

May 18, 2020

HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE FROM THE STRESS OF THE CORONAVIRUS

In an anxiety-laden crisis, overcoming your worries can provide a path forward

by Jessica Migala, with Kimberley Rae Miller, AARP, May 1, 2020



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS GASH

One day in March, you woke up and your entire life had changed – your work was disrupted, your loved ones’ health suddenly in peril, your movements restricted, your home turned into a pressure cooker.

But what if you could turn all this negativity and adversity into something positive – to become stronger and more resourceful, and to build toward a healthier future? “That’s what resilience is,” says Froma Walsh, codirector of the Chicago Center for Family Health and author of *Strengthening Family Resilience*. “It’s not simply coping with the situation, but it’s turning difficult times into a growth experience.”

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can trigger the classic signs of anxiety: elevated heart rate and shortness of breath. But studies show that when you see a situation like this as a challenge – something you are able to rise to and overcome – the heart becomes more efficient, blood vessels expand, and you’re more effective and productive. When you see it as a threat, however, blood vessels contract, the heart works less efficiently, and decision-making is impaired. In the long term, viewing difficult episodes as unmanageable threats is associated with accelerated brain aging.

Here are some common situations many older Americans face during the crisis, as well as some ideas for turning threats into challenges and challenges into teaching moments.

If you are at greater risk because of your ethnic group or health condition: “The anxiety of knowing that you’re more vulnerable to COVID-19 can make you feel like a walking time bomb,” says Elizabeth Lombardo, a Chicago-based psychologist. “You may then exist in a constant state of stress and worry, which, ironically, can make it harder for your body to fight off pathogens.”

TAKE CONTROL: There are two constructive ways to approach any challenge, Lombardo says: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. They are equally important. Problem-focused involves following guidelines, like social distancing and isolation. If you have been doing this, stop for a moment and recognize the work you’ve been doing. That’s called taking control, and that’s great.

Emotion-focused involves taking measurable action to reduce stress, which helps boost your immune system. Meditation is perfect for this, she says. For free 20-minute guided meditations, visit stayingsharp.aarp.org/activities/meditation-stress.

Read this complete article at www.aarp.org

In this issue:

Helpful Information

At Home...

- Activities
 - Crafts
 - Exercise Resources
- and a few more laughs!



Here’s what we’ve been up to...

Cheryl celebrated Mother’s Day with her kids Marisa and Marcus.



Jessica has been walking every day with either her boyfriend, Adam or dog, Luna.



Nick has been coordinating community food distributions and is enjoying his weekends!

SEVEN WAYS TO COPE WITH ANXIETY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Uncertainty and fear are major triggers.

Here's how to cope

by Christina Ianzito, AARP, March 16, 2020



WESTEND61 / GETTY IMAGES

You head to your local grocery store and the shelves are empty of canned and frozen foods. Your usual social activities have been canceled, and the news is a constant stream of alarming stories about how the spreading coronavirus is upending life as we know it. Add to that the fact that older adults are particularly vulnerable to complications from COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, and you have a perfect storm for anxiety.

"This has been a big anxiety trigger for a lot of people," says Stewart Shankman, chief psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University, of the coronavirus outbreak. But he and other mental health experts note that it's important to learn how to handle anxious thoughts, and get help if necessary — in part because anxiety can impede the body's ability to fight infection.

"Anxiety suppresses the immune system," says Jane Timmons-Mitchell, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland. "So anything we can do to not be anxious is helpful."

These ideas from the experts may help keep your anxiety under control.

Limit news consumption

It's important to know the facts and what you can do to protect yourself and to take all precautions — but it's not going to help stress levels to obsessively watch the news, says Shankman.

Shankman says that he's not suggesting denial.

Rather, it's "sort of accepting this is the current situation and not letting it interfere with your life."

or certain friends whom you know will brighten your mood.

If you feel like your anxiety is getting extreme, interfering with your daily functioning, for example, ask for help. Reach out to your doctor, and a trusted confidant.

Practice calming techniques

Different people relax in different ways, but if you feel particularly anxious you might try deep breathing, taking a warm bath, or sitting with your pet, says Neda Gould, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins Medical School. "Alternatively, try mindfulness: bringing attention to the experience and kind of allowing it to be there, and not judging it and knowing that it will pass." If you need mindful or meditative guidance, try free apps such as Calm; Breethe; UCLA Mindful, an app developed by the University of California, Los Angeles, Mindful Awareness Research Center; and Mindfulness Coach, from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Move your body

"If people are able to just do a little bit of exercise, just walk around or stretch — just to sort of calm the tension in your body," it will help, says Shankman. "If you calm the tension in your body, you calm the tension in your mind."

Connect with loved ones

Call, email or videochat with family members, especially if you are feeling isolated or you know that they are. You may find that they have more time to talk than they usually do because so many people are home from school and work, Timmons-Mitchell points out. "There might be some grandchildren that you don't get to communicate with a lot, but now maybe they could because those people aren't as busy."

Listen to music, find activities that bring joy

With symphonies, opera houses, ballets and theaters shutting down or losing their audiences to quarantine measures, many are bringing their offerings online: The Berlin Philharmonic, for instance, gave a free livestreamed concert on March 12, while playing to an empty concert hall; it's offering free access to its archived concerts through March 31. The Philadelphia Orchestra is offering its recent live performance of "BeethovenNOW: Symphonies 5 & 6" online, as well. "Watching a concert like that is going to help somebody feel better, and probably less anxious," says Timmons-Mitchell.

Get stuff done

Tackle a hobby you've wanted to explore, or a project you never seem to have time for. Maybe you have some watercolor painting supplies in a closet, or a big box of old photos that you've been meaning to transform into a keepsake album. Accomplishing tasks such as cleaning clothes closets or garages can be rewarding, while diverting your attention from anxious thoughts.

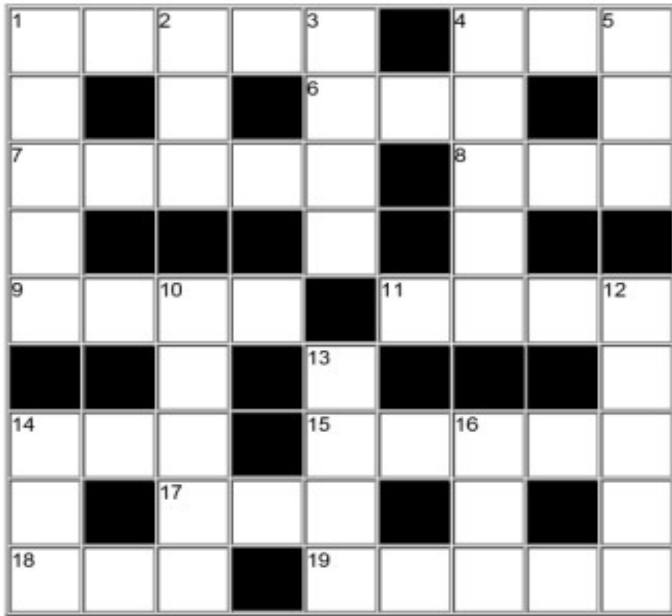
Find ways to laugh

Humor is a wonderful coping mechanism in times of crisis. Turn to sources you find funny, whether they're movies or TV shows, or certain friends whom you know will brighten your mood.

If you feel like your anxiety is getting extreme, interfering with your daily functioning, for example, ask for help. Reach out to your doctor, and a trusted confidant.

Read this complete article at www.aarp.org

Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. Cook on gridiron
4. Work with shovel
6. Belonging to us
7. Repeated another time
8. Small insect
9. 10 cent coin
11. Frozen precipitation
14. Food tin
15. Grayish green
17. Hooting bird
18. Sticky black substance
19. A lollipop

Down

1. Protect
2. Nothern Ireland army
3. Not short
4. Empty liquid from container
5. Acquire
10. Not major
12. Filly of weeds
13. Tootsie_____
14. Feline
16. Sick

Answers:
 Across: 1.griII, 4.dig, 6.our, 7.again, 8.ant, 9.dime, 11.snow, 14.can, 15.olive, 17.owl, 18.tar, 19.lolly,
 Down: 1.guard, 2.IRA, 3.long, 4.drain, 5.get, 10.minor, 12.weedy, 13.roll, 14.cat, 16.ill



YouTube Crafts



EASY PRESSED FLOWERS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zz066hTnzQ>



YouTube Exercise

LOW IMPACT CARDIO WORKOUT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVilzXtqi8c>

20 MINUTE EXERCISE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiPVjjPS9zk>



NO-SEW T-SHIRT BAG

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgpaM3u2zng>

I G M Z R N O Z Y L N X K C V Z R J S U F S W B
 D A M N Q O A T Y N A R A B V J L T W Z P V I T
 W M Z F A W I A G Z G S H X X M A X T Y L W K N
 Q S V C J E M H T U T E Y J T F L N A R Q D U S
 T R O U S U S G Q I F T P U M G N S P K B I I F
 Z V X B E S Y U X T T E E H U G T M Q O A T Q Q
 H V O T P C U P P H D B R A E H S E Z B I Z D I
 B E K C Z T M N S C A A T U M A P B K R Z M G R
 F G S N J N R C Z Y V I E A Q A L T H J R E A X
 Q E H M B J B V Z P U D N F Z M P T D F C Z I F
 M T M W Z E N S I R L S S K Q E R B H H C H V A
 J A A L K J V D P O H K I F E A E N D T L C Q K
 Q B C L A S F W O T L A O M O S D I P I L A T W
 J L R E N E R G Y E N V N E G W Q I S O C R A J
 E E O L A T Q R V I Z U T N Q T E Y U A O B P H
 T S N T R Q F D Z N N S Y S O U W U O T S O P U
 Z L U B Z Z K W E T O F F F F A B O O V G H S A
 H M T K K A E N P A P E E L S P V W K T E Y Q L
 B Q R Q H Q Y J Y L Y Z F W K S M P B I J D I P
 K F I X R E L U O J O L I K Y X O R R S U R F Q
 S Q E I B S L W V F U W W S S B B D M K L A D B
 M W N V V X V O P F B O T L B V D L I X O T A C
 C P T D M I C R O N U T R I E N T S Y U N E N H
 J I S M J U N B M I J K P C S B T O N R M S H E

Asthma

Sleepapnea

Osteoarthritis

Hypertension

Obseity

Sodium

Vegetables

Micronutrients

Macronutrients

Lipids

Kilojoule

Energy

Fats

Protein

Carbohydrates

Diabetes

Health

EASY PRESSED FLOWERS

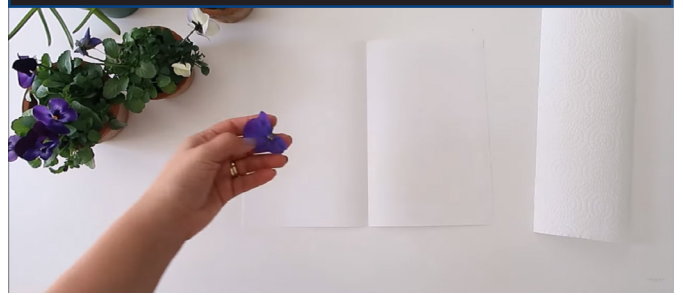
Supplies: 1 sheet of paper, 1 paper towel, scissors, variety of flowers, microwave safe dish with flat bottom, microwave, picture frame for display (optional). You can use these to decorate other items such as handmade cards!



1) Fold paper in half & open.



2) Cut & place flowers of your choice on one side of the paper. Make sure they are as flat as possible.



3) Place paper towel over flattened flowers.



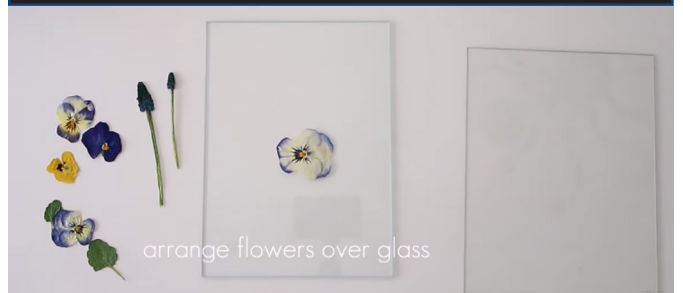
4) Fold paper in half. Place in the microwave w/ a flat microwave safe dish on top for 30-60 seconds.



5) Remove from microwave and gently lift flowers off of paper.



6) If desired, arrange flowers to your liking onto the glass of a picture frame.



7) Carefully attach the other piece of your frame.



8) Slide it in or adjust any clasps and you're finished!



NO-SEW T-SHIRT BAG

Supplies: fabric scissors (or other sharp scissors) and an old t-shirt.

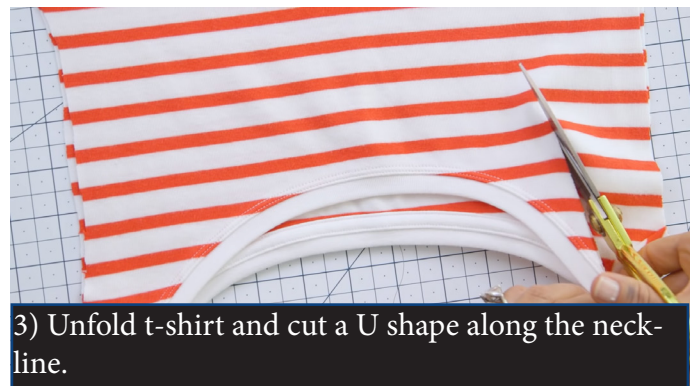


1) Fold t-shirt in half so sleeves are perfectly aligned.

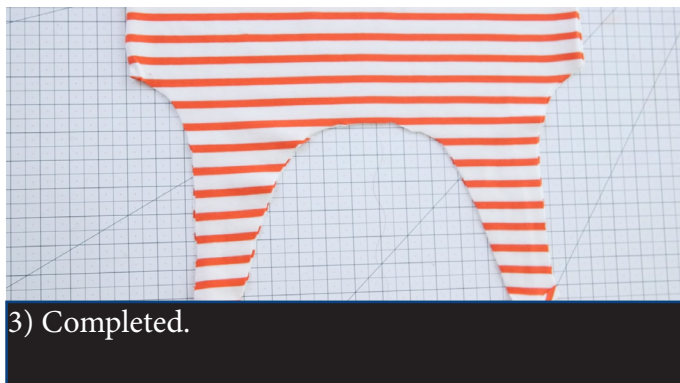
2) Cut both sleeves simultaneously on the inside of the seam.



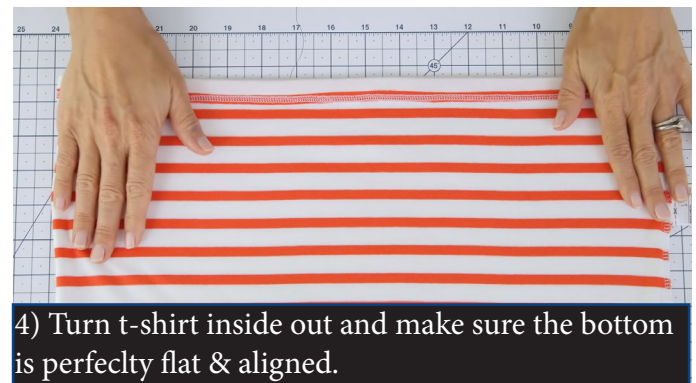
2) Continued...



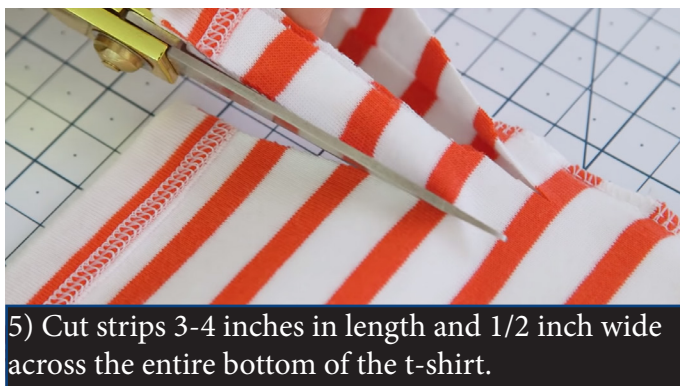
3) Unfold t-shirt and cut a U shape along the neck-line.



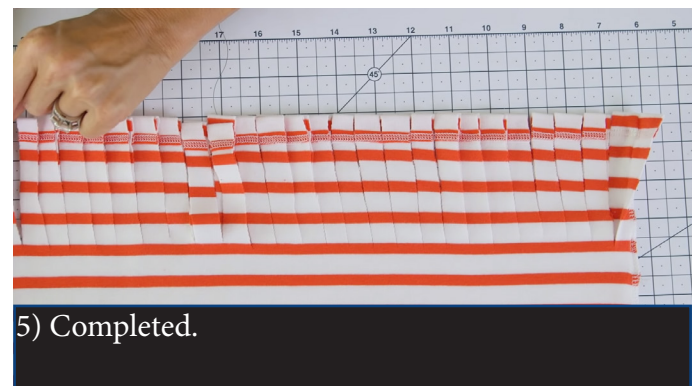
3) Completed.



4) Turn t-shirt inside out and make sure the bottom is perfectly flat & aligned.



5) Cut strips 3-4 inches in length and 1/2 inch wide across the entire bottom of the t-shirt.



5) Completed.



6) Tie the top and bottom strip together in a single knot across the entire bottom of the t-shirt.

7) See the gaps in between the knots?... now we will close those by tying the top of 1 to the bottom of 2.



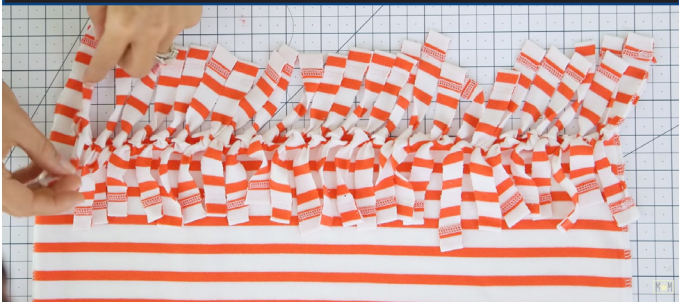
8) Continued...



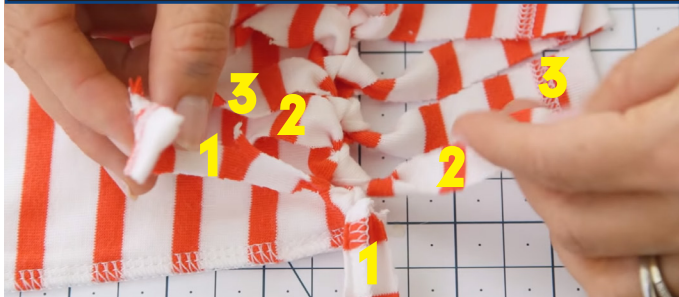
9) Finally, tie the top and bottom strip together in a double knot across the entire bottom of the t-shirt.



6) Completed.



7) Continued... Tie to top of 2 to the bottom of 3 and so on and so forth.



8) Completed.



10) Turn the t-shirt right side out and your bag is now complete!

SEND US A PHOTO OF YOUR COMPLETED PROJECTS AT SENIOR.CENTER@NEWARK.ORG



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