How to Cope With COVID Beyond Watching YouTube Cat Videos

If you're wondering if there might be new things you want to try for however long you stay home, here are a few tips.

May 27, 2020 By Dann Wonser

Friends and Family,

Not everyone is handling social distancing in the same way, and it seems like we're all getting extra-antsy right now. Finances are certainly a piece of it for most of us, but why are we so restless now, after two months of living this way?

Maybe it's the spring weather. Maybe it's cabin fever. Maybe we're running out of new shows to watch on TV. And I don't know about others with cancer, but Genevieve and I expect to remain in quarantine until there is a vaccine – roughly another 12-18 months. How could we do otherwise when between us, we check almost every high-risk box for COVID-19? While the chances of getting it may be low if we're careful, the chances of having extreme health problems if we do is off the charts. Still, 12-18 months would be a long time to spend watching funny cat videos on YouTube.

If you're handling this confinement with no problems, by all means ignore this. But if you're wondering if there might be new things you want to try for however long you stay home, here are a few tips:

ADD A LITTLE STRUCTURE TO YOUR DAY: Having structure gives your days an anchor so it doesn't feel like you're drifting from one day into the next. For Genevieve and me, this means plopping down our mats and turning on a YouTube yoga video every morning. Every afternoon we go for an hour-long walk, rain or shine. Every other day I do a fitness video after yoga. Genevieve has a regular schedule for Zoom meetings for the different groups she belongs to (women's group, astrology, investment club, coffee group and more... it's a long list).

Courtesy of Dann Wonser

EXERCISE: Between the walks, the yoga, and the fitness videos, Genevieve and I both feel like we're in better shape now than when we were going to the gym every day. I may not have Buns of Steel, but they might have gone from Jell-O to Silly Putty. And for people with cancer, I strongly believe that EXERCISE IS THE MOST UNDERRATED KEY TO LIVING LONGER.

GET YOUR SOCIAL CONTACT: Phone calls, texts, emails and video calls, of course. You may need to initiate contact more than you normally would. Not everyone has the same social needs, so adjust to suit yours. I wouldn't do well having as much social contact as Genevieve, but I make sure to get as much as I need.

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO OTHERS: It feels good to get out of yourself, make a difference in someone else's life, and get out of that "poor me" state of mind that can come with being stuck. Three different neighbors have offered to do our grocery shopping for us. Genevieve is making COVID cards for people in need, while I'm involved with several lung cancer projects. Genevieve's sister Christine is making masks for first responders. You might want to reach out to your peeps that you think are more likely to become isolated. There are tons of things you can do if you take a moment to think about it. Try one option this week and see how it feels.

TAKE ON PROJECTS: It can feel good to have a goal in front of you, and to accomplish something

where you get concrete results. I've been pulling ivy and blackberry bushes out of our nearly-unreachable backyard for weeks. I researched modems and routers, and bought one of each so we can stop getting a monthly rental charge for the one the cable company provides. I'll be doing touch-up paint inside the house next. If/when I have time, I plan to sort my photos.

EAT HEALTHY: Processed food and alcohol sales are up since the pandemic hit, as people gravitate towards comfort. The irony is that your body feels crappy after eating most comfort food. On the other hand, fresh produce sales are up. What about at your house? Garlic, mushrooms, and cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale etc.) are particularly good for fighting both the virus and cancer.

Think about trying a few of these ideas.

Love,

Dann

PS: Here's your first opportunity to make a contribution to others: Join me in the very first VIRTUAL Summer Jam 5K Your Way! You can join Live Lung and Prosper (my team), donate, or both. CLICK HERE TO JOIN OR DONATE.

My goal this year is to have people from AS MANY STATES AS POSSIBLE join my team! I'm on the planning committee for this event, and I advocated to focus more on involvement than donations, since this is a tough year for so many people financially. As a result, there is a contest for whose team has people from the most states.

If you join my team, you'll have the option of walking on your own, participating in one of the real-time exercise videos in lieu of walking (hence the "5K Your Way"), or sitting on your sofa, And of course, since your donations go to lung cancer research and advocacy, I would greatly appreciate any donation you choose to make. Again, if money is scarce this year, that's perfectly fine.

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