

The Art and Science of Practicing “Social (Physical) Distancing”: Dedicated to the Extroverts Among Us & Written by Introverts

Dr. Becky S. Bennett & Dr. Connie Jo Smith, Distance and Online Learning Specialists

So, you don't know how, or why, to practice “Social Distancing”? Let's reframe it and call it what it is – Physical Distancing. Because let's be honest, the introverts can fill you in on what we've known for a while and that is, you can be SOCIAL at a distance!

Need some quick guidance? Think of an introverted friend, and give them a call, text them, or videoconference with them (if they will accept your “I'm going crazy here!” request), and ask them what they do all day. Hey, think up a list of questions even before you reach out, because the introverts among us appreciate succinctness and efficiency!!

But seriously folks, what are the requirements for Social (Physical) Distancing? Here's the definition provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: **“Social distancing means remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.”**

But why, oh why you ask. Congregations of people and crowded settings increase the speed and risk of spreading the virus, and of contracting the virus. **Practicing Social (Physical) Distancing will help to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.** Social (Physical) Distancing is vitally important for lowering the life-threatening risk to older folks, and those with lower immunity in our society, as well as for ourselves and our friends/families. It is critically important for our healthcare systems and professionals who are going to be overrun and unable to help if we cannot slow the spread. Another important factor as we each consider practicing social (physical) distancing is that the seemingly healthy among us can be “carriers” without symptoms. Extroverts, HEAR OUR CRY, “Please err on the side of caution. **Don't** gather out there just because you're bored. **Do** gather online!” **Give this virus the cold shoulder!**

How about some practical guidelines and suggested activities? When trying things online, please remember, it's good to scan for viruses before downloading any program, and to check out the listed ratings and problems with apps before you download, when practical to do so. We don't want your devices to catch any nasty bugs either!

1. Your “peeps” are still out there. Reach out to them. “Phone a friend” is appropriate advice here! But, you can also, video-conference call using [Facebook Messenger](#), FaceTime ([click here for versions](#) or [here for Apple support](#)), [Skype](#), [Zoom](#), and [many others](#). Been too afraid to try out these services? Now is the time to “Learn, Baby Learn”.
2. There are free online resources out there to help you learn the services mentioned above, new software programs and apps, as well as many to increase your skills and help you pick up new [hobbies](#) (something for kids and adults too)! Check out this

[Forbes online article](#) of top websites and [this site](#) for free online education. So you see, if you can dream it, it's probably out there online. Think of some keywords and do an online search, you've got the time!

3. Home with the kids and pets. Get into some [fun activities](#). Again, there are numerous resources to help you maximize your time together in a fun and educational way, so search for them online. Encourage your local radio and TV outlets to broadcast helpful stay-at-home resources and suggested stay-at-home activities for those without Internet access.
4. Make your TV, Netflix, or other streaming video service, and live streaming TV your virtual friends. Watch some old classics for a change in pace. You can watch online while on your phone with your real BFF if you need to!
5. Bring out an old gaming console, "fire up" some board games, or a card game.
6. There are hundreds(?) thousands(?) of [free](#) online games, and apps you can download to your iPad, phone, computer, or other device. Look at [Crazy Games](#) for just a few. Extroverts (or anyone really) you can "unite" through multi-player games! These can include both new, highly realistic online games, as well as old favorites like Checkers, Chess, and Rummy online with friends next door, or family many miles away! Take a look at [SkillsGamesBoard.com](#). You might even make some new friends online!
7. Start an indoor vegetable, herb, or flower garden. Share your ideas, ask related questions, or seek advice about your new or old hobbies online with friends and family members, near and far. Check out Pinterest and Facebook for groups related to your interests.
8. Work crossword, jigsaw, or mind stretching puzzles. Get 'em online or buy the real thing (and have it delivered to your door). Try the "Magic Puzzles" app, and see how fun it is to work or create free jigsaw puzzles on your device.
9. Speaking of stretching. Get up and move to ward off boredom, emotional distress, and to relieve the isolation. Do yoga ([Gentle Chair Yoga](#)) or workout while videoconferencing with someone else, or with a video for direction. Take a drive in the country and wave at people who are out (others are lonely too). Ride your bike, walk, or go hiking outside, but move. Moving, not brooding, is one of the best ways to minimize your anxiety and mental/emotional distress.
10. Take a virtual tour of a local, regional, or national zoo, museum, aquarium, etc. These folks are presenting some extraordinary online opportunities. Search online, watch the news, and check Facebook for information and links to visit art and folks/fish/animals from your home. [Click here](#) for a list of places you can go!
11. Organize your photos online. You don't want to lose them, you know you need to, and you can easily share them with whomever you want. Check out [Tom's Guide](#) for photo storage and sharing resources.
12. Pinterest and YouTube can be addictive, as learning tools, hobby habits, and for the DIY enthusiast – [Pinterest.com](#) and [YouTube.com](#).
13. ...and speaking of fixing it, why not take time to do a little home repair and/or upgrade if you have the skill, can learn them online, or you can videoconference with a friend who can walk you through it? Save a buck along the way!
14. It's old school, but it warms our "introvert" hearts to read a book, listen to music, and hug our pets! Try out ["BookBub"](#) for free (or cheap) Ebook deals. [Pandora](#) and

[iHeartRadio](#) are two of the online music streaming services that offer free options for listeners. Create a music playlist or your own music “station”, develop an electronic list of online games and activities you find fun and stimulating, start a virtual book club, set up an online recipe swap meet (and then get cookin’), start a collection of funny pics of you, your kids, pets, and jokes, and by all means, share these things with your “peeps”!

15. Look in your pantry and pull out your recipes; try old recipes with new ingredients, and share your results, or just gather new recipes that use these ingredients (we like [Allrecipes.com](#)) as one online example.
16. How about an online blog, message board, or other online means to provide communication between you and those important to you at a distance. These options may provide you with a way to journal about your experience, stay in touch with the ones you need to (personally and professionally), and support safe information sharing. Check out this list of “[9 Best Free Blogging Sites...](#)”
17. Next up... a “plug” for home-delivery, telemedicine, pickup, and drive-thru services. These are all wonderful services to employ and help you practice the art and science of physical distancing for health. Let’s remember to give BIG OLD THANKS to those people who are on the front lines, using whatever methods and means necessary to ensure the health and safety of all.
18. Working from home can be both challenging and rewarding. Using some of the video-conferencing or distance communications sources already mentioned, you may be able to engage with work colleagues, patients, and customers efficiently and fully. You can connect in real-time for online conversations, idea-sharing, decision-making, or just a friendly chat. Do some front-end planning before any videoconference time, and if you’re working with business colleagues, send out an outline, with connection information well in advance of the virtual meeting! In the meantime, consider the work you do each day. As you transition to working at home, [check out this article](#), and begin by thinking about the things at work that you do in person. Consider how you might complete the same tasks online. For many extroverts, going in to work is socially satisfying, but we encourage you to try, along with us, to ENGAGE online, by phone, and via the drive-thru as much as possible. **BTW, Alexa, Siri, Google, Bixby, and other virtual assistants are always there to help and talk to you... if you can remember their names and proper form of address!!!**

Check out this “Scrubs” TV show message:

<https://www.today.com/popculture/why-social-distancing-so-important-viral-scrubs-clip-will-explain-t176106>