

Activities for the Family While Staying at Home

by Dr. Michael Nowazek

The whole family having to stay at home is a big change for most people. I wanted to share a few ideas that my wife and I have implemented to try to maintain a stable and as-near-to normal routine as possible for our family.

We're focusing on [maintaining a routine](#) for our family. That's important because stress is defined as change, whether good or bad, and a change from your routine can add stress.

Our four kids have been doing their school work at home, of course. That's not as big a change for us as it is for some families because we used to home-school the kids, so it's more like going back to a former routine that we were used to.

We keep to a regular school day/workday schedule as much as possible. We get up at the usual time, bathe, have breakfast and then get the kids doing their school work, usually around 9:00. The school work continues until 3:00 or so. We eat our meals at the usual times and take breaks every half hour or every hour.

The kids work on normal school activities. The teachers from the schools that our kids go to have been fantastic! They've been getting assignments to the kids, getting projects to them, and really been doing everything they can to keep them going through their schooling. The teachers have been doing an amazing job, especially given their significantly reduced hours.

The kids work on math, language, history, reading, and they work on a self-project as well. They're working on Kumon math, which we've done for a long time. It's a great system to help children understand math and to continue with their math skills.

At the end of the school/work activities, we're having everyone in our family spend some time reading. We each read a book; that's really helpful for de-stressing.

After that, we each get some time to work on a project or a hobby. If the kids want to work on a school project, that's great; if they want to work on a different project, one that maybe they've always wanted to do but didn't have time for before, that's fine too.

Then we have some family time. We've been playing board games and we've set up a jigsaw puzzle. The puzzle is set up so that everybody can work on it at any time. If the kids want a break from school work, they can work on the jigsaw puzzle (and if my wife or I want a break from work, we can go work on the puzzle).

Then we do some physical activity. We get them outside, go for a walk. We do not go to play parks or areas like that, and we certainly maintain a physical distance from anyone else, but it's important to get outside, get some fresh air, and get some exercise.

After our period of physical activity, we get into some board games.

We do let the kids have some electronics time, but we're careful about the amount of time they can spend on electronic devices. We generally limit it to an hour at most. We want to minimize the amount of time on the electronics and have their days as productive as possible.

In the evening, we have a family movie night. Everyone gets a chance to choose a movie they'd like to see and that everyone will enjoy. We're sticking with movies that are family-friendly, nothing violent

or apocalyptic. The family movie nights are a really nice bonding time and a way for us all to de-stress.

Then before bed, we like to have everyone do some more reading. The reading material should be light and enjoyable such as an adventure or a comedy. Reading really helps to relax the mind and to de-stress, and that helps with sleep. Getting a good amount of quality sleep is always [important](#), and especially so during stressful times.

The whole idea has been to do the best we can to maintain as normal a routine as possible, keep everyone productive and healthy. I hope this information is something you can use in your household.

Even though our clinic is temporarily closed to help to flatten the coronavirus contagion curve, our doctors are still virtually available to patients via video and telephone. We are available to all of our patients with a virtual follow-up consultation so your care continues with little or no interruption. You can [book online](#) or call the office at (780) 485-9468.

