

Pingdemic! 6 ways to avoid the summer self-isolation blues

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Over 500,000 people in England and Wales received self-isolation alerts

(<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/jul/20/covid-thousands-of-summer-holidays-could-be-ruined-by-the-pingdemic>) by the NHS Covid-19 tracing app during the first week of July.

With reports that as many as 4.5 million people could be asked to self-isolate

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-57751033>) by August 16th, and the end of restrictions now in place, it's looking highly likely that most of us will receive the dreaded 'ping' at some point over the summer.

But, there's no excuse to be caught out this time around. Here, the experts provide their top tips for minimising the frustration of an unexpected bout of summer self-isolation.

Create more open space

There's nothing like a ton of clutter and mess to dampen your self-isolation spirits, so get to work creating more light, open and airy spaces in your home, suggests Emily Snape from Lovespace (<https://lovespace.co.uk/>).

'Being stuck at home over the summer can be made a little more bearable when your home feels bigger, cleaner and more organised. Putting things that you don't need into storage (yes, even those chunky winter coats clogging up the pegs by the front door) is a quick and easy way to free up space in your home and help you better cope with your self-isolation,' explains Emily.

'Make sure you opt for a storage provider (like Lovespace) who can offer collection and delivery, so you can simply leave your boxes on the doorstep and avoid any contact during your self-isolation period.'

Prepare isolation activities

The shops are open, so there's no excuse not to stock up on activities that can keep you entertained for the duration of your self-isolation, advises Dr Lucy Davey (<https://www.drlucydavey.com/>), a professional mother's coach.

'Whether it's art and crafts for the children, a new book, a game or the ingredients for baking their favourite treats, make sure you have everything you need ahead of time,' advises Dr Lucy.

'Pay particular attention to those areas often overlooked, such as ink for the printer, AA batteries or crafting glue. If you're missing an essential item that you can't just nip out to get, you'll feel extra frustrated, so try and avoid this by preparing in advance.'

Have 'pingdemic' alternatives on standby

There's nothing more frustrating than having to cancel plans due to self-isolation, so consider what 'pandemic' alternatives you can have on standby should your plans have to change.

Find an afternoon tea that delivers to your doorstep, check if your favourite restaurant that you've booked also delivers, get a projector for some garden movie nights, or book in on a virtual cocktail making class.

'There are many ways to still experience those special events and moments whilst self-isolating at home, you just need to get a bit creative,' explains Dr Lucy.

Stock on up DIY supplies

There's no denying that a good old DIY project can help to pass the hours (and days), so consider stocking up on essential items you'll need, such as paint, wallpaper, or building supplies.

'DIY projects are a great way to spend your self-isolation time, especially if you are planning to put your property on the market soon,' explains Nicola Schutrups, Managing Director of The Mortgage Hut (<https://www.themortgagehut.co.uk/>).

Research proves that well-designed homes are more appealing to potential buyers and significantly raise the overall impression of a property. However, Nicola warns that going overboard on the decor can have the opposite effect.

'Taking a look at current trends is a great way to gain inspiration for your DIY makeover, but remember that every prospective buyer is different so try to stick with light, neutral tones which you can jazz up with brighter or contrasting accessories.'

Prepare for a mental detox

Retreating from the hustle and bustle of daily life is the perfect opportunity to give yourself a mental detox. Switch off from all your technology and start journaling, after all, who doesn't like a good notebook? If you're a beginner, you could try Notebook Mentor's 'Getting to know me better' (<https://www.notebookmentor.com/product/getting-to-know-me-better/>) journal.

'The concept of journaling is growing – the art of reflecting and writing in your notebook. This can be as simple as writing an idea down that's been buzzing in your head or you might journal your career or life story,' explains Elisa Nardi, founder of Notebook Mentor.

'Getting stuff out of your head and on to paper is a form of reflective writing. By helping you make the most of opportunities, or deal with challenges that might otherwise diminish or impede you, you can self-develop to find happiness, improve self-awareness, and build better workplace relationships.'

Check out local events and excursions

Having to cancel a holiday or day trips due to the dreaded 'ping' is always going to be

disappointing, but it's worth keeping an eye on events or getaways which are close to home and don't require advanced booking. This will give you something to look forward to even if you do have to cancel your existing plans.

Holiday parks like Belle Aire (<https://hemsbybelleaire.co.uk/>) in Hemsby, Norfolk, are a stone's throw from the beach and have a packed summer schedule of live events, markets and craft fairs taking place, none of which require advanced booking and are open to all. This means that as soon as you have the green light to leave home, you can hop in the car, set off and enjoy the remainder of the summer!