



Hitting the open road

As the roads remain relatively quiet due to lockdown restrictions, cyclists young and old have fallen back in love with their two wheeled friends; dusting off and greasing up old bikes that been gathering dust under the stairs and steadily getting their road legs back. Apart from being a great excuse to get outside within current exercise guidelines, there are a whole plethora of positive benefits that extoll the virtues of cycling.

- It improves mental wellbeing – for the time that you're on your bike, all you can think of is the road, your surroundings and the effort of pedalling. The combination of both physical exercise and being out in the great outdoors exploring new sights and scenes promotes feel-good endorphins
- Can improve sleep – as with any physical outdoor exercise
- It can help improve general fitness levels – you could use an app such as www.strava.com to plot your route, distance travelled, time and heart rate etc. You can then plot your progress from week to week
- It builds muscle and can improve lung health, both of which can only be beneficial in the current medical climate
- It's low impact – ideal for people with joint issues and is less likely to cause injury than running
- It improves navigation skills and opens your eyes to your surrounding area by encouraging you to explore off the beaten track



Immune boosting tips from our resident nutritional expert Elaine Wiseman



At this time of year there are lots of red eyes, sneezing and runny noses. There are a group of foods which can help eliminate these symptoms and contain natural antihistamines or have anti-inflammatory properties. Apples and onions contain a high amount of a natural antihistamine called quercetin which can help combat allergies. Eating the skin of the apple will also provide more fibre. Tomatoes can help respiratory issues (use raw or cooked) and turmeric helps to release histamine, the main cause of allergies, so try to include this in curries or hot drinks such as green tea or freshly squeezed lemon. Where possible, try and avoid dairy products, especially milk and cheese which are mucus forming.

Moving from your nose to your brain!

We all need to keep our gut healthy with good nutritious food, but we also need to nourish our brains too, now more than ever. Including more avocados, oily fish (tinned sardines are really reasonable and the bones are edible which contains lots of calcium), salmon and mackerel in our diets will help to ensure the grey matter works properly. Pumpkin seeds, dark leafy greens and dark coloured fruits are also great as they contain lots of antioxidants which can protect the brain from mental decline. Drinking lots of water keeps the brain hydrated and green tea boosts brain function. For all those chocolate lovers, dark chocolate (min 70% cocoa) contains lots of flavonoids and antioxidants, and is also a mood booster.

If you haven't already seen this video on YouTube by Tom Foolery, I urge you to take a few moments to watch it; it's an uplifting account of 2020, I found it quite thought provoking.. YouTube:<https://youtu.be/beat4jCAkXsl>



For those of you able to take advantage of the long bank holiday weekend, let's hope the weather holds and that you're able to enjoy a well-earned rest and quality family time. For those on call, thank you for your efforts and please be sure to book time off in lieu to get the downtime you also deserve.

Quarantini time!

Thanks to Amy Pullinger for sharing her favourite quarantine tippie – Espresso Martini. She's attempting making her first one since lockdown began with her mum this weekend, think I may be joining you....!

For the sugar syrup: 100g golden caster sugar

For the cocktail:

Ice, 100ml vodka, 50ml freshly brewed espresso coffee, 50ml coffee liqueur (could use Kahlua or Tia Maria – both on Amazon...I checked!) and 4 coffee beans to decorate – optional

1. Start by making the sugar syrup. Put the caster sugar in a small pan over a medium heat and pour in 50ml water. Stir, and bring to the boil.

2. Turn off the heat and allow the mixture to cool. Put 2 (martini) glasses in the fridge to chill.

3. Once the sugar syrup is cold, pour 1 tbsp into a cocktail shaker along with a handful of ice, the vodka, espresso and coffee liqueur. Shake until the outside of the cocktail shaker feels icy cold.

4. Strain into the chilled glasses, garnish each one with coffee beans if you like – then sit back, relax and enjoy!

Top tip – not good as a night cap unless you use decaf coffee!



Pet Power

Although the benefit of time spent with pets is widely accepted, the mental and physical advantage of having a pet is proving to be especially pertinent during this stressful time. Indeed, Covid-19 has inspired many people to open up their homes to pets in need of adoption, in search of the focus and purpose they provide and for their calming presence.

One of the many positives of pet ownership is that they can offer unconditional love and friendship, all the more important in these challenging and uncertain times. But there is something in it for our pets too, many of whom are enjoying extended periods of company and fuss when they might otherwise have been left home alone.

As much as many may be revelling in this additional attention (mine for one!), some, like many of us humans, may be impacted by the recent changes in routines, finding the increased commotion in the household a little overwhelming. This may be specially the case for cats who generally prioritise some quite periods alone. The key is to ensure your pet gets some alone time just as you would like for yourself – tricky as this may be as we're mostly confined indoors.

It's been lovely seeing so many of your pets putting in an appearance on the weekly company call – if only they could tell us what they really think of this all!



Death, grief and hope

This week we look at a recent Christian document which was published last month (and is attached to the weekly comms), which focuses on the pandemic Covid-19, and its impact on death, grief and hope. Whilst I recognise that not everyone has a faith, this document remains an interesting read and supports many of the ideologies that we apply in our day to day, living with the effects of death, grief and hope, and how this impacts our mood, feelings and emotions, and in turn affects our overall wellbeing.

This resource explores many of the feelings and emotions that we experience, especially given the constraints placed upon us with limited funeral services, attendance numbers at crematoria, grave side services and the opportunities to say our goodbyes.

If you only dip into it, I recommend the section which considers 'Ways of remembering' – specifically looking at creative ideas and ways in which we can practically remember our loved ones. You may recall this is one of the mindfulness sessions we talk about for improving our wellbeing within the CPJ Field Colleague Wellbeing course.

Towards the back of the document you will find links to other organisations which you may also find helpful at this time of need, for signposting others to and for ourselves and those we care for.

For more on this document and creative ideas, listen to the recording on Monday which can be found on SharePoint in academy / wellbeing file.