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Personal Essay

I've been noticing an overwhelming trend in my social media feeds lately.

I'm being shown endless ads for new home workout programs or apps encouraging people to utilize this time to finally get that "beach body."

My friends and acquaintances are posting pictures on pictures of food and new recipes that they have been trying in their attempts to stay productive and control their diets.

Some people are cracking jokes left and right about how much weight we're all going to gain during this period while others are boasting about all that they're doing to lose some.

Being in quarantine does not lend itself to maintaining a positive body image.

Advertisers and fitness bloggers are taking advantage of this time to profit off of the fact that people suddenly have lots of free time, trying to shame consumers into feeling like they should try to eliminate it.

I am not alone in having a long history involving a fear of weight gain. It has affected my relationship with food and eating, my motivations for wanting to be active and even my idea of health itself.

Without so many distractions and other priorities, the concept of body weight has suddenly become so prevalent in many people's minds.

It is all too easy to allow a fear of weight gain to be consuming. It's easy to self-criticize for snacking more than usual while being home, or to feel guilty for having less motivation to be active.

During a global crisis, it's silly that we're trying to grind even harder than before to optimize all of our new time for self-improvement and productivity. It's only adding more stress to a time that's already extremely stressful.

For so many of us, our lives have been uprooted and placed on pause. We've dropped everything to isolate ourselves in our homes for an indefinite amount of time in order to protect ourselves and the people we care about... and the internet wants us to believe we're still not doing enough?

Everyone copes in different ways. Many people find they need to keep themselves occupied or active just to feel normal. Prioritizing rest and simply attending to basic needs, however, is more than enough.

For many people who have struggled with eating disorders or similar behavior in the past, all of these nudging voices and intrusive thoughts introduce a risk of relapsing or spiraling back into old patterns. Eating disorders falsely promise a feeling of comfort and control during a time when it feels like we have very little of it. Fortunately, [nationaleatingdisorders.org](https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) now offers a COVID-19 resources page filled with free and low-cost support options for those that feel that they may need help.

I have also been using this time to unfollow, block and mute social media feeds that hinder my mental wellness and positivity. I occasionally need to protect myself by limiting my time on social media overall, as it can often feel overwhelming when exposed for too long.

Social media can be harmful even on a good day. During a global crisis, the most important thing we can do to is take care of ourselves and maintain a faith that we will come out on the other side.