



# South Central Region ECB ACO

## Taking Care of The Minds & Bodies of Umpires and Scorers in Times of Stress & Solitude



At the present time, right across the world we are seeing significant measures implemented to minimise the effect and spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The majority of sporting action, including training sessions have been prohibited.

These restrictions can have a huge impact on the emotional wellbeing of Umpires and Scorers, as well as the general public. Considering this, I have provided some advice for looking after your mental and physical health in the difficult and uncertain times that we find ourselves in.

**Occupational Deprivation** – Occupational Therapists work to a well-recognised phenomenon, Occupational Deprivation. This can arise following an enforced absence from the day to day roles and responsibilities of a working person. An example of this would be, the period of time needed to recover from an injury, or in the current situation the lack of ability to access regular employment due to the government's social distancing regime. Occupational Deprivation can greatly increase someone's risk of depression and other psychological or mental illnesses.

### Guidance for Umpires and Scorers

**Routine** – For those who are unable to leave their homes, the temptation to lie in bed in the morning, and go to sleep much later than usual is great. You should look to avoid this. Attempt to maintain as usual a sleeping pattern as possible.

**Healthy Eating** – The temptation to reach for unhealthy snacks when your mind is unoccupied is huge. It can really help to plan healthy meals for throughout the day, if possible, these will be fresh and home cooked. If you are unable to cook or prepare meals this isolation period could be the perfect time to learn. Some fantastic recipes and video tutorials can be found online.

**Regular Exercise** – Regular exercise tops the list of the best ways to maintain good mental health. If you can go for a walk or a run, then try and incorporate this into your daily routine.

Additionally, it is very much possible to exercise within the confines of your own home. Even without access to a home gym, there are endless numbers of resources available online, and apps which can support you with regular access to fitness associated activity plans.





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The South Central County ACO is offering their Umpires and Scorers guidance via their County ACO's on how to keep themselves in good condition as well as helping officials continue their development by sharing clips and Laws of the Game questions in the form of CPD and Bite Size training material. Please contact your County Scorer, Education or Development Officer.

**Rehabilitation & Recovery** – If an Umpire is currently in the rehabilitation process following an injury, they should continue to be in dialogue with their physiotherapists & surgeons to understand the best approach for them with regards to their ongoing rehabilitation.

This period can also be used by officials to address knocks, or long-term underlying injuries that they may not previously have had time to fully recover from. Similarly, to more major injuries, dialogue with physiotherapists is important so that agreement upon an individualised training and enhanced recovery plan can be made.

**Physical Health** – In addition to a combination of regular exercise and maintaining a healthy diet, you will almost certainly see benefit in restricting the amount of alcohol you are consuming. You are always best avoiding smoking at all times. Try to spend as much time out in the fresh air as possible. If you are concerned about your physical health, follow the latest NHS advice with regards to contacting your GP.

**Social Interaction** – To reduce the chances of having to socially isolate completely, it is important to maintain good contact with your family and friends. If you can, spend time in touch with close friends, although the way you choose to do this must be in accordance with the latest Government advice. Make positive use of social media, messaging and apps such as WhatsApp to keep in touch. FaceTime and Zoom are also incredibly useful visual tools for a period



where social distancing is enforced.



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**Mental Wellbeing** – Exercises to help you relax such as mindfulness can be very a useful technique when looking to maintain good mental health. There is an abundance of resources online, as well as fantastic apps you can download to your devices such as Headspace. If you have never given mindfulness a try but always wanted to, then this period of time could be the opportunity you've been waiting for. It is an incredibly effective way to help you manage the difficulties you are facing such as raised anxiety levels, and the potential to become depressed.



**Activities** – The importance of having regular access to leisure activities cannot be emphasised enough. The restrictions on movement we are increasingly facing can provide some challenges to participation, but once again, the situation we find ourselves in may provide the opportunity you've been waiting for to try something you've long wanted to or that has caught your attention. I have listed below some ideas of leisure activities you may want to try and may be inspired to take up. Remember, as part of a balanced routine, there is no shame in spending time watching your favourite boxset on Netflix or Amazon Prime.



- **Cooking**
- **Arts & Crafts**
- **Watching movies and TV programmes**
- **Gaming**
- **Gardening**
- **Walks (Consider the latest government advice)**
- **Music (If you have ever wanted to learn to play a musical instrument then this could be the right time)**
- **Reading & Writing**



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**Opportunities for Personal & Professional Development** – The period we’re now facing may seem bleak, but it could provide a great opportunity for you to consider how you can develop yourself personally and professionally. If you have long held aspirations of starting your own business or writing the book that everyone tells you that we have in us, then with a clear schedule, now could be the time to make that commitment. Additionally, now could be a great time to explore opportunities for training or further education. Fantastic training bodies such as the Open University offer a range of distance learning opportunities which include an abundance of free online training modules.

**Contact with The ECB ACO**– It is crucially important that Umpires and Scorers maintain regular communication with key figures at their local County ACO, such as their Umpire Development Officer as well as keeping abreast of the messages being sent out by the National and Regional ACO’s.

Frequent telephone and email communications can be a useful approach in minimising social isolation. Keep your conversations interesting and fun where possible and appropriate. The use of WhatsApp groups can be really effective in maintaining the strong bonds between officials who are all in the same position of loving the game and greatly missing being out in the middle or sharing a scoreboard.

If you are concerned about your mental health or that of one of your colleagues, speak with family or friends or any Mental Health First Aider you may know. Seeking out the expert advice of your GP is always the most highly recommended thing to do.

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The Third Team supports referees by providing them with awareness on all things related to Resilience to enhance Performance and improve Mental Health.

Additionally, they help educational institutions through the vehicle of refereeing alongside the Mental Health workshops they deliver in industry.

Please use this link if you are interested in joining their [mailing list](#).

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