



**MARSTON'S**

Staying connected

# Introduction

It's really important at times like these that we all put more effort into staying connected and communicate regularly.

By its very nature self-isolating can be lonely, frustrating and a bit depressing, so keeping in touch, both at work and in your personal life, will really help to lift your spirits.

There are so many ways now of having virtual catchups, we're almost spoilt for choice! We've captured some of the ways you can do keep in contact while still social distancing. Even if you're an avid texter or a regular FaceTimer, why not try using a new way of reaching out and connecting with your teammates, friends, family or community?

Checkout this guide for some ideas and top tips on how to stay connected.



Keeping in touch at work

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# Why?

- While working remotely comes with a whole host of personal benefits (e.g., wearing PJs or loungewear - check!), when faced with working from home for a long period of time, it can be hard to handle.
- When working from home, communication is paramount. You may need to keep your manager or team updated, you may need to work with someone on a project or you might just want to talk through an idea to get other views.



# How?

## Quick check-ins or questions:

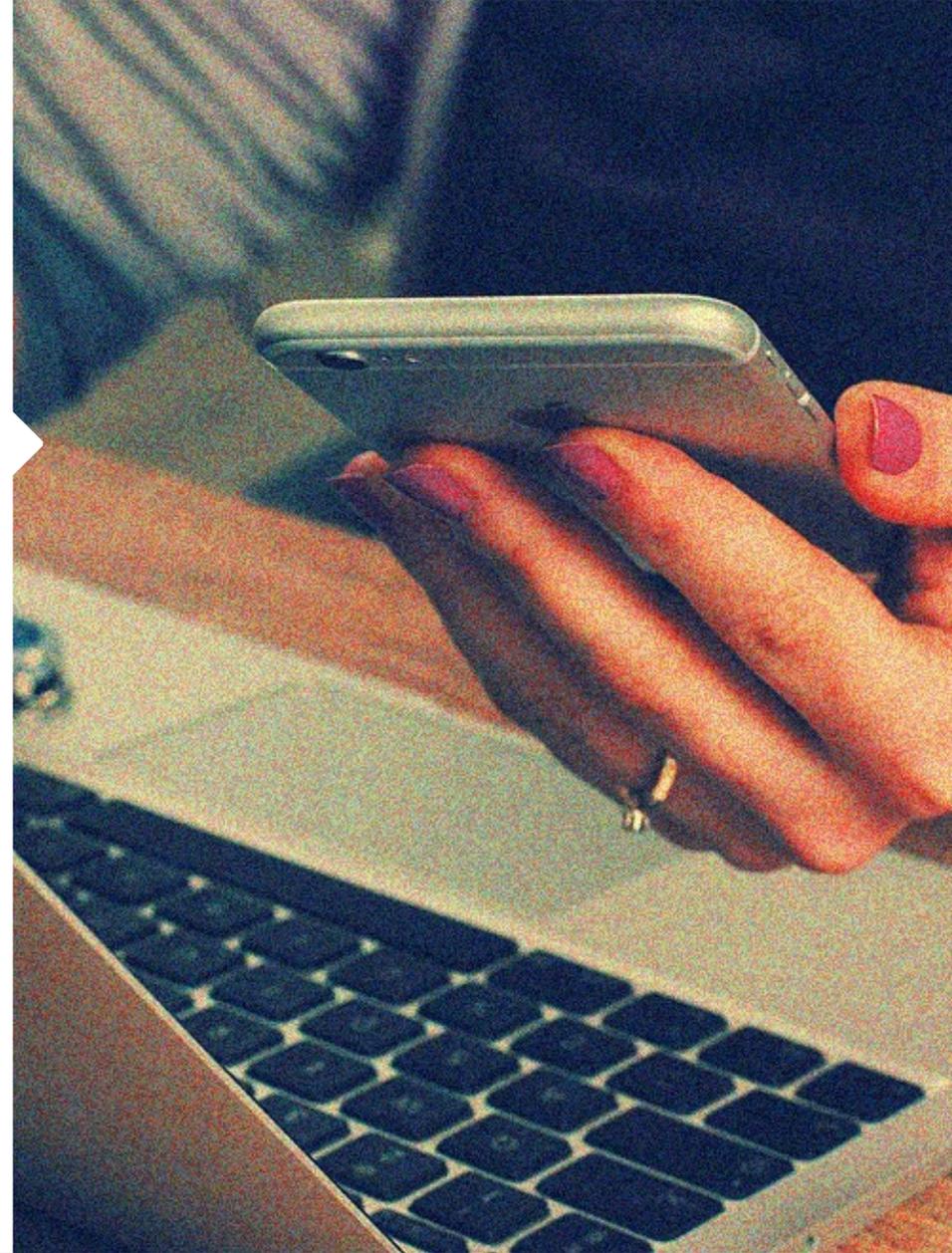
- Why not use text message, WhatsApp, Skype instant messaging, or the chat function on Microsoft Teams if you've got it?
- Don't forget to pick up the phone and have a quick chat. Sometimes it's the easiest and fastest way to clarify something.
- Try not to use email for quick check-ins – it'll just clog up the inbox and can easily be missed.

## In-depth conversations or virtual meetings:

- This is where communication apps really come into their own! You can use Skype, Teams or Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) for multi-people conferencing.
- By using the apps above, you can do audio or video conferencing, share your screen or content, and use a whiteboard, as part of the virtual meeting.
- It's good to be able to see the people on the call, as well as hear them, especially if it's going to be a long session. Plus, it helps with your personal wellbeing too.

# Keeping in the know

- To keep up to date with the latest information and news, regularly check your emails. We'll be sending everything out via Marston's Mail to your work email account if you've got one, or your personal email account if you've submitted it to HR.
- If you've not updated your contact details with HR, send your name, pub / location name, payroll number, tel no, email address, and postal address to [keepingintouch@marstons.co.uk](mailto:keepingintouch@marstons.co.uk)
- Follow us on social media. We've been a bit quiet on those recently, but we'll be posting new content soon.
  - ['We are Marston's' on Facebook](#)
  - ['Marston's Snaps' on Instagram](#)
- Keep an eye on any work-related, closed social media or messaging groups you're part of, from WhatsApp to Facebook, it's a good way to see what's going on and to reach out to the people in your team.
- Go to Marston's News – [www.news.marstons.co.uk](http://www.news.marstons.co.uk) – to find the latest Q&As documents and employee guides.



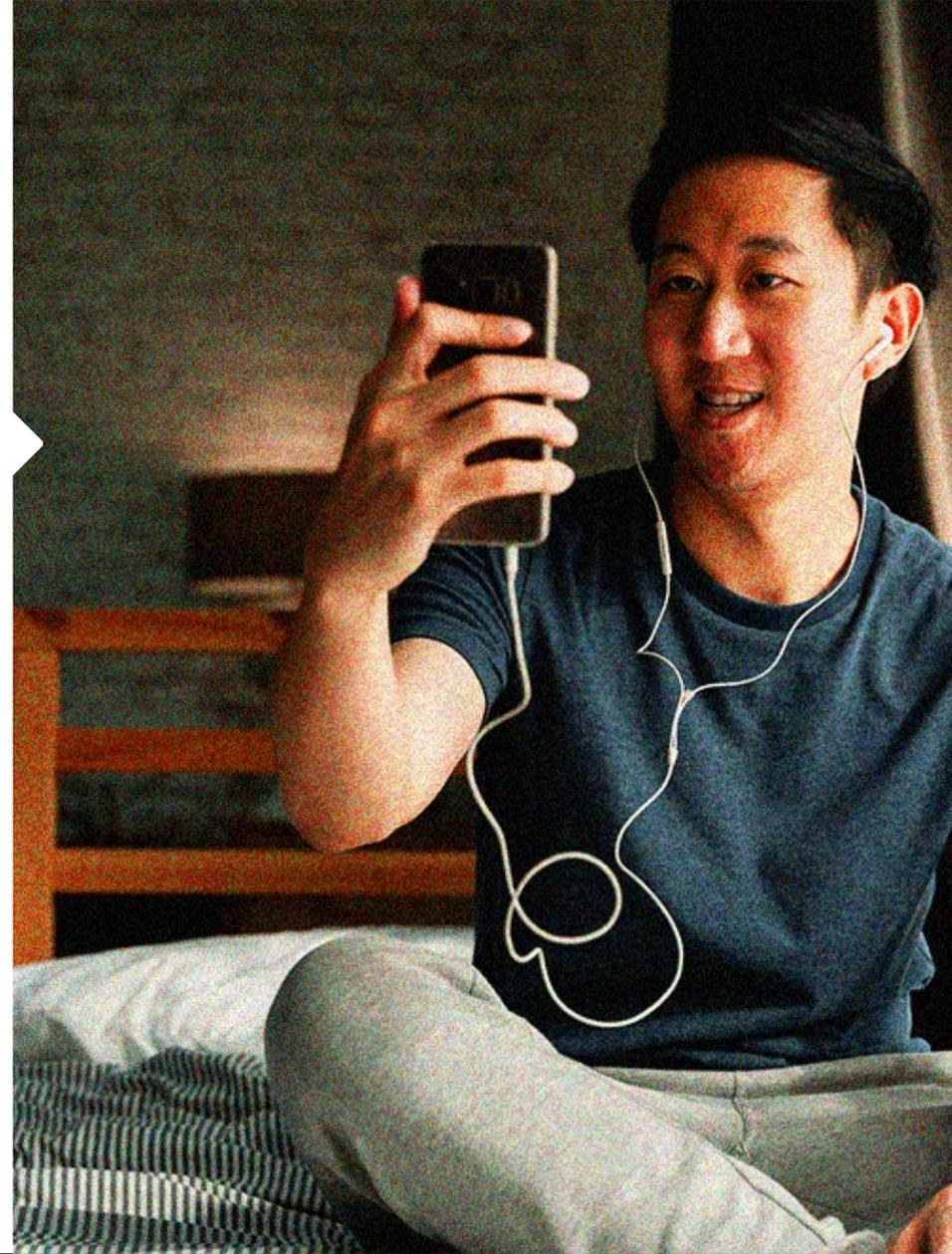
Keeping in touch with  
friends and family

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# Keeping in touch with friends and family

- It's important at times like these that you reach out to friends and family. We'll all be anxious about how they're coping and wanting to have a bit of down time.
- During times like these, knowing you're not alone and seeking comfort and reassurance from others, especially those who may be in similar situations to our own, helps to significantly lower anxiety levels. It helps us to feel more connected, safe, and understood.



# How?

## Quick updates and check-ins:

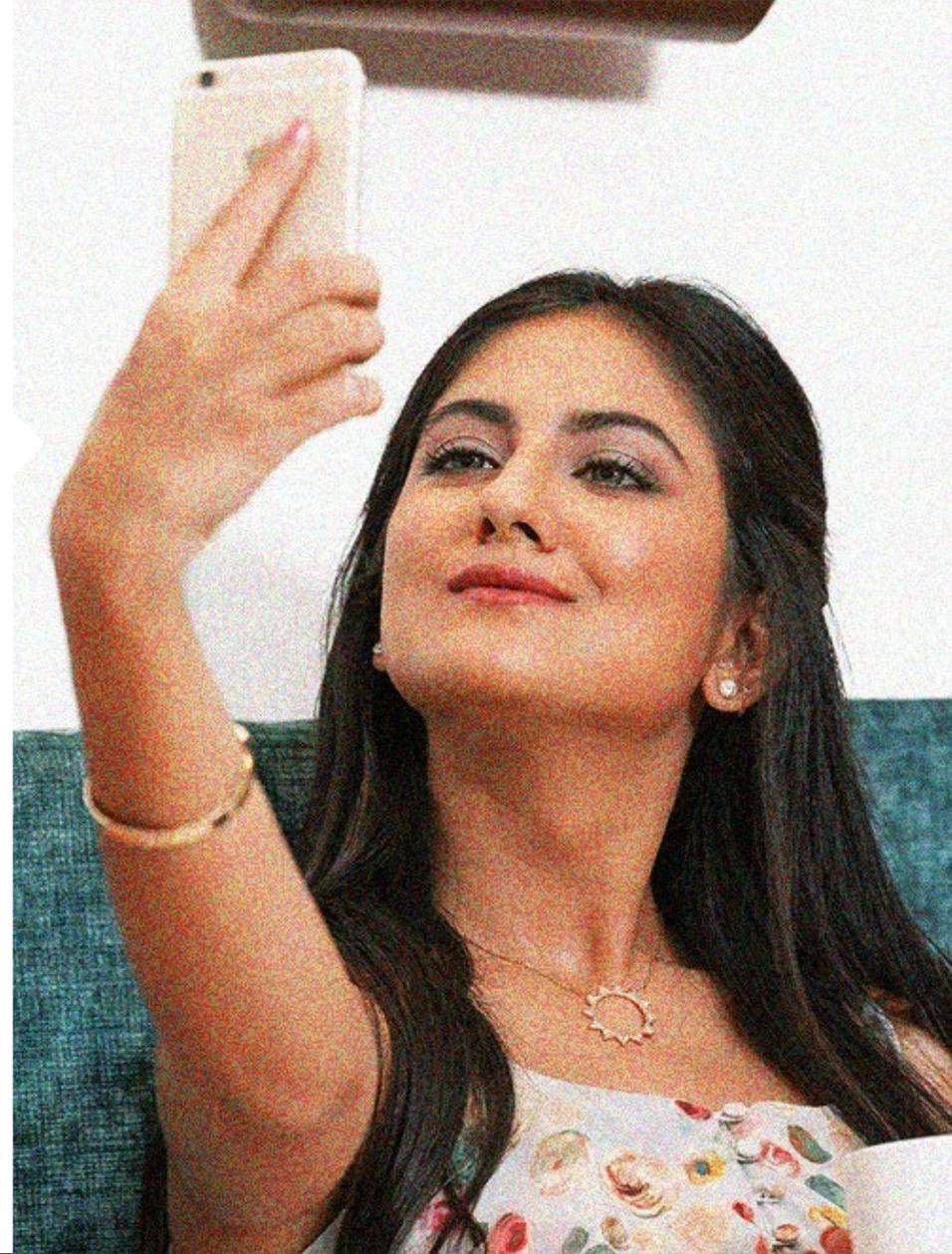
- Drop someone a quick message, photo, meme or update about your day, via text, WhatsApp, or Messenger, to stay in touch and so they know you're thinking of them. Don't forget to ask them to do the same!
- Sometimes only a quick 5 min phone call will do. If you're walking the dog, waiting to shop or just having a cuppa, why not multi-task and give a friend a call?

## A proper chat and catch-up:

- Video chat is a great way to stay in contact with someone who you'd usually meet with, because you get to see the facial expressions and hear the tone of voice, making more of an emotional connection.
- You can do this on a number of free apps and devices...
  - If you're on the go, a phone call is your best bet. You can multi-task at the same time.
  - Use FaceTime (if you've got an Apple device), Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>), or Houseparty (<https://www.houseparty.com/>) for multi-people video calls. Zoom and Houseparty have the added benefit of games you can play while you're chatting too.

# Ensuring a FOMO-free zone

- When you've got a spare 5 mins, why not check out what your friends and family are up to on social media. You'll get a sense of how they're doing, respond to their posts and perhaps follow-up with them if need be.
- If you're not a social media user, why not take some time to understand what each one can do. You can find beginners guides to all the platforms online...
  - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest.
- If you're already a devoted social media fan, that's great – keep going! However, think about what you're posting and try to stay positive. In times of crisis, it's natural that people are a bit more sensitive and it can be easy to upset someone unintentionally.



# Feel lonely or just want to talk?

- First up, it's perfectly natural to feel lonely or anxious in these circumstances, regardless as to whether you're living with others or home alone. Sometimes you just need to someone different to talk to, or someone to listen to how you feel.
- Social media and news apps can be great for keeping updated, but you can also feel like you're being bombarded with news and info that's just adding to your worries.
- Look after your online wellbeing too. If you're finding it all too much, just switch off from social media for a while, or limit how much time you'll spend on your devices.
- You might decide to view particular social media groups or pages, but not scroll through timelines or newsfeeds.
- Speak with someone you trust. If you are feeling anxious about coronavirus or staying at home more than usual, you may find it helpful to talk about these worries with someone you trust, especially if they are in a similar situation.
- You could join a peer support community. The mental health charity, Mind runs an online community called Elefriends, where you can be yourself, share your experiences and hear from others.

# Other ideas

- Think about things you can do to connect with people. For example, putting extra pictures up of the people you care about might be a nice reminder of the people in your life.
- Listen to a chatty radio station or podcast if your home feels too quiet.
- Stay connected with current events but be careful where you get news and health information from.
- Don't forget the good, old-fashioned post! Buy or make a card and then spend some time writing a thoughtful letter. It'll be a lovely surprise and much-appreciated.
- If you're going to phone and video-call someone, why not schedule it in and make it a regular thing? It's reassuring to know that you won't lose touch with someone.
- If you're worried that you might run out of stuff to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a show, read a book or try a new recipe separately so you can discuss it when you contact each other.
- Tell a joke, reminisce or play a fun game - laughter is known to decrease stress hormones, help our muscles relax, protect our heart function, and heighten the release of endorphins, our 'happy' chemical. Plus, humour and laughter are also natural immunity boosters which, during the current climate, is a necessity. 😊



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