

Guide to being Furloughed

Do what feels right for you

It is important to remember that this is a unique set of circumstances. There is no right way to deal with everything that is going on. Whilst it seems like everywhere you are encouraged to make the most of being furloughed by being productive or creative, learning a new language or skill, you may benefit from using this time to recharge and reflect - you should do what feels right for you.

Invest in you

However if you do want to use your furlough leave to do things you would not usually do there are many options available to you. This can be spent on personal development, or even just a time to rediscover yourself. A couple of ideas:

- Learn a new creative skill on Skillshare;
- Understand how you think by taking personality quizzes such as <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>
- Seek self-improvement resources such as The School of Life;
- The government has this week announced its free platform where people can learn new skills to boost their careers: <https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

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Explore from your sofa

You might want to spend this time learning something new. Perhaps you want to pick up a language or explore topics you've never had the chance to look into before. There are many resources online now to help you:

- Future learn offer hundreds free of online courses from top universities and specialist organisations
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>;
- TED Talks and Yale's free course on The Science of Wellbeing.
- Sign up to free trials of online publications, such as The Economist and the Harvard Business Review.
- You can even virtually visit a zoo, explore the British Museum or go to the National Theatre every Thursday.
- You can also find ways to keep your mind and body active. This is a good time to attempt your 1000 piece puzzle, or learn a new craft.
- You can stay active by gardening, online workout classes, and running - use the Strava app to follow and support friends who are also exercising at this time.

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Looking after yourself

Your mind

- It is very normal to feel anxious or worried during this time. There are many ways you can try to alleviate these feelings.
- You can practice meditation by using Headspace, Calm, or free YouTube tutorials.
- If you need a bit of a healthy distraction, spending time listening to upbeat podcasts and soothing music can bring you some tranquillity. A few recommendations include Ferne Cotton's Happy Place, Mentally Yours, and Feel Better, Live More.
- Focusing on breathing exercises and doing yoga can also bring a sense of calm.
- Try to limit the amount of news you are exposing yourself to just once a day. It is easy to feel bombarded and concerned by the constant news updates, give yourself some space from this will help you live more presently.
- Social-distancing does not have to mean being alone. Get creative with your friends and family to maintain your social network. Ideas such as dinner parties, bake offs, and game nights can all take place virtually.

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Your body

It is important to make sure you are getting enough sleep. The best way to do this is by reducing your exposure to blue light by avoiding your phone and laptop for at least an hour before bed. You could also try using lavender oils and sleep sprays, and keeping a routine for your sleep cycle.

Although your time outside is currently limited, try to keep up to 10,000 steps a day, and you can still exercise at home. Fitness apps, such as Fiit, let you stream hundreds of home workouts.

Financial wellbeing

Uncertainty about our financial situations is entirely natural. If you are worried about your finances you may find the following helpful:

- The Money Advice Service has guidance on coronavirus. Allowing to check your entitlement, as well as see tips on how to adapt to a new budget. You may be able to receive a mortgage repayment holiday, and postpone some bills by contacting providers.
- Martin Lewis's Money Saving Expert also provides helpful information on how to manage your finances in this unprecedented time.
- If you feel you are struggling, you can reach out to Citizens Advice, speak to a money guidance expert from Money Advice Service, or contact Samaritans.

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Keeping in touch and connecting with your colleagues

Even though you are not working, you may find it helpful to keep in touch with your colleagues. Not only will this help you keep on top of what is going on at work, but also maintain your social network. Set up a virtual coffee or beer catch up, perhaps even organise a group activity.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

One final reminder, TXF's EAP remains available to you during this time and offers professional advice and telephone counselling. This is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The programme is independent, confidential and free to use. TXF will not receive any individual feedback on usage. The free 24 hour confidential helpline number is 0800 030 5182.

These are just some tips to help you get through this period. If you have any questions about what the next steps are, need clarity, please do not hesitate to contact your line manager or Zoe. We would also love to hear any ideas you may have in terms of staying in touch during this time, or any challenges we may set the company.