

Your guide to being furloughed

In March the government announced the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#). The main goal of the scheme is to protect the jobs and protect the salaries of team members who can not be provided with work during this period.

The government has agreed to reimburse 80% of each eligible team member's salary - this is capped at £2500 per month. The scheme is currently running until the end of June, with possibility for extension.

During furlough leave, you won't be able to carry out any work, however you will still be entitled to all your statutory rights such as sick pay, holiday entitlement, maternity and paternity, any redundancy payments and all rights associated with any formal disciplinary and grievance action.

Keeping in touch and connecting with your colleagues

Even though you aren't 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 lunch date, perhaps even organise a group activity. If you have any questions about what the next steps are, need clarity, or if you have any suggestions of things that can be done to maintain morale, let your Team Lead know.

I have all this time... what do I do with it?

1.

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, so be kind to yourself! Where some may feel that they can use this time to be super productive or creative, others may benefit from using this time to recharge and reflect - you should do what feels right for you.



2.

Be virtually social

Being connected is key! Reaching out and staying in contact with your loved ones is vital to our overall wellbeing. Thankfully, modern technology has made this quite easy with social media or tools such as FaceTime or Zoom. Or you can go old-school by sending letters and cards - or even care packages!

Invest in you

You may want to use your furlough leave to do things you wouldn't usually do. Now that you have the time, this can be spent on personal development, or even just a time to rediscover yourself. There are some great ways to kickstart that process. For example, you may want to learn a new creative skill on [Skillshare](#), understand how you think by taking personality quizzes such as the [Myers-Briggs Personality Test](#), or seek self-improvement resources such as [The School of Life](#).

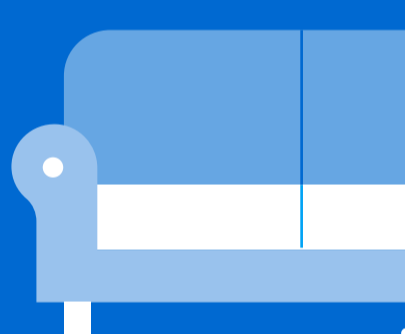
3.

Explore (from your sofa)

You might want to spend this time learning something new. Perhaps you want to pick up that language you've always been fascinated with or explore topics you've never had the chance to look into before. Online you can find a plethora of free resources to help you, such as: [Future Learn](#) for short educational courses, [TED Talks](#) and [Yale's free course on The Science of Wellbeing](#). A great way of keeping informed is by signing up to free trials of online publications, such as [The Economist](#) and the [Harvard Business Review](#).

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. You can even virtually [visit a zoo](#), explore the [British Museum](#) or go to the [National Theatre every Thursday](#).

4.



Looking after yourself

It is normal to experience peaks and troughs whilst going through this surreal experience. If you are feeling down or anxious throughout your furlough leave, there are many things you can do to help alleviate some of that stress.

1.

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 tranquility. 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.



2.

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.

It is also ok to limit the news you are exposing yourself to - you may feel bombarded by the constant news updates, and giving yourself some space from this will help you live more presently. Perhaps, limit your news intake to just once a day.



Although your time outside is limited, you can still exercise at home. Fitness apps, such as [Fitit](#), let you stream hundreds of home workouts. YouTube also offers many free home workout videos for all abilities.

Social-distancing doesn't have to mean being alone. By getting creative with your friends and family you can still have at-home spa days, dinner parties, pet parties, bake offs, and game nights, as these can all take place virtually.

3.

Financial wellbeing

Uncertainty about our financial situations has come along hand-in-hand with the coronavirus. If you are worried about your finances, you can have a look at the [Money Advice Service](#) with their guidance on coronavirus. You'll be able 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](#).