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Wellness impacted by meaningless scrolling during coronavirus lockdown

Reading could be key to helping support good mental health

Across Europe people are spending increasing amounts of time online as the coronavirus quarantine is extended. Whilst many are using their devices to connect with friends and family, a recent Yougov survey commissioned by magazine app [Readly](#), reveals that aimless scrolling online and boredom are having an adverse effect on the mental health for a number of people, with almost 8 in 10 Brits admitting to spending meaningless time online.

The Yougov survey reveals that social media has a negative impact on the mental health of almost 3 in 10 Brits - with this rising to 42% for 18-29 years olds. The most common adverse impacts being on self-esteem (47%), depression (40%), and problems sleeping (39%).

Dr Becky Spelman, Psychologist, said: "It can be very tempting to endlessly scroll social media at the moment. Of course, it is important to stay connected, but constant exposure to a growing pandemic of conspiracy theories, "fake news" and misinformed advice is not at all useful. For those who find that their time on social media is getting them down or causing anxiety, it is important to know when to step away. It is a good idea to set aside a specific time every day to check social media and then to put it away and do something different or explore other interests."

The survey noted that the top ways in which Brits worked on their mental wellness was through getting enough sleep (65%), exercising (47%), reading (41%), following a healthy diet (41%), and meditation (15%).

Dr Spelman continued: "At times like this, it is very important for all of us to take care of both our physical and mental health. We all know we should be doing our best to eat healthily and to try get a reasonable amount of exercise - but there are additional things we can be doing that are often less discussed. Reading is an excellent way to foster good mental and emotional health - but it should be "active" reading, rather than passively absorbing information as you scroll through Facebook or other social media feeds. Some people are using the quarantine as an opportunity to learn something - but reading escapist fiction or keeping up with celebrity gossip in a magazine can be just as fulfilling. Anything that engages the mind and the emotions is useful."



With magazine reading at home helping to keep us informed as well as inspire and motivate us, the research shows that 58% of people report that reading helps them to relax, while 54% feel that it allows them to “step into another world”, and in that way to get away from all the stress and anxiety of the moment.

With restlessness and isolation increasing, many have been seeking inspiration, entertainment and information on platforms such as magazine app Readly - which has noted increasing activity over the past month. Readly app downloads have increased significantly with the onset of isolation in March, seeing downloads on all markets up 62 percent compared to March 2019 and 21 percent compared to February 2020.

Ranj Begley, UK Managing Director and Chief Content Officer at Readly said: “The high demand of the Readly app indicates a growing need for distraction and a place to relax as the coronavirus crisis is unfolding. Many of our 5,000 magazine titles bring a much needed break from what we are witnessing around the world. The availability online means people can keep reading their favorite magazines on their phones, tablets and laptops despite self-isolation, as well as ensure they are accessing verified news from established sources.”

A number of reading categories have spiked on the Readly platform in the last month in Britain with the onset of social distancing.

Top 5 categories most increased during March according to Readly data:

- Crosswords and Puzzles: + 28%
- Mindfulness & Health: + 21%
- Home and Renovation: + 18%
- Gardening: + 14%
- Crafts: + 12%

Ends

For more information: www.readly.com

The Readly app is £7.99 per month, no lock in contract – and currently has a 2-month free offer.



The survey was conducted by the YouGov analysis institute. A total of 7379 CAWI interviews took place in Sweden, UK, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands during the period of 19 - 24 March 2020.

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About Readly

Readly is a digital subscription service that lets customers have unlimited access to nearly 5,000 national and international magazine titles - all in one app. Founded by Joel Wikell in Sweden in 2012, Readly is today one of the leading companies in digital magazine subscriptions in Europe with users in 50 markets. In collaboration with around 800 publishers worldwide, Readly is digitising the magazine industry. Our purpose is to bring the magic of magazines into the future, enabling the discovery and survival of quality content. During 2019 Readly distributed more than 120,000 issues of magazines that have been read 83 million times. www.readly.com