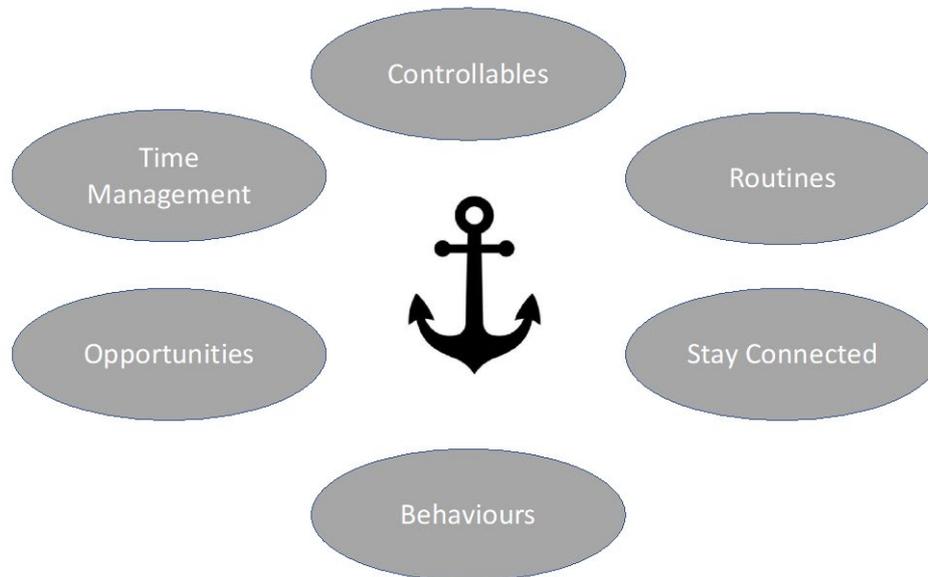


Wellbeing in Changing Times

During periods where there is change, instability and the future is unpredictable, focusing on the things that help you maintain your wellbeing becomes increasingly important. The following are some suggestions to support your balance and mental health while you are navigating challenges, such as changes to your plans, training restrictions, self-isolation, caring for family etc.



When the storm hits, the boats in the harbour drop anchor. If they don't, they get swept out to sea. Dropping anchor does not make the storm go away, but instead keeps the boat steady until the storm passes. Focusing on these six key factors will anchor you to what is helpful to remain balanced and mentally healthy.

Controllables

- Focus on the things that matter and things you can control
- It is natural to drift into worry, rumination and the future. Work to keep your attention in the present
- Be observant of your internal experiences (thoughts, feelings, sensations), take time to acknowledge and accept them, then gently bring your attention back to the task at hand

Routines

- Maintain regular routines (sleep, nutrition, training, recovery), it reminds our brains it is safe to dial the stress response back and enable you to focus on what is helpful
- Keep your routines as normal as possible, but be as flexible as and when necessary

Connection

- Stay connected to your purpose, values and goals – they are your lighthouse when the sea is stormy and the night is dark
- Keep up regular connections with your support network. In times of challenge we need to increase support, so you might need to reach out more than usual. If you can't do this face-to-face, use all the tools at your disposal
- Bring vulnerability to your connections with others, it is ok not to be ok

- Connect to your community – helping others is a key ingredient to our own satisfaction and wellbeing

Behaviours

- Do the basics of your personal self-care (quality food, time with loved ones, mindfulness etc.) - put your own life jacket on first
- Maintain the hygiene basics – handwashing, social distancing, coughing/sneezing into your elbow, cleaning surfaces regularly
- Ask yourself, what do I need to be doing for me and my community right now? Whatever the answer is, do it and engage with it fully
- Deliberately seek out people and stuff that make you happy
- These times are hard for everyone, if you have a choice between being hard on yourself or others, or being compassionate and kind – choose kindness!

Opportunities

- Promote an opportunity vs. a threat mindset. Everyone is having to change plans and behaviours, if we can focus on the opportunities our new plan presents to us, we will come through this in good shape, and maybe even better than our competitors
- What does your new plan allow you to do that you might have been putting off, deprioritizing or ignoring (e.g., key relationships, tax returns, university studies, learning a new skill, updating your social media, volunteering)? This might be a time to get into some of these
- Use this as an opportunity to refine your ability to stay present when you are under stress. While the challenges you might currently be facing now are not exactly like the ones you experience during performance, building these skills to manage your attention and unhelpful thoughts/emotions will be useful over the next few months and beyond

Time Management

- Allocate a specific amount of time in your day to focus on coronavirus and government updates, what-ifs, worry etc. This will allow your brain to engage fully when you are required to focus on other activities
- Be aware of how much time you are spending on media, which tends to be full of hype and non-factual information – put yourself on a media diet
- Ensure you maintain structure and purpose to your day, avoid energy vampires and time wasters: ask yourself, is this activity/conversation helping me in my quest to function as well as I can right now?

For more detailed information/suggestions, please see further reading below. If you find yourself getting stuck and find it hard to shift from unhelpful thoughts/emotions, or need support to navigate the changes, reach out to those who are best placed to support you, such as your Performance Psychologist or Athlete Life Advisor.

Text or Call 1737 helpline

This is the national free to call or text helpline number. The service is staffed with fully trained counsellors and is available 24/7 for advice or support on anything to do with mental health and wellbeing.

Further Reading

'Face Covid' How to respond effectively to the Corona crisis

- [Dr Russ Harris, Author of 'The Happiness Trap'](#)

Real-time Resilience Strategies for Coping with Coronavirus

- [NZ Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience](#)

Mental Health Foundation

- [Looking after mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19](#)