



## Colleague wellbeing online fitness launch: Active Equilibrium

Hopefully all of you will either have seen live, or watched / listened back to this week's company call, where you were introduced to the latest exciting addition to our colleague wellbeing offering – the launch of free online fitness, pilates and stretch and relaxation classes for all colleagues and their families to benefit from.

The link to the website is below where you will find a bank of six-minute videos focussed on the different exercise types. You may choose a six-minute breathing and relaxation video perhaps at the start of your working day, or to refocus after a difficult arrangement meeting or call. Or you might like to unwind after a day's work with a pilates or fitness class – a quick six minute blast, or by completing a number of the six-minute videos back to back for a longer work out. The beauty of the resource is that it's yours to tailor however best suits your daily and fitness routine. There will be new content added ever fortnight, hopefully by which stage you'll be itching for the next classes. There is an area for feedback on the site, and we'd love to know if and how it's working for you, so please get involved, have a go and email [Emily.hendin@cpjfield.co.uk](mailto:Emily.hendin@cpjfield.co.uk) with any thoughts or queries.

The website is: [www.active-equilibrium.com](http://www.active-equilibrium.com)

Click on the 'Corporate' tab along the top menu, the password is then **corporate** . A box will then appear and the additional password is **Swan** . This will then take you to all the exercise videos, sorted by exercise type. Simply click on the one you want to watch and away you go...



## HERBS THAT HEAL... AND LISTENING TO OUR BODIES

by Elaine

With coughs (not of the covid variety!) and colds are on the increase this time of year - did you know that some herbs can actually clear the lungs? Here are a couple of the most common ones to try.

**Thyme** contains antiseptic essential oils and is a natural anti-biotic. Drinking a thyme herbal tea can help cleanse bacteria and viruses from the body.

**Oregano** contains a natural decongestant and can reduce histamine. The vitamins and minerals contained in this herb can support the respiratory tract and help clear your nasal passages. It's also great for hay fever sufferers!

**Liquorice root** is great for your immune system and is especially beneficial for the stomach, lungs and throat. It can also soothe sore throats.

Our bodies are very clever and have ways of telling us we are eating too much and if we're eating the wrong type of foods. Look out for things such as bloating, feeling sluggish, skin breakouts or weak nails and hair – all classic symptoms of a festive season well celebrated!

There are signs however, that we are not eating enough generally – here are some interesting signals to look out for and be aware of to ensure you're properly nourishing your bodies over the winter months: feeling moody, always feeling cold, low energy, sleeping badly, getting sick easily or constipated. Check out Amy's nourishing soup recipe for a good example of how to feed your body well.



# 'Christmas is just around the corner'

By Andy Holter

Christmas is a time of celebrations, presents, good food, seeing family and friends, and going out. But this year is hugely different with Covid: isolation, loneliness, and regionalised restrictions; making December a particularly tough time of year – especially for those struggling with mental ill health, low esteem, low confidence, anxiety and depression.

So what can we do to support ourselves and others during this vastly different Christmas? For many, the opportunity to have some sort of structure may help; it gives us a sense of stability, direction, and helps us get out of bed in the morning. Losing a sense of structure during this time can be a massive challenge if you are struggling with mental ill health.

It can be helpful to use mindfulness techniques such as colouring, reading, going for walks, or rediscovering previous hobbies and passions to help release those endorphins and make us feel good. As well as this, there are specific steps you can make to have a happier, more meaningful Christmas this year, and here are some ways you could make a difference:

- 1. Serve someone** Sadness is inward-looking, service is its opposite. By making someone else's life better, watch what happens to yours. Joy will start to replace sorrow, meaning and purpose will begin to strive in your life.
- 2. Celebrate the season with forgiveness** Of all the gifts we can give, perhaps the most meaningful and life-changing will be the gift of forgiveness you offer someone that has upset or offended you. You will likely benefit the most from forgiving than the person you forgive.
- 3. Make it fun and festive** Get out the lights, put up the tree, blast the tunes, decorate, dance around the house, sing carols, pop some popcorn, watch a funny Christmas film, laugh out loud and most of all, if you are alone or know someone that is, why not consider using Zoom and share in a game or two.
- 4. Create a new 'family'** If sadness overwhelms the festive period because of loss, separation or if you're isolated due to restrictions or distance, start now to create a new family of friends to celebrate Christmas with: join a virtual online club or volunteer to participate in special projects and get to know local likeminded people.
- 5. Do what you love** Sometimes when you feel down it can be very hard to change how we feel. Instead, rekindle in what we love: paint, run, sing, dance or find the inner child and learn to play again.
- 6. Become the neighbour's secret Santa** Bake some cookies, buy some gift cards, share a gift, and start to secretly make your neighbour's day. Put a plate of cookies on a doorstep or put Christmas cards on the windscreen (being careful of course).
- 7. List all the things that are wonderful in your life** Take time to write down all that is good in our life, this can help us paint a picture of the positives and feel good and grateful about our life.
- 8. Get up, get dressed, get out** Some of the symptoms of depression include oversleeping, staying in bed, undressed, un-showered, and generally unmotivated. When we're down, we do not get up and dressed, often feeling worse and experiencing lower moods. Therefore, we must stop the cycle by getting up, having a shower, putting on your glad rags and going out for a walk.
- 9. Put yourself on Santa's nice list** As you are out doing good to others, spreading Christmas cheer, spread some to yourself as well: buy yourself a gift, make it meaningful and enjoy it.
- 10. Try an online festive workshop or host a Zoom craft party** Why not try being creative and taking part in an online festive workshop? This is an opportunity to make something new and share in activity with others, or even try hosting one yourself.



## WINTER WARMER: SPICED CARROT AND LENTIL SOUP



Courtesy of Amy Pullinger

### Ingredients

2 tsp cumin seeds; Pinch chilli flakes; 2 tbsp olive oil; 600g carrots, washed and coarsely grated (no need to peel); 140g split red lentils; 1 litre hot vegetable stock (from a cube is fine); 125ml milk (to make it dairy-free, use coconut milk instead); Plain yogurt and naan bread, to serve

### Method

Heat a large saucepan and dry-fry 2 tsp cumin seeds and a pinch of chilli flakes for one minute, or until they start to jump around the pan and release their aromas.

Scoop out about half with a spoon and set aside. Add 2 tbsp olive oil, 600g coarsely-grated carrots, 140g split red lentils, 1 litre hot vegetable stock and 125ml milk to the pan and bring to the boil.

Simmer for 15 mins until the lentils have swollen and softened.

Whizz the soup with a stick blender or in a food processor until smooth (or leave it chunky if you prefer).

Season to taste and finish with a dollop of plain yogurt and a sprinkling of the reserved toasted spices. Serve with warmed naan bread.



Check out our Advent calendar of kindness on social media this December and try some out for yourself!



C.P.J. Field.

ADVENT CALENDAR OF  
**KINDNESS**

