If you’re freaking out over the COVID-19 pandemic, you’re definitely not alone. Most people I have been living in a state of low-key anxiety—quietly stocking pantries and waiting for the next development. And quarantine or isolation is a possibility for many—even if you don’t fall ill, coming into contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus could result in your doctor recommending a period of isolation. This comes with a lot of concerns—food, medication, apparently toilet paper—but one thing that we’re not talking much about is how to fill the time. Two weeks is a lot of time to spend stuck at home. Of course, if you’re working from home (either as a professional or a student), the first thing to do is make sure that you’ve done all of your assignments first. But let’s talk about some of the other productive things that you can get done if you find yourself at home for an extended period, and hopefully the uptick in productivity will help with the inevitable anxiety.
Update Your Résumé

Updating your resume is one of those tasks that falls by the wayside in everyday life. And it’s understandable—it’s hard, it takes a long time, and you should usually have several people look it over to find mistakes. Well, a quarantine is plenty of time to get your résumé in order for the next time you find yourself on the job hunt. While you’re at it, you might as well update your LinkedIn page, too.

Catch Up on Your Reading

Everyone always seems to be complaining that they don’t have enough time to read. Our commutes are only so long, after all—and if you’re like me, you’re not at your optimal level of reading enjoyment while strap-hanging, anyway. Isolation gives you a heck of a lot of downtime to fill, and while binging on the latest true-crime docuseries on Netflix is certainly one way to entertain yourself, wouldn’t it be much more productive and fulfilling to tackle that stack of books on your nightstand?

Work on Some Long-Term Projects

Everyone has at least one thing that they’ve been trying to finish for what feels like forever. Have you been meaning to build your personal website? Got a half-finished scarf or painting languishing in your craft space? Working on a book or learning to code? These are the kinds of activities that often take a backseat to more pressing matters when competing for the day’s limited hours. It’s easy to find excuses when there are more pressing matters: The tub doesn’t need to be re-caulked immediately—you have laundry to do and friends to meet. But a quarantine or self-isolation can provide you with the time to tackle those projects that you’ve been meaning to get around to for what feels like forever.

Make (or Reassess) Your Budget

We all know that the COVID-19 crisis has tanked the markets, which might have made you concerned about money. While I can’t confidently offer you any investing advice (talk to a financial planner if that’s what you’re looking for), if the volatile markets have got you stressed, it might help to lay out a budget for yourself. Seeing clearly exactly where your money is going can help you feel more prepared to meet uncertain times. If you already have a budget (congratulations on being responsible), you might consider revisiting it. Are there instances where you can save? Budgeting and saving are things that take time to figure out, so take the time while you have it.

Check in with Your Networking Contacts

Lots of people are working from home and will be for the foreseeable future. The COVID-19 pandemic actually provides a great opportunity to check in with people who perhaps you’ve been meaning to talk to. You can ask them how they’re doing, if they’re working from home, what the situation looks like wherever they’re at. This might not be the best time to ask someone for coffee, considering the general advice towards social distancing, but quickly touching base with someone to check in on their health and safety is a thoughtful thing to do and a great way to stay on the radar of those that you work closely with.

Staying at home for extended periods of time can be a challenge. So wash your hands, regularly wipe down the things you touch frequently, and try to use the time to accomplish something productive.