

# **My Quarantine Days**

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I know you all have read a lot about corona or covid-19 so I am not going to mention about that again here! You, your family and of course all your loved ones would be worried about your safety after returning to the campus. But trust me, I have gone through this and I can only say that, give yourself time to mend with the situation and everything will be alright! Of course, you will have to follow rules, there will be few restrictions but that is all for our safety only.

When I look back again at that time when I reached campus after attending the conference in the USA, I was also worried, frightened and with mind full of doubts about the management at the campus. However, during my 14 days of quarantine period I did not face any difficulty at any time. Days were smooth. I am not gilding here. I too had a few difficulties to get acquainted with this quarantine routine. I was anxious, scared and impatient like you all will be but as time passed, I learned to get over these and managed to create good routine for myself. Initial two days I just spent overcoming the jet lag and talking with my friends-relatives (all of them had presumption of me being infected). On the third day of my quarantine period institute got closed. I had got literally panicked by thinking about the possible lockdown and not getting chance to go home. But then through the encouragement of my family and PhD advisor, I started looking at this isolation as an opportunity for writing my thesis and self-composing my thoughts and emotions. As the time started passing each day, I found myself getting more patient and stable every day. I started my day with meditation and couple of suryayamaskars. It helped me to remain calm and active throughout the day! And I followed it every day. During initial 2-3 days, I used to spend a lot of time in reading newspaper or on mobile with increasingly getting panicked regarding the case counts in India but slowly I could spend my days well planned. Before lunch I used to do some breathing exercises and chat with family and lab mates. From afternoon till the dinner time I used to work on the article I was writing with in between break for exercise just before the evening snacks. Long video calls with family and reading my favourite poems (mostly in my mother tongue) were last tasks I used to do before going to the bed. Apart from work, it was also a perfect time for me to appreciate biology (the subject I am scared of) little bit more e.g. I read about different viruses, history of vaccines and how human body responds to different viruses, pandemics which world had seen in the past etc. That time everyone would have been doing similar stuff but being completely isolated

from the social life and still able to keep your spirit high was something different and unfortunately, I did not have any other source of entertainment such as movies or TV series in my laptop but limited internet data in the mobile ! After completing 14 days in the guest house I returned to my hostel room and I cannot tell how happy I was to see my room. In my almost 6 years of stay in the IISc I just realised that I had never appreciated my room enough. After shifting to the hostel room, I was (and still I am) more cautious, alert and with sound mind as that day onwards we were supposed to use all common facilities such as washrooms, water coolers, mess etc. We were asked to follow the isolation for 14 more days which included getting food from the mess into the tiffin boxes and eating in the room similar to what you all will be doing after coming back to the campus. In room I had much more stuff to keep myself occupied such that books to read (I prefer hard copies), drawing/painting accessories to do. Honestly, I found myself getting more disciplined during this quarantine period by balancing the time for work, daily exercise and hobbies in better way. The biggest achievement for me after a month of isolation was to be able to do two-digit surya-namaskars and some exercise without using my asthma inhaler!! So, believe me, your quarantine period will not be a waste of time but definitely you will gain and learn a lot from this solitude.

Finally, I would really like to thank Prof. Dipshikha Chakravorty, Mr.Jayraj (AR security), Mess and hostel staff, Dr Nirmala and Health centre staff for all the support they have given until the present time from the day of quarantine. I even got chance to know new people because of the quarantine WhatsApp group and got new friends like Siya, Sukanya who were also quarantined in the guest house.

In summary, I would like to give following suggestions which you may find useful during your quarantine period:

1. Keep yourself occupied for the entire day. Remember that “An idle brain is the devil's workshop”.
2. Either in the morning or evening give some time for exercise. Doing simple surya-namaskars and breathing exercises will make you feel refreshed.
3. Do not stress out yourself thinking about your unfinished research/lab work. Instead use this time to revise few concepts, for reading articles or analyzing data. If you are not able to concentrate on work, spend time with your favorite hobbies or try to learn new things.
4. You may even miss your family after spending a long time with them. Do talk with them daily- this will also ease your anxiety.

5. Lastly and very important: Follow all rules of the quarantine stringently. If you are getting any symptoms of any illness (not restricted to Covid-19) or have any doubt or requirement, please contact the institute COVID-19 team immediately.

I want you to understand that nobody wants to suffer here or trouble anyone on purpose. This institute is your other family which is going to look after you once you come back and going to make sure that you are in safe hands. But remember they will also need your co-operation. It's in our hands to keep ourselves and institute away from this invisible enemy. I am very eager to see you soon in our heavenly campus 😊. Till that time please keep washing/sanitizing your hands and have safe journey back to the institute.