

Tips for Off-Duty Health Care Workers

Infectious disease outbreaks like COVID-19 can be especially challenging for health care workers, the unsung heroes responsible for saving countless lives. HAP's clinical staff have provided some tried-and-true tips and reminders to help off-duty health care workers unwind and recharge.

Take care of your body

- Practice physical distancing (6 feet) when not at work
- Discuss proactive planning for the home such as separation of living spaces and bathrooms and when such separation should be implemented
- Wash your hands before touching anyone or anything inside of your home
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep
- If you are older or have certain comorbidities you may be at higher risk of complications if infected with COVID-19, consider requesting a work re-assignment
- If you feel ill, stay home. Do not return to work until you feel well
- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [guidance](#) for health care workers planning to return to work after a COVID-19 diagnosis or quarantine

Take care of your mind

- Manage your [anxiety](#) by taking time to unwind
- Try to do some activities you enjoy and keep in touch with family and friends
- Take a break from the media coverage of COVID-19

Take care of your gear

- Remove scrub attire prior to leaving the hospital—an infection prevention best practice
- Sanitize items that were used while at work, including cellphone, handbag, laptops, and stethoscope
- Leave your shoes at the door. Shower and change your clothes when you arrive at home. Wash attire in the hottest water possible

Remember: It is possible that someone may react negatively after learning that you work in health care. This is an opportunity to remind them they are safe and that appropriate precautions are being taken to protect everyone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website has a [guide](#) to reduce stigma. It's on all of us to build understanding and be good stewards of calm, fact-based public health information.

Thank you to health care workers for all that you do during COVID-19 and every day.