

Winter Newsletter

We are here to bring you lots of advice on exercise, nutrition, mental health and things to keep you active during lockdown.

We are all being tested at the moment, everyone is experiencing lockdown differently, some are totally on their own and are very lonely, where as others have a house full of people and would love five minutes peace! Whatever your situation, it may be difficult for you and there is no one solution. But, the important thing is that if you are on your own, you keep in contact with family and friends and if you are in a busy house you must take time for yourself.



Sleep!

We need sleep, it's a vital part of daily life, if you have ever had a baby you will know that sleep deprivation is torture! Not being able to sleep properly can really affect us; we feel constantly tired and may ourselves nodding off during the day. Our concentration and decision making is poor and we can generally feel depressed. Many people are experiencing poor sleep patterns at the moment; below are some tips to help you to improve your quality of sleep.

- Try to keep to your normal bedtime routine; go to bed at the same time at night and get up at the same time in the morning to help regulate your body clock.
- Wind down before you go to bed, have a relaxing hot bath with soothing aromatherapy oils and bubbles.
- Clear your mind; write down anything that is worrying you, you can then tackle them in the morning.
- Try not to nap in the daytime so that you are tired when you go to bed.
- Make your bedroom as comfortable as possible, clear away clutter and make sure that it's not too hot or cold.
- Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, smoking and alcohol before going to bed
- Avoid having a heavy meal before bedtime but, don't go to bed hungry.
- Read a book or listen to audiobooks in bed.
- Try some mood lighting, Your retinas contain photosensitive cells which pick up surrounding light and send it as a message to the part of your brain that is in control of your internal clock; this tells your body that you're tired or awake. The cells are mostly sensitive to both blue and white lights, which suppresses the production of melatonin, a hormone that makes us feel sleepy. Those cells are the least sensitive to warmer colours such as orange, and especially red, which increases melatonin and doesn't disrupt our internal clock.
- Smart devices also stimulate photosensitive cells so don't be tempted to scroll through your phone or iPad, read a book instead.
- Listen to a relaxation app, there are so many available free of charge ranging from meditation, visualisation and relaxation techniques to help you to drift off.

The more you try to nod off, the harder it seems to be. If you do lie there for hours the best thing to do is to get up, make a hot drink and go back to bed and read a book. The more you fight to get to sleep the more anxious you will feel. If the problem persists, have a chat with your GP.

THINGS TO DO DURING LOCKDOWN



Learn something new

There's lots to learn on YouTube; sign language, foreign languages, singing, painting, cooking, wine tasting, gardening, astronomy or even magic! You name it - it's on there.



Start a book club

Not only do you discover new books, but you can then meet up on video calls to discuss it and have social contact with people.



Host a talent show

Host and perform in your own talent show on a video call with your friends and family, it beats another quiz!



Have a day out - indoors!

There's virtual tours of many tourist attractions. Have a look around Buckingham Palace, museums and art galleries or check in on the animals at various zoos.



Start your family tree

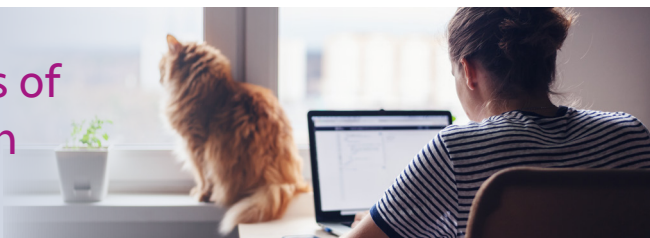
Find out about your ancestry and start researching your family tree, you might be surprised at what you do find! There's lots of websites to help you start your tree.



Try meditation

Learn the art of relaxation. Visit our facebook pages to find our Podcast with a 10 minute relaxation session from Tom Peña.

The dangers of sitting down too much



If you are working from home, home schooling, or furloughed, the chances are that you are spending more time sitting down than you usually do. On average, we are sitting down for 10 hours a day. Several things happen to our bodies when we sit down for long periods of time:

- Electrical activity in leg muscles shuts off, circulation is less effective.
- Calorie burning drops to one per minute.
- Enzymes that help break down fat drops 90%.
- After two hours, HDL cholesterol (the good stuff) drops 20%.
- Muscles become weaker as they are not being used, this also reduces the amount of calories burned.
- Muscles in the hips, back and bottom become tighter in areas and lengthened in others which can lead to injury.
- The risk of developing metabolic syndrome increases, this is high blood pressure, high cholesterol and being overweight. This can lead to diabetes type 2.
- Tight muscles can have a detrimental effect on the posture.
- Blood pools in the lower legs which can lead to varicose veins.
- Being sedentary can lead to weight gain.
- There is a risk of developing osteoporosis which is where bones become fragile due to lack of weight bearing exercise.

What can we do?

Your daily walk or jog is so good for you but don't let it count for nothing, sitting for long periods of time can reverse all the benefits of exercise, even if you do loads! Every 45 minutes we should aim to get up and stretch, set a timer to remind you!

Here's an exercise that you can do which will get everything moving; the squat.

This exercise is one of the best that you can do, for so many reasons! They are a great exercise for all fitness levels and abilities.

- Firstly, it's a functional exercise; you will already have done some today without knowing it! We squat when we sit on a chair and pick something off the floor.
- Squats are compound exercises which meant that we use many muscles to do them, pretty much your whole body gets involved from head to toe, not just the legs
- Using so many muscles helps to keep the circulatory system working well.
- It's a low impact exercise and doesn't damage our joints as long as you have good technique.
- It actually helps with hip and knee problems because it strengthens the muscles, tendons and ligaments around the joints.
- It keeps us flexible.
- It's a great rehabilitation exercise to do if you've had an injury or surgery to the knee or hip.
- It builds stronger bones as it is a weight bearing exercise which means that it improves bone density.
- Squats keeps us strong, when we age we lose muscle mass, it is important to keep the muscles functioning well to maintain independence.
- Doing squats burns calories! It increases our metabolic rate, which is the rate at which we burn calories because there are so many muscles that need fuel to perform this exercise.
- You can just use your own bodyweight and as you progress, you can use weights to make the exercise more challenging.



InspireAll Leisure & Family Support Services manages facilities in partnership with Milton Keynes Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council. InspireAll is a registered Charity. Charity No. 1093653

How to perform... **THE SQUAT**



Stand with your feet hip-width apart, feet facing forward. Brace your tummy muscles.



Keep your spine extended and your head up, don't be tempted to look at the floor and bend from the lower back.



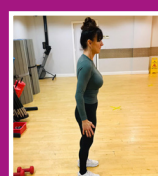
All the weight should be on your feet equally in the ball of your foot and heels.



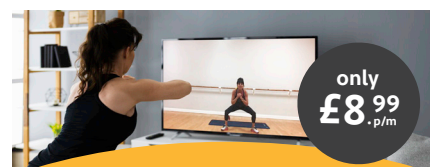
As you squat down, push your bottom out as if you are going to sit down but, keep your back and chest up, and spine nice and long.



As you get lower in the squat, bend your knees and focus on keeping them in line with your feet, you may find that your knees want to come in together so concentrate on keeping them in line with your feet.



Once you have squatted down, it's time to think about coming back up! Push through your feet and as you get to a standing position, squeeze the bum muscles in and slightly tilt your pelvis forward.



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