



# AVATAR AT HOME

A COVID-19 Toolkit



# TEAM AVATAR PRESENTS:

## Bringing Balance To Your World In A Pandemic

Each Avatar must learn to **balance all four elements**, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each and what the elements contribute; this same principle can be applied to health. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, taking extra care to maintain this balance is even more important! We reached out to the Gaang for their tips on staying healthy during social distancing.

First of all, there's some important safety guidelines we ALL need to follow. Listen up:



- 1 Regularly wash your hands with soap and water! 20 seconds, people.
- 2 Stay home if you are able, especially if you are sick.
- 3 Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth! HANDS. OFF. THE FACE!
- 4 Maintain a six foot distance from people in public spaces.
- 5 Avoid crowds of people when possible.
- 6 Wear a mask when in public! Masks protect people around you in case you're a carrier without knowing it.
- 7 Sneeze and cough into your elbow. No one wants that gunk.
- 8 Seek medical help if you are experiencing a fever, difficulty breathing, and coughing.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH WITH SOKKA



**T**raining to take on the Fire Nation involves a lot of physical and mental work. As a non-bending fighter, I take physical health very seriously, and so does the rest of the Gaang! Every bender knows that regular exercise is an important part of cultivating balance. The four bending styles are actually modeled after real-world martial arts: waterbending is modeled after Tai Chi, Earthbending after Hung Gar, Firebending after Northern Shaolin, and Airbending after Ba Gua. Aang spends a lot of time and effort to take care of his body while learning the four elements. Katara spends time every day practicing her waterbending skills and Zuko trains diligently with Uncle Iroh to learn firebending. Personally, I try to get in at least 20 minutes of boomerang and cardio activity every day. I might not be a bender, but that doesn't mean I can't keep up!

While you may not have access to your usual bending and training studios, you can still keep up a regular exercise routine indoors. There are tons of free online fitness classes in exercises like yoga, strength training, aerobics, cardio, and more! There's also tons of apps that offer personalized workouts and can track your progress. Here are some free exercise resources:

- **Yoga With Adriene** - Free yoga classes for every level and goal.
- **100 Days** - John Green and Chris Waters go on a journey to improve their health in 100 days.
- **FitOn app** - Lots of free classes in a variety of exercises with celebrity trainers. *Queer Eye's* Jonathan Van Ness teaches yoga classes here!
- **Zombies, Run! App** - A running app with a storytelling component. The developers also created a **5K trainer** version and a **walking app**!
- **JaxBlade** - A personal trainer who analyzes fitness routines of pop culture characters and teaches pop culture themed workouts.
- **The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability** (NCHPAD)- a non-profit that provides accessible exercise and health resources for disabled people.
- **YMCA 360** - An online hub for free exercise classes.

If you don't have time for the CDC recommended 20-30 minutes of daily exercise, that's okay! Sometimes we're on the road- er, air- so long, we don't have as much time or space to exercise as we'd like. (You try doing yoga on the back of a flying air buffalo. Not easy, let me tell ya!) If you don't have time for a full workout, you can get the benefits of physical exercise from even just a few minutes of moderate to vigorous activity. **Find out more here.**

In addition to training, we try to eat a balanced meal of fruit, vegetables, grains, and proteins from the local market of each town we visit. Each of us have very different diets, but everyone in Gaang does their best to eat food that helps us take on the day (with the occasional treat of an egg custard tart, of course!).

# MENTAL HEALTH WITH KATARA



**M**ental health is just as important as physical health. When I helped free Aang from the ice, he had no idea 100 years had passed and it was difficult for him to cope with that amount of change as well as the loss of his people. When my mother died and the men of my tribe went away to war, Sokka and I also had to process a lot of change and loss. While these were difficult situations to handle, Aang, Sokka and I are lucky to have a lot of support from each other to help us through difficult times.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, it can feel like the entire world has changed almost overnight. Many people around the world are having to cope with massive changes during a frankly traumatizing time. Taking care of our mental health is more important now than ever, especially for those with preexisting mental health conditions which can be extra tough in isolation. Here are a few ways you can take care of your mind while you practice social distancing at home.

- 1 Reach out to family and/or friends via online video-chatting or social media for support. If you don't have access to the internet, consider calling, texting, or sending a loved one a good-old-fashion letter in the mail (which can **support the USPS** in the process!)
- 2 See a licensed mental health professional if you're struggling. Many therapists and psychiatrists are offering support to clients via telehealth and phone sessions.
- 3 Practice self-care in whatever way recharges you. That could be doing an activity you love, taking a break during your day to recharge, keeping your space clean and tidy, or indulging in an at-home spa day. Whatever shows your mind and body some love.
- 4 Take regular breaks from news and social media. While the internet is a great way for keeping in contact with friends and it's important to stay informed, it can get exhausting fast. Make sure to take time away from news and social media to give your mind a rest.
- 5 Utilize community resources and reach out to others for help when you need it. You can also find a lot of resources in this very toolkit!

## Mental Health Resources During COVID-19

- **Psychology Today** is a great resource for finding a mental health professional online.
- **Talkspace** and **BetterHelp** may be affordable virtual therapy options if you don't have insurance or can't find a mental health professional in network with your insurance.
- The Anxiety and Depression Association of America's "**Managing COVID-19 Anxiety**" Resource Page.
- **Headspace**, a comprehensive meditation app, is offering free memberships to healthcare professionals and those experiencing unemployment. They also offer a free section of their app called "Weathering The Storm" for managing COVID-19 related stress and anxiety.
- **Distress Monday** has a variety of resources and weekly suggestions for managing stress and anxiety. I suggest their **squared breathing exercise, de-stress coloring pages**, and **meditations**.
- Amber Rae put together this **30 day feelings journaling challenge**. Journaling can be a great outlet for stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues!
- The World Health Organization's **recommendations** for handling pandemic stress.



## Uncle Iroh's Stress-Reducing Teas

We reached out to The Jasmine Dragon for stress-reducing tea recommendations and here's what they suggested!

**Chamomile Tea:** A classic herbal tea that is known to help with sleep and reduce stress. Iroh recommends enjoying this relaxing drink with a dash of honey and a slice of lemon. This is also a great tea for soothing sore throats or a mild cough.

**Jasmine Tea:** This calming, aromatic green tea blend is scented with jasmine flowers and has stress-reducing properties. The floral scent and grassy finish make this a great tea to unwind with in the afternoon. Green tea does have some caffeine, though, so try not to drink it too soon before bedtime.

**Ginger Tea:** This herb helps with the digestive system, is a natural anti-inflammatory, muscle relaxer, and can help settle the stomach. It's warm, spicy flavor is a great tea to unwind with after battling the Fire nation.

**Matcha Tea:** While matcha has a lot of caffeine (3X the amount of regular green tea) its brewing method of powdered leaves mixed into water gives it 3X the antioxidants. Matcha is a great choice for a calm focus throughout the day and won't cause you to crash later.

**Valerian Root:** When searching for a tea for bedtime, look for valerian root which is a natural sedative. Valerian root can be quite strong and often does not mix well with SSRI medication, though, so try a weaker brew first to see how your body reacts before brewing a full cup.

**Rooibos Tea or Red Tea:** Rooibos is an herbal tea made from the South African bush of the same name. It has no caffeine so it makes the perfect afternoon or evening beverage and is also known to aid respiratory health.



# SPIRITUAL HEALTH WITH AANG



**W**hen I woke up after a hundred years in the ice, I no longer had the spiritual guidance of the monks who raised me. It was hard not being able to connect with my community, and it's still hard sometimes. However, I was still able to continue my spiritual practices and beliefs during my travels across the globe. Even now I'm still able to practice these beliefs in quarantine!

Spiritual wellness can be just as important as physical and mental health. Unfortunately, right now many people feel spiritually isolated because their places of worship are closed. While you may not be able to gather with people in a place of worship during social distancing, there are many spiritual resources available online.

## Spiritual Resources During COVID-19

- **Covid-19 – Practice Resources & Teachings** via Sravasti Abbey
- **Joint Statement from the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 Regarding a Phased Reopening of Mosques across United States**
- **Support During COVID-19 Emergency** via The Muslim American Society-Social Services Foundation
- **COVID-19 Resources for Congregations** via The Union for Reform Judaism
- **Prayer Amid Pandemic: Words of Comfort for the COVID-19 Crisis** via The Union for Reform Judaism
- **Caring for Self and Others in Times of Trouble: Some Spiritual Tools** and Tips via Harvard Divinity School
- **Hands-Free Sacred Greetings** via the Interfaith Council of USC
- **COVID Grief Network for Young Adults (20's and 30's)** via COVID Grief Network
- **COVID-19 Response and Resources** via The Sikh Coalition
- **COVID-19 Resources** via Institute for Social Policy and Understanding
- **How Hindu spiritual practices can help manage your COVID-19 anxiety** via Hindu American Foundation

## A Meditation with the Avatar

Meditation and prayer are an important part of many spiritual practices. Whenever I need to connect with the spirit world or a past self, I enter into a meditative state. Meditation isn't just a spiritual practice, though. It's also great for reducing stress and anxiety. Here's a guided meditation you can use anywhere to foster a little spiritual and/or mental clarity.

- 1 Start by sitting in a comfortable position either on the floor or a chair. You may decide to hold your hands out in prayer or keep them rested in your lap.
- 2 With your eyes open, take a few deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- 3 Close your eyes and focus on your breath. It may help to count your breaths, too; 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale and so on.
- 4 If you wish to say or think a prayer, now is a good time to do so. Otherwise, give your body a full scan, noticing how your body feels without judgement or need to change. Continue to focus on your breathing.
- 5 If you notice intrusive or unwanted thoughts, simply notice them and then return your attention to your breath or prayer.
- 6 You may sit in this meditative state for as long as you want. When you're ready to come out of it, do so slowly. Notice the noises around you. Focus your attention on the sensation of your body against the floor or chair. Open your eyes when you are ready. You may also choose to use this time to thank the person or deity you prayed to and close out your prayer.





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## Disability Resources:

- **A Self Advocate's Guide to COVID-19** by Green Mountain Self-Advocates
- **"What You Need to Know About COVID-19"** video by The Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- **The International Disability Alliance's** resources and action campaigns page.
- **The Disability's Rights Fund** on COVID-19
- **Half-As\*ed Disabled Prepper Tips for Preparing for a Coronavirus Quarantine** by Leah Piepzn-Samarasinha

## Resources for Healthcare Workers:

- **Managing Healthcare Workers' Coronavirus-related Stress** by the National Center for PTSD
- **Resources for mental health professionals** by SocialWork.Career

## Resources for Parents:

- **Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus Crisis** by the Child Mind Institute
- **Helping Children Cope with Emergencies** by the Center for Disease Control
- **How to Talk to Your Anxious Child/Teen About Coronavirus** by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America
- **Cooking With Kids of Different Ages** by Unlock Food
- **Our Favorite Summer Recipes for Kids ... Fun Cooking Activities for Even the Littlest Chefs!** by Two Healthy Chefs

## Mutual Aid:

- Find a mutual aid group in your area through the **Mutual Aid Hub**.
- Alexandria Ocasio Cortez' **Mutual Aid guide**

This resource was created by the Harry Potter Alliance, a 501c3 nonprofit that turns fans into heroes. Help support our work [here](#).

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