

SELF CARE

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND DIGITAL
IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

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This manual compiles some resources and pieces of advice in order to deal with these challenging times. Its aim is not to be thorough or to remove the efforts being made in this respect, but to be added to the set of practices spreading on social networks during this time.

It is inspired by previous work from other colleagues, from different latitudes, traditions and world views. We wish to keep adding practices and we hope that new initiatives with strong and healthy roots arise from the flaws of the capitalist patriarchal system.

In times of harshness and isolation, life care is a radically political act.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING



BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT YOU EAT

Our emotional health is linked to food. In the following pages you will find some advice to strengthen your immune system.

CREATE A ROUTINE

Although we are at home and it seems that time passes differently, try to keep fixed schedules to eat, to exercise, to talk to a friend, to play with your child and to take your dog for a walk. Routines give us a structure to sustain us when we have hard experiences or when we are going through tough times.

MAKE PAUSES

Take a break for a few minutes away from screens (cellphone, computer or TV). In this time we are getting too much information, and it is good to have quiet moments to check how you feel, to distract yourself, to dance, draw, have a tea or read.

RECOGNIZE YOUR FEELINGS

For most of us, everything that is happening can be very oppressive. Although the idea of staying at home can be comforting for some people, it is not for other people. Talk about what you feel. Make the most of these moments to be with your family and friends, even in the distance. Take advantage of technology to talk and message your friends. Check your emotions and find them a place within you.

TRUST YOUR SUPPORTIVE NETWORK

If you are in a difficult situation, you don't feel good or you don't feel safe talk to your contacts, ask for help. The good thing is that many supportive networks have been activated.

MOVE

Dancing, practicing yoga and moving your body is very good for this time of isolation. In the following pages you will find exercises to connect with your body, to clear your mind and find a place for your physical sensations. These are invitations to start or close your movement routine.

HONOR YOUR ANCESTORS

Trust all this will pass, call upon your guardians, those women who took care of you and brought you to this very moment. Do your rituals. You know that this can reactivate your confidence. You can light up a candle and pray, invoke the energy of the protectors that inspire you, look at the pictures of your deceased loved ones, read an oracle or just have a tea.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



In this time of stress and anxiety, it seems that the mind goes at a quicker rate than the body, which has to follow it. We feel that we are losing control of our actions and sensations. To fuel our thinking seems very tempting. However, a way to stop this condition is to listen to our body and focus on physical sensations.

WHAT DO I FEEL?

A way to go through our body is to connect to what we feel.

Making body maps during this period can be a way to know yourself, to identify which are your reactions against fear and anxiety, and also to know what resources you have to deal with these situations.

Some questions to guide this exercise can be:

Where are the emotions settled?

Where do I feel fear? How does it feel?

Where are my memories (happiness and grief)?

What do I do to feel better?

In which part of my body do I feel it?

Once you finish you can write a diary with these maps in order to feel if something has changed once you are aware of your physical sensations and also to check if you are creating new resources to counteract unpleasant emotions.

Practice inspired by:

Mesoamerican Defenders Initiative and teaching from La Serena, home of refuge and healing for the defenders of human rights in Oaxaca, Mexico.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

CONNECTING WITH OUR CORPORAL LIMITS

Length: 8-10 mins

When we are dealing every day with stressful situations at an accelerated rate, it is easy to lose the sensation of belonging to our body. As women we have learned to constantly surpass our limits, either because of work overload, being recognized, precarious life or because of all the above issues.

Reconnecting with all the physical limits of our body is a tool that allows us to connect with the present, depending on what we feel, touch and sense.

It is better to do this practice with our eyes closed and our mouth slightly open:

This practice is best done with your eyes closed and slightly opening your mouth, relaxing your chin:

- Sit in a comfortable position, preferably on the floor, or on a surface that allows you to move if you need to. You can also rest your back against the wall.
- Close your eyes and take a few seconds to connect with your sensations without judging them. How are you? What do you feel? Take three deep breaths and exhale through your mouth.

- Rub your hands to generate warmth and put your hands in front of your face without touching it. Feel the warmth coming from your hands.
- Repeat this 3 times, inhaling and exhaling slowly.
- Imagine that all your senses go through your hands: you can see, listen, taste and feel with your hands.
- Put your hands on your feet. Go through your foot with a gentle and pleasant touch recognizing every bone and toe. Change to your other foot and do the same.
- Keep going through your calf, your thighs, your groin, your hips, your lower back, your abdomen, your chest, your upper back, your shoulders, your arms, your hands, your neck, your head. Stop in each part for as long as necessary and give yourself a massage. You know what you need right now.
- When you reach your face, give yourself a massage making circular movements with your fingers on your forehead, your cheekbones, your jaw.
- With every breath, think of softening the tissues, letting your organs to occupy the space that corresponds them inside your body.
- When you feel you are finished, rub your hands again to generate warmth and put them on your chest. Open your eyes slowly.
- Express your gratitude for this moment.

FEED

BODY AND MIND



- Drink enough fluids, preferably warm and hot. This is because two reasons: the virus do not stand high temperatures and cold water alters our nervous system.
- Eat fruit and vegetables in order to keep a strong immune system.
- Eat foods rich in vitamin C (citrus fruits, broccoli, red pepper, kiwi fruit, among other things).
- Reduce the intake of refined sugar. It is better to sweeten with honey or natural sugar.

- Avoid raw foods, as they are harder to assimilate. It is better to boil them.

- Have a break from screens, although this is a challenge in these days of isolation. Alternatives: reading, meditating, chatting with somebody, making puzzles. Bring yourself to seek new creative and simple ways to spend these days.

- Do exercises of alternative nostril breathing – Anuloma Viloma, watch videos on YouTube.

Food and exercises that increase serotonin levels (in order to have a more resistant nervous system)

Lentils, pineapple, banana, pistachios, almonds, cocoa bean, tomatoes, whole grains, cashews. You should eat them in small portions 3 or 4 times a day.

Sunbathe if you can.

Source (in spanish):

<https://ginecosofia.com/2019/10/chile/?v=0885de5fa089>

HOT DRINKS

TO RAISE THE SPIRITS

GOLDEN CHAI



YOU NEED: star anise, cardamom, peppercorns, clove, cinnamon sticks, fresh ginger, fresh turmeric (or powder), honey and vegetable milk of your choice.

1.- Heat 500ml of water and add:

- 3 pieces of anise
- 3 pieces of clove
- 3 cardamom pods
- 4 peppercorns
- 2 slices of grated ginger
- 2 slices of grated turmeric

2.- Let it boil for 20 minutes on a low heat.

3.- Serve and add a splash of milk and as much honey as you like.

*If you have all the ingredients that's great; if not, you can improvise and add turmeric and whatever you have.

HOT CHOCOLATE

Hot chocolate is a very comforting drink, and it also has a lot of antioxidants, which are good to keep our body clean and active. The ancestors from Mexico consumed it as a ritual drink. There, people do not drink it with milk, but with water, but you can drink it as you like.

YOU NEED:

- A cup of warm water or milk.
- Cocoa powder (1 tbsp.)
- Brown sugar or panela
- Water or vegetable milk (whatever you want)
- Ground cinnamon (1 tsp.)

* Process in a blender to make foam.

NATURAL HERBAL MEDICINE



FOR DEPRESSION

Borage

(*Borago officinalis*): it is restorative of the adrenal cortex, it relieves depression. Drink it as an infusion up to 3 cups a day. Do not mix with other herbs.

Basil

(*Ocimum basilicum*): it is antidepressant and it stimulates spirit. Strengthens the sensations of being down to earth. Eat fresh leaves and/or drink as an infusion combined with lemon balm or rose petals in order to increase its effect.

Oat

(*Avena sativa*): it is antidepressant and tonic for the nerves. Eat for breakfast or as a snack with juicy fruit.

FOR INSOMNIA

California poppy

(*Eschscholzia californica*): it is soft hypnotic, tranquilizer, calming and safe for children. Drink as an infusion at night. In order to boost its effects, it can be combined with passion flower or lavender in case of excitement.

Wild lettuce

(*Lactuca virosa*): it is sedative. Drink as an infusion at night.

Passion Flower

(*Passiflora incarnata*): it is sedative, hypnotic, and calming. Helps to fall asleep. Drink it before sleep. It can be combined with lavender and chamomile in order to boost its action.

Chamomile

(*Chamaemelum nobile*): drink as an infusion at night.

FOR ANXIETY AND STRESS

Lime Blossom

(*Tilia europaea*): it reduces stress. Drink as an infusion up to 3 cups a day or 10 ml of tincture a day. It can be boosted by adding chamomile or lemon balm.

Consulted sources (in spanish):

<https://ginecosofia.com/2019/10/chile/?v=0885de5fa089>

Book: Medicinal Plants, Penelope Ody

NATURAL HERBAL MEDICINE

IN ORDER TO RELAX

Mugwort

(*Artemisia vulgaris*): it soothes the nerves. It is useful for tension and stress. Drink it not very strong. Drink up to 2 cups a day.

Chamomile

(*Chamaemelum nobile*): it is sedative, carminative and antispasmodic. It is useful for excitement and "nervous stomach". Drink up to 3 cups a day.

Lavender

(*Lavandula officinalis*): it is sedative and analgesic, with an antispasmodic effect. It can be drunk as an infusion (up to 3 cups a day) or its essential oil can be used to massage the temples.

Lemon Balm

(*Melissa officinalis*): it is antidepressant and tonic for the nervous system. Drink as an infusion up to 3 cups a day, preferably after eating or before sleep. It is recommended to start taking small doses

Valerian

(*Valeriana officinalis*): it is a very powerful tranquilizer, antispasmodic and softly calming. Drink it with caution, preferably at night before sleep. It is recommended to start with a small dose.

TO WARM UP AND ACTIVATE THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Garlic

It is used for respiratory diseases such as cough, tonsillitis, asthma, sore throat, snoring and bronchitis; and for pain in general, such as back, head and muscular pain.

Cinnamon

(*Cinnamomun spp.*): cinnamon is useful for all types of "cold states", such as common cold. It is a good energetic herb for those states linked to lack of energy. It promotes sweating.

Ginger

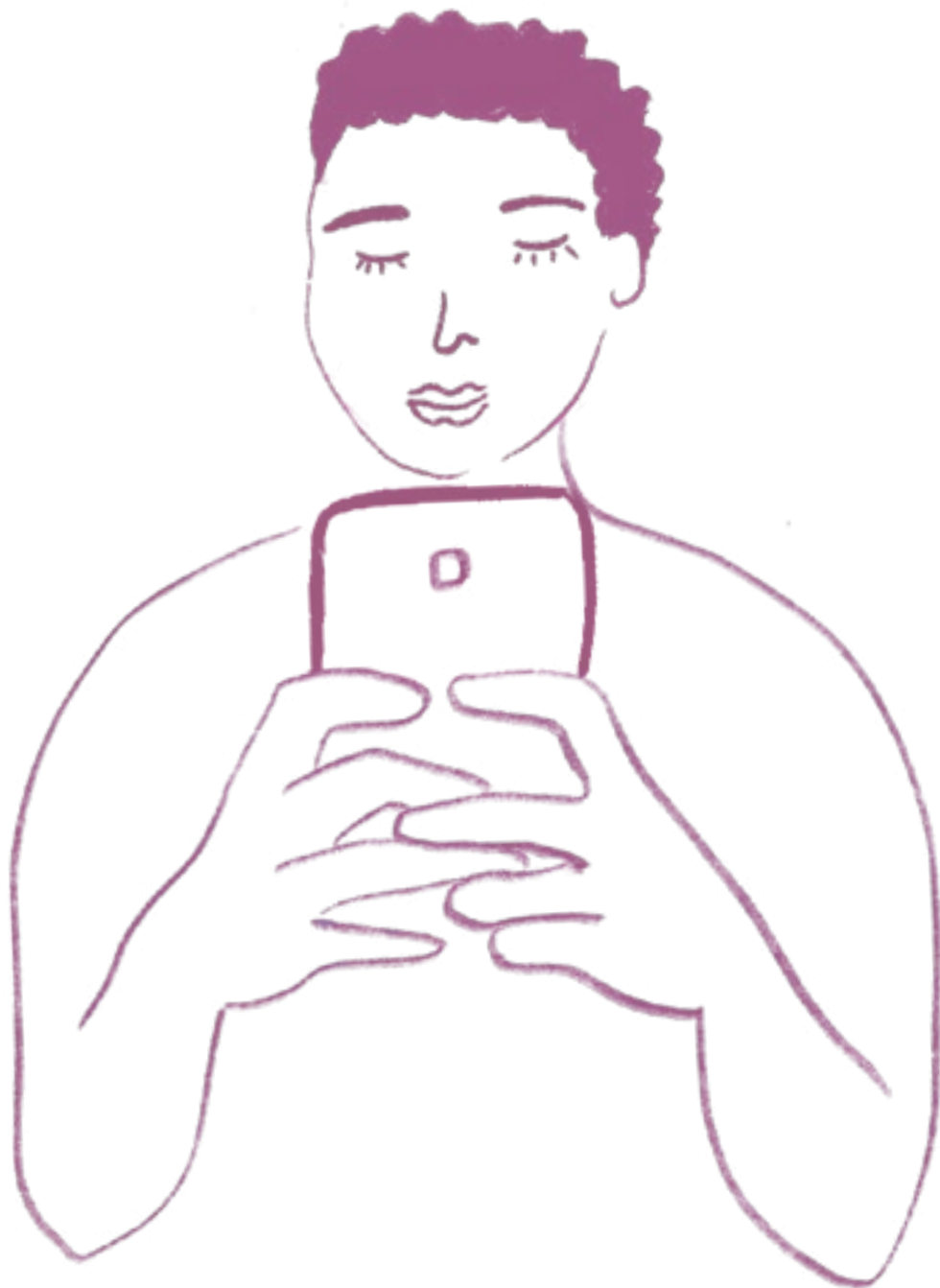
(*Zingiber officinalis*): its fresh root is used as an expectorant for colds. It stimulates the circulatory system. You can drink it as an infusion by boiling two slices per cup for ten minutes.

Turmeric

(*Curcuma Longa*): Turmeric's best known medical effect is far-reaching anti-inflammatory, whose effectiveness is comparable to that of pharmaceutical drugs. However, it also cleans the blood and has as analgesic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antitumor, antiallergic, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, carminative (gas-releasing), cholagogue (it promotes liver's function), digestive, diuretic (it removes the excess of fluids), stimulant and vulnerary effects. The fresh root is used boiled in water for ten minutes.

*** The use of these resources is not a substitute for a medical consultation. The use of this information is the responsibility of each reader.**

DIGITAL SECURITY



These are times when virtual relationships become relevant, due to not being able to have physical contact with our friends and workmates, so we spend much more time with our cellphone and computer.

It is important to make social networks a safe space to express ourselves freely, without the risk of our information being used without our consent. We will share with you two handbooks so you can implement care strategies in the digital world.

Digital care toolkit, made by the feminist group "Luchadoras".
(spanish)

<https://luchadoras.mx/toolkit-de-cuidados-digitales/>

Handbook of advice and practice to send nudes online safely.
(spanish)

<https://www.codingrights.org/safernudes/>

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