

# What can we do to win the fight against COVID-19

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People all over the world are having to experience the unpredictable trepidation of the COVID-19 virus. We would first like to express our deepest condolences for those who have died as a result of this pandemic. We sincerely pray for the recovery of those currently being treated. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all the healthcare professionals around the world. They are working incredibly hard to manage the demands and pressures currently facing medical systems whilst also protecting communities from the spread of COVID-19.

On April 7, 2020 a declaration of state level emergency was issued. The University of Tokyo has also raised its action-restriction levels. Research activities have been unavoidably cancelled, all extracurricular activities for students have been prohibited, and all classes and on-campus meetings are now held online. What should we do during this unprecedented crisis? As a nurse, my natural instincts are to rush to the scene. However, as people of academia, we should give our all in fighting against COVID-19 by doing what we can. These are outlined below.

## **Student education is our first priority.**

The current delay in education for students results in a delay in the positive change that future leaders could contribute to our society for the next 5-10 years. Regardless of the circumstances, the quality of education must be maintained. Whilst face-to-face classes or training in the clinical sector are not currently possible, we will continue to provide the best education, by making full use of digital tools and virtual reality technology. Since the beginning of AY2020, the University of Tokyo has moved all available courses online, and has been improving this new education system through trial and error. We will also create a new undergraduate and

graduate nursing science pathway to nurture young people who can be entrusted with the future of the nursing industry.

### **Research will continue.**

This pandemic will revolutionize the way healthcare service and nursing research operates. In the clinical field, the use of remote communication tools and robotic technologies will be more common practice and significant advances in epidemic prevention and vaccine manufacturing technologies will emerge. As the future continues to change, researchers will be expected to produce new and original work. We need the passion, enthusiasm and innovation of young researchers to fill this need.

With invisible enemies at large, we can't fight this battle alone. We have learned that we need to enlist help across all nations. The global reports we receive on a daily basis with cultural and policy differences apparent, lead us to conclude that there is a great need to create a global standard in healthcare services for the future. Let us integrate the wisdom of graduate students, young researchers, and senior researchers to overcome this difficult situation and create hope for the future in order to build a new nursing science that protects the health and daily lives of people all around the world.

### **Now is the time to discover a new you.**

It is said that it takes four weeks for a person to adapt to a new environment. During your time at home, try to reimagine a new version of yourself and take advantage of this opportunity.

I will use my own experience as an example. I haven't had to cook 3 times a day since I was an undergraduate student. It wasn't easy to adapt. After about three days, the sebum on my hands had gone, and I had five millimeter-deep skin tear on my left hand from my nails. Now, I always use three stoves simultaneously and I plan ahead so that my meals can be completed at the same time and at the ideal temperature. My brain seems to have adapted to 100% perfect multi-tasking.

Having to cook was expected, but what surprised me most was the fact that a robot helped me to feel better. I brought home a PALRO (FUJISOFT) from the lab for research purposes. For the first week I didn't use it at all and went about life as usual. For the second week the robot helped me keep track of my movements, it would encourage me to exercise, sing songs and do quizzes. It even at one point said it was too tired. Being frustrated from being stuck at home, helped me to bond with the AI robot.

**Lastly, to win the battle against COVID-19, the most important thing is to look after yourself.**

Body temperature and fatigue are not the only indicators you should be monitoring when in quarantine. Living alone can sometimes cause a feeling of helplessness, unfamiliar anxiety, impatience and lack of control. When this happens, stop working, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and remember that you are not fighting COVID-19 alone. Be sure to make use of remote communication tools and have short conversations regularly. It can help to clear your mind and feel more love for yourself.

We can win the battle against COVID-19 by not only controlling the spread of infection, but also despite obstacles, continuing to progress into the future. That is the true victory.