been a time we struggled, felt anxious and even panicked, but we managed to power through these difficult times, stay safe and strong. Here are some lessons we learned along the way and hope you may find them useful!” (IOM China staff members)*

1. **Set up a time table and stick to it:** first thing to do when you start working from home is to setup your time schedule and decide when to get up, when to start work, when to have a tea/coffee break and when to exercise, keeping in mind IOM’s normal working hours.... Then most important of all, stick to it!
2. **Dress up regardless of whether you work from office or home:** we had haircut, nail painted and put on fashionable clothes for the Chinese New Year during our online interactions with friends and colleagues. Likewise, we decided to wear business-like attire even when working from home. Colleagues appreciated it during teleconferences and helped remind us all that IOM stayed open for business.
3. **Reach out to friends and family members:** You may just pick up a phone call with some friend or use social media to chat with your loved ones. Group chats help a lot in coping with isolation.
4. **Read a book or watch a movie you bought long time ago but you did not have time for it:** now that you have more time available to read during weekends or in the evenings, pick a book or watch a movie you have been hoping to watch for a while.
5. **Stay informed but follow the right sources of information:** there are days we are bombarded with news from all sort of sources, some are reliable some are not. It is advisable to follow news from reliable sources only, and for a limited time per day, to avoid feeling overstressed or overwhelmed.
6. **Doing physical activity every day:** exercise will keep your mind and body happy and healthy
7. **Work hard on creating a good and harmonious family atmosphere:** Manage your family well, particularly your relations with your spouse and children now that you are going to spend so much more time with them. Try your best to establish a good and harmonious family atmosphere, which in turn will be quite helpful to you when working from home.
8. **Have some fun:** believe it or not, you can actually have lots of fun while staying at home or resort to irony to tone things down when pressure mounts. Here is a video as an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQQnH-A0fug>
9. **Set up a learning objective:** it is a good time to learn something new! Some of us improved our cooking skills during this period. Others started their “writing career” by posting their ideas, thoughts on what is going on. Remember your dream to be a writer one day or learn a new language? Maybe it is the time for you to start now!
10. **Be helpful and help others:** It is a time other people may need your help. Many people feel desperate and some lost their beloved ones. There are many ways we can be helpful and help others. Some people may donate PPE to hospitals others may need your help in reaching out for help. We can be helpful even just by talking to people and calm them down, by staying at home and not going out unnecessarily, by washing hands frequently and wearing a mask when sick or confined in a crowded, closed space where local customs require us to do so.