



Whispers from the Willows NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our newsletter for February.

We hope that you enjoyed our previous newsletters.

We will continue to bring you as much news, important facts and fun things in our upcoming newsletters and continue here with our February issue.

Hope that you our residents and your family on the outside as well as our staff here at The Willows Private Nursing Home enjoy.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

To provide optimum health care and rehabilitation in an environment which respects the rights, dignity and feelings of the residents.

Our health care is given with compassion, care, love and encouragement with every consideration for privacy, comfort and the independence of our residents.



February
month of
Love



*Happy
Valentine's Day*

WEDNESDAY
14TH

AMAZING

HUMAN BODY FACTS



SMALLEST BONE

Stapes in the middle ear

HARDEST MATERIAL IN THE HUMAN BODY

Tooth enamel



STRONGEST MUSCLE

Jaw muscle

SMALLEST GLAND

Pineal



LARGEST ARTERY

Aorta

LARGEST INTERNAL ORGAN

Liver

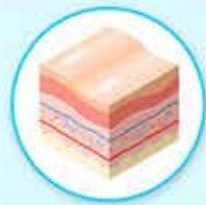


LARGEST MUSCLE

Gluteus maximus
(buttock muscle)

LARGEST EXTERNAL ORGAN

Skin

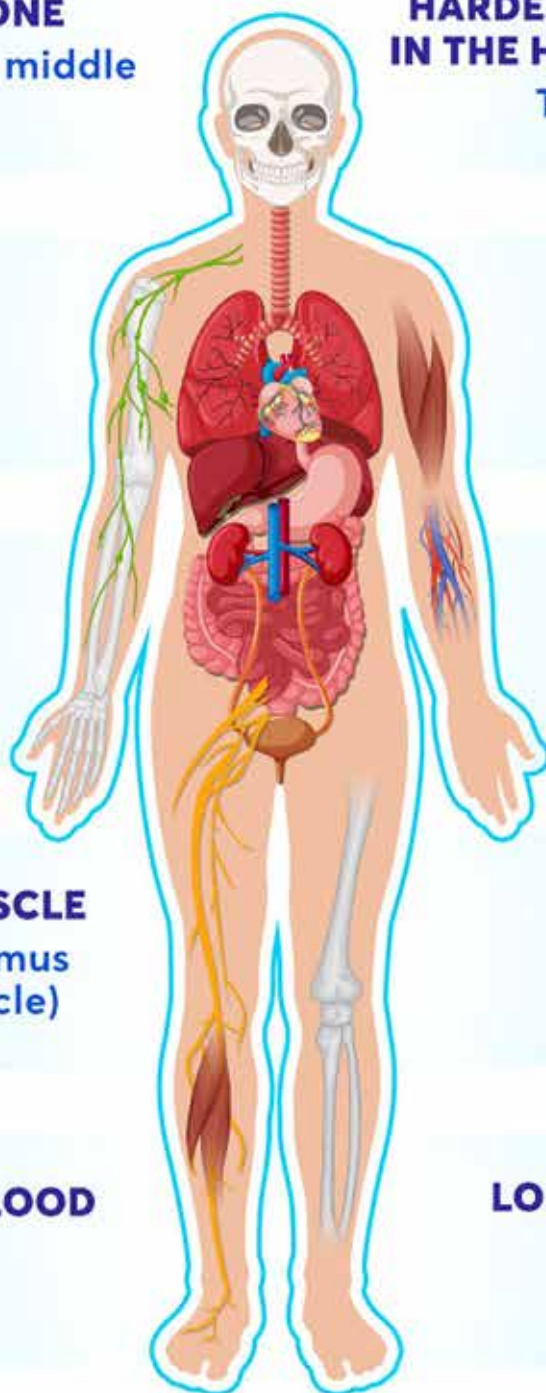


SMALLEST BLOOD VESSEL

Capillary

LONGEST BONE

Femur
(thigh bone)



Health Management



Medication packing matters

WHETHER IT'S REMEMBERING WHEN TO TAKE EACH PILL OR DEALING WITH MEDS THAT CAN INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER, MANAGING YOUR MEDICATION CAN SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE A JUGGLING ACT. THIS IS WHERE MEDICATION PACKING CAN HELP MAKE THINGS MUCH EASIER. LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ADVANTAGES OF MEDICATION PACKING AND HOW IT CAN SIMPLIFY THE WAY YOU HANDLE YOUR MEDS, MAKING IT EASIER FOR YOU TO STAY HEALTHY.

For anyone managing multiple medications or those of us who find it challenging to remember if we've taken our meds for the day, medication packing is a game-changer. It simplifies the routine of taking pills by organising them in easy-to-follow packages. It can also ease the financial burden, as it reduces the chances of medication-related mishaps, ultimately saving you time, money, and effort while providing peace of mind. Your local Blooms The Chemist pharmacy offers medication packing as just one of our services to make this process smoother for you.

Why medication packing matters

- **Preventing medication errors:** The most fundamental aspect of medication packing is accuracy. When you receive your pills in a well-labelled container, the chances of taking the wrong medication or the wrong dose are significantly reduced. This means fewer mistakes, less risk, and greater peace of mind.
- **Simpler instructions:** Medication packing can also help improve patient adherence, which means taking your medications as prescribed. By having pills organised in a way that corresponds with your treatment plan, you're more likely to take them consistently. This is especially important for some medicines which specify the times to take them and require consistency.
- **Ease of use:** Proper medication packing ensures that pills are conveniently stored in a way that's easy to access and use. That means no more fumbling with pill bottles and struggling to remember which one is which.

How our Pharmacists help you

Pharmacists play an important role in ensuring the safe and accurate dispensing of your medications. When you drop off your prescription at the pharmacy, the Pharmacist conducts a thorough review to confirm the right medication, dosage, and usage instructions, before beginning the dispensing process.

There are different types of dose administration aids, including:

- **Blister packs:** These are pre-packaged doses of medication, neatly organised in blister-like cards. Each blister contains a single dose and is typically labeled with the date and time for your convenience. Blister packs are ideal for individuals with complex medication regimens, offering clear organisation and minimising the chances of mistakes.
- **Pill organisers:** Pill organisers come in multi-compartment containers tailored for storing medications over a week or more. They are usually divided into days and sometimes further segmented into morning, noon, evening, and bedtime doses. These organisers are especially useful for those who manage multiple medications daily.

Chat to your local Blooms The Chemist Pharmacist about the right type of medication packing for you. Blooms The Chemist pharmacies also offer a free medication blister pack recycling program, so you can recycle your used blister packs and reduce our environmental impact. Ask a team member for more information on blister pack recycling.



IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!



How VR is used in aged care to bring people together and stimulate and engage

In this article, we look how VR is used in aged care to provide immersive experiences that enhance cognitive stimulation, promote relaxation, and improve the overall well-being of elderly individuals.

What is virtual reality?

Virtual reality is a simulated 3D environment that enables users to explore and interact with a virtual surrounding in a way that approximates reality, as it is perceived through the users' senses. The environment is created with computer hardware and software, although users might also need to wear devices such as helmets or goggles to interact with the environment. The more deeply users can immerse themselves in a VR environment -- and block out their physical surroundings -- the more they are able to suspend their belief and accept it as real, even if it is fantastical in nature.

Gone are the days when the thought of aged care facilities conjured up images of drab, beige hallways, deserted common rooms and a gloomy atmosphere hanging heavy in the air.

With Australia's over 65's population growing rapidly, the need for progressive establishments offering socially and emotionally fulfilling programs for residents is fast becoming the number one focus for both care providers and families alike. Debilitating lockdowns during the pandemic shone a spotlight on the effects that social isolation and loneliness can have on our wellbeing, and indeed how those effects can be amplified for residents in care homes. When VR is used in aged care, it can go a long way towards helping feelings of isolation among elderly communities.

How VR is used in aged care

In many cases, we've seen that both technology and the way that VR is used in aged care can play a part in enriching the lives of older adults who may be feeling isolated. Virtual reality technology can really change the narrative of aged care living, and SilVR Adventures is leading the application of Virtual Reality to the ageing population.

Virtual reality (VR) is a simulated environment that looks and feels incredibly realistic. Unlike a computer or tablet with a fixed field view, virtual reality headsets adapt to your head movements.

This means that the wearer is immersed in a rich 360-degree, 3D environment. Users have access to an ever-growing library of immersive stories specifically tailored to older adults which include landmarks, nature, bucket list experiences, music, history, wellness and reminisce therapy.

Sullen common rooms transform into vibrant landscapes and the seven wonders of the world – take a walk through any of the residential care homes using this new technology and sombre silence is replaced with 'ooh's, 'aah's' and animated chatter – "It reminds me of when my late husband and I travelled many years ago.. this was such a happy time."

Whether it's a trip to see the spectacular Great Wall of China or something more personal like a childhood home, the way that VR is used in aged care can allow users to visit new places and relive memories. Connections are created, experiences are shared, and emotions are stimulated – this is much more than an entertaining novelty, and the numbers back it up.

Over a 12-month pilot program across multiple sites with UnitingCare Queensland, SilVR Adventures' VR solution proved a huge success: 85% of customers have said that the use of virtual reality sessions as therapy has helped to significantly drive social engagements. 89% of residents said they would like to use VR again, and 91% would recommend it to their friends.

SilVR Adventures' Founder Colin Pudsey is dedicated to building technologies and services that improve the lives and wellbeing of ageing people and their caregivers. 'Our mission has always been to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation among seniors while driving social engagement.'

Following a successful introduction of their VR platform into residential aged care facilities across ANZ, Singapore and the UK, SilVR Adventures continues to expand in 2023 with upcoming research into the benefits of VR Therapy on dementia in collaboration with Deakin university, and expansion into disability/community care and hospice settings.

Virtual reality is not just for gamers anymore. The way that VR is used in aged care can go a long way towards lighting up the faces and hearts of our most vulnerable citizens – bringing joyful, meaningful experiences to those who are in desperate need of connection... and it's here to stay.



Happy Feelings



01

Get offline

Is there any wonder people start to feel bored and frustrated by their lives, when they spend a large proportion of it looking at the highlight reels of the world on social media? Yes, it's a part of modern life, but turning off your phone and putting the lid down on your laptop and doing something else will boost your mood.

02

Shake it off

In the words of Taylor Swift, "shake it off," a dance around the kitchen with your favourite music is a sure-fire way to dial down negativity and turn up happy FM. Ten minutes of moves will take your mind off your ever-growing to-do list and as your heartbeat increases and more blood pumps around your body, those natural feel-good endorphins will keep you happy for the rest of the day.

03

Time with a pet

"I try to spend time every day with my five dogs who are all linked to my wellbeing. When they are restless, I feel it and make sure we get out for a stomp," says Lowri Dowthwaite, senior lecturer in psychological interventions at the University of Central Lancashire. It's well established that bonds between humans and animals positively impact both physical and mental wellbeing, with evidence suggesting that petting an animal can trigger biochemical changes in the body.

04

Mini mental escape

Envision yourself somewhere that makes you happy. We suggest this exercise: "Imagine being in your favourite place. See what you see, hear what you hear, and feel the fabulous feelings you feel when you're there. Make the colours richer, brighter, and bolder, and the sounds a little louder, and double those feelings. You can be anywhere in a nanosecond and boost your inner energy as you take a trip in your mind."

05

Flash a smile

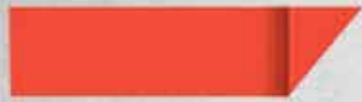
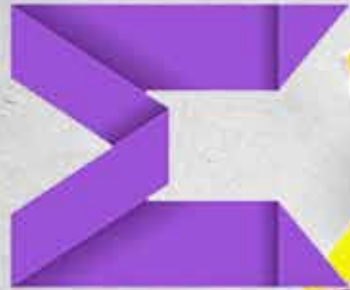
Another fast fix! "Smile and look up as you do. It's hard to feel hopeless as you smile and look up," says Ms Temple. "It's the opposite of what we do when we're feeling low."

06

Hot foot soak

"A hot foot soak is an excellent and affordable technique that helps ease anxiety, calm a busy mind, alleviate tension, relieve poor circulation and boost your mood. Find a container that will fit both feet - a washing-up bowl is ideal - and add a couple of drops of lavender oil or Epsom salts for a relaxing and revitalising treatment."

THIS IS



Origami originated from China and was popularized in Japan.

It is the art of paper folding. In Japanese, "ori" means folding and "gami" means paper. What's so great about folding paper?

The kind of paper folding we're talking about here is not the same as merely folding a piece of paper to fit in your pocket for portability.

What we're talking about here is folding paper into birds, butterflies, flowers, dogs, cats, and even pokemon. Origami is more than just paper folding. It's paper transforming. It's paper magic. It's art.

Origami can range from the super complex with realistic models to the simple models that are more easy to fold, but yet very recognisable.

However complex, these models require carefully planned folds like brush strokes on a Rembrandt painting.

If you're like most people, sometimes random, clumsy folds are enough to create something recognisable.

Origami is a hobby for the young and old. It can be easy or hard depending on the complexity of the model. It can be relaxing and/or mind-bending depending on your reasons for folding. It can be fun no matter how old you are or what your level of expertise is. Finally, it is always magical. Ready to fold your own origami?

1

2

3

4

5
THINGS
YOU
NEED
TO KNOW

BEFORE GOING

With millions of vegetarians and vegans around the world, interest in plant-based food has never been higher.

In fact, a YouGov poll found that 37% of us eat much more plant-based than we used to. If trying to go plant-based is on your agenda, and you're not sure where to begin, here's your go-to guide



Whether you're wanting to eliminate meat from your diet completely, or just shift the focus of your plate to all things plant (such as fruits and vegetables), undertaking a big diet change can be tricky. We've all heard of the health benefits of focusing on plant-based food, with diets that emphasise them having been linked to a reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes, as well as healthy body weight and lowering blood pressure.

"Plant-based diets tend to be naturally higher in foods integral to a healthy diet – including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes." Because of this, plant-based diets are often much higher in dietary fibre, and lower in saturated fats."

It's not just about health, though. Others opt for the switch for environmental reasons. Going plant-based has even been linked to helping fight climate change, according to United Nations (UN) experts, because of the fact it reduces land use and greenhouse gas emissions.

But that doesn't mean we know everything about going plant-based. Some of us may have questions about the switch, whether it's figuring out meal planning, or wanting to make sure we pack in enough protein for our workouts. So, if you aren't sure about how to get started, here's a breakdown of what you need to know.

1. KNOW YOUR 'WHY?'

While there are a tonne of benefits, it's important to know what your motivation is for going plant-based. Choosing to change your diet because of a TikTok trend, and not actually doing your research, may make it a short-lived experiment.

If you have real motivation to transition to a more plant-based diet, whether it be for better health or environmental reasons, then you may not find it as much of a struggle compared to someone who isn't really sure why they want to eat more plant-based. If you're uncertain, then research plant-based diets, watch documentaries and read literature on the benefits and impact.

2. LOOK BEYOND THE LABEL.

Thanks to interest in going plant-based never being higher, there are more products to choose from. Having the word plant-based on the label doesn't automatically make something healthy though, so you're not going to get the health benefits we mentioned purely from swapping your regular ice cream to a tub of plant-based ice cream instead.

In fact, to do it right, the key is focusing on naturally plant-based ingredients, rather than stocking up your pantry with alternatives.

There are many processed and ultra-processed foods that are marketed and labelled 'plant-based' in an attempt to appear healthier to consumers. Focus on real, whole foods – where you don't need to read the back of a packet to check the ingredients list.

3. DO A NUTRITION AUDIT BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

Let's set the record straight: it's perfectly possible to get everything you need from a plant-based diet, without worrying about supplements. However, like any new diet change, you need to make sure you don't miss out. For example, if you know you're prone to low vitamin B12, or need more calcium than the average person, it may take a little extra planning to get plant-based completely balanced.

Plant foods provide a vast range of important nutrients, and it is possible to thrive on a plant-based diet, and hit the required recommended intake of vitamins and minerals. However, some animal food sources do serve as the highest, most accessible, and absorbable forms of vitamins like vitamin B12 and vitamin D, as these are naturally absent from the majority of plant foods. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in the highest amount in oily fish, and calcium is found in much larger amounts in dairy products.

The good news is there are plenty of easy ways to rectify this. Plant-based alternatives contain some of these nutrients; walnuts, chia, and flaxseed contain omega-3, and soy products, nuts, seeds, beans, and green leafy veg contain good levels of calcium. However, it takes careful planning and a varied diet to ensure you're getting a sufficient amount. You will also likely need to supplement B12, so consult a professional to make sure that you aren't deficient, and for advice on dosage.

4. IT'S NOT ALL OR NOTHING.

While some may thrive on 100% plant-based, others may find it trickier – especially if they have health challenges, or nutritional deficiencies. If you've gone full plant-based and aren't seeing the benefits, that doesn't mean you need to ditch it, you may just need a different approach.

"Think of eating plant-based as a general approach to eating, rather than a strict diet. The goal should be to try to incorporate as many plant foods into your meals as possible," advises Xuxa.

Plant-based diets are usually higher in fibre, which is great for our health, but suddenly ramping it up may cause digestive discomfort, like bloating, if your system is sensitive, or you have a condition such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

"Give your taste buds and gut a chance to adjust," Xuxa adds. "Start slowly, and make small adjustments. Instead of cutting out all animal products at once, pick a couple of swaps to try to implement each week."

5. GET ADVICE.

Going more plant-based can bring real benefits to your health and the environment, but like any lifestyle change, learning more, taking it at your own pace, and listening to your body are key to enjoying a plant-based diet. When making any big changes to your diet, it is important to speak to your GP for tailored advice.



BE healthy
BE happy
BE {you} TIFUL



WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

AI (Artificial intelligence) refers to computers that emulate human intelligence. AI systems essentially perform two functions: pattern recognition and robotics.

Pattern recognition identifies human faces, natural language, objects and trends, essentially patterns in almost any set of data.

Robotics are industrial or human-like forms that move mechanical extremities.

In order for robots to identify objects and spoken language, pattern recognition is also built into robotic systems.

AI is employed to make decisions in business and make profits in the financial markets. It is also used to answer myriad questions, generate unique essays, stories and images. AI is even used to write software.

The Tools - Not Ordinary Programming

The software architecture of AI pattern recognition is the "neural network," which is entirely different than regular "if this-do-that" programming. Comprising multiple layers that connect to each other, the neural name was coined as an imprecise analog of the neurons in the human brain. People learn by experience as do neural networks, which analyse patterns in millions, billions and trillions of text and image examples gleaned from websites, blogs, articles, dictionaries and books.

Known as "language models," the more layers in the neural network, the "deeper" the learning. The more samples of data fed in the training stage, the larger the knowledge base and more comprehensive the results when asked to do work (analyze; predict; generate).

A Simple Example

If 10,000 chest x-rays showing lung cancer and 10,000 cancer-free x-rays are fed into a neural network, the system learns the differences between them. Such systems can detect diseases as accurately or better than most medical professionals, and most importantly, much faster than humans.

Concern for the Future

What worries people is the research being done to replace human decision making with AI software.

For example, should an AI be used to determine when a company expands or contracts? Will AI eliminate millions of jobs? Even more significant, do we leave the decision to go to war up to a machine? There is a huge amount of controversy regarding the future because of AI.

NOTE: This article is one person's view. There are many views, articles, misinformation available on the internet. Read up so as to get all opinions and maybe a better understandings of AI.



the garden *for beginners*



Everyone nurtures dreams of a beautiful, lush, green garden, but then reality comes knocking and the lack of time and insufficient funds tear the dream down. And maybe your fingers weren't as green as you thought. Here are seven good tips for gardening rookies and novices, to help you succeed:

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR GARDEN?

A playground for the kids, a kitchen garden or a sea of flowers? It's hard to combine all your wishes and desires, so limit yourself, at least for starters. It'll take some time to create your own personal Eden. Before setting to work consider what features you would like in your garden – seating areas, playing areas, flowerbeds?

2. START SLOWLY...

If you're the new owner of a house or an apartment with a garden or plantations you'd do well taking it slow the first season. Below the black earth you might discover the previous owner's garden dreams. Many plants are perennial and will flower year after year. Other areas might have to be dug up and revived.



3. HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO ON YOUR OWN?

Here it is a matter of balancing time, know-how and money. For many gardeners much of the charm is doing everything singlehandedly. Others hire professionals, garden designers or landscapers. But you're seldom totally alone and you can always ask your neighbours for help ...

4. WHAT ARE THE CLIMATE CONDITIONS WHERE YOU LIVE?

The climate will vary depending on where you live, a good start is to ask your local garden centre or plant nursery for advice. They generally know everything there is to know about vegetation, climate and soil. Randomly buying plants without checking first can turn out to be an expensive venture.

5. HEIGHT, TIME AND COLOUR

There are three simple things to keep in mind when planting a flowerbed: height, time and colour. Make sure to pick species with flowering periods that overlap and thus extend the season of bloom in your garden. Combine colours that work together & make sure tall plants don't obscure lower ones.

6. QUALITY PAYS OFF

Naturally, there are cheap tools and low-priced flowers to be found at supermarkets, but plants don't flourish in bad, oligotrophic soils and tools should last more than a single season. Buy quality tools and materials! Buy fewer but more expensive things and they'll last for a much longer time.

7. SHARE WITH FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

Not every person in the neighbourhood needs his or her own lawnmower or cultivator. Try borrowing from your neighbours or get together and share the costs when making bigger investments to allow you to buy products of high quality. You can share and exchange plants and bulbs with your friends and your neighbours, exchange tips and strategies and help each other out when you need to lift heavy things. Don't forget to invite them to a garden party as a thank you!





Let's Talk



RETIREMENT PLANNING

Retirement is a time where we finally have the space to do what we want to do with our lives, whether that's travel, developing and learning new skills, taking up hobbies or just enjoying the company of those we care about.

The problem with waiting until we are retired is we are postponing engaging in things that could be making us happy right now. Exploring what gives us joy now and developing those skills will make for a much easier transition as you wave goodbye to your working years.

Something to retire to

Retirement represents a big shift in the way we live our lives and it's not uncommon for that adjustment to be a little challenging. For many, our jobs give us a profound sense of identity and define how we perceive ourselves, so our sense of self can suffer when we leave the workforce. There is also often a gap in our lives where work used to be.

That's why rather than looking forward to retiring from something, 'have something to retire to' is a common piece of advice to encourage people to think about what they want their life to look like when they leave the workforce. Think about what defines you now and satisfies you outside of work, and putting in place a

Start today to do the things you love

While it can be hard to carve out time while you are still in the workforce, it's possible to take small steps and set aside dedicated time each week or commit to activities that won't take a lot of your time.

If you are keen to travel when you retire, consider signing up for a short course in the language of the country you are keen on visiting to get prepared for the trip of your dreams. Or if you want to finally write that novel you've been mulling over for years, set aside a little time now to draft a framework and get a head start. Who knows by the time you retire you may be on your second novel!

Keen to do more exercise? Join a gym now and get into a routine - even if you only manage to get there a couple of times a week it's a good start. It takes a while to develop new habits and skills so starting to pick up the things you want to explore in retirement now sets you up for a smoother transition when you have more time to devote to these activities. Starting now also gives you a chance to try things out and see if they are something you want to commit time and energy to.

Fostering connections with those you care about

While spending time doing things you love makes for a happy and satisfying retirement, another important factor is being around people you enjoy being with.

Think about the people you enjoy spending time with and foster those friendships right now. Not only will it make for an easier transition when you retire, it will also bring you joy and the benefits of those relationships right now. There is always room in your life for making new friends too!

The best laid plans can change

It's important to be open minded in your plan of how you see your retirement unfolding. Remember that not everyone retires on their own terms. Some need to retire sooner than expected or in a different manner than expected due to ill health, caring for a family member or because of a decision or situation in the workplace.

On that basis it's important to live well now - enjoy your present life and embrace the things that make you happy as you'll also be setting yourself up to enjoy retirement - whether it's just around the corner or still a way off.

NOTE: Please consult family, professionals or financial advisors before committing to your retirement.



Just Eat RIGHT

OSTEOARTHRITIS



Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis, affecting almost 1 in 10 Australians. It's a condition where the cartilage between joints breaks down, causing the bones to come into direct contact and the joint area to become inflamed.

The main symptoms of osteoarthritis are stiffness and pain in the hips and knees, as well as the hands, ankles and spine. It's a leading cause of knee and hip replacement surgery. Positive lifestyle habits, such as maintaining a healthy body weight, regular physical activity and good nutrition, are all linked to better outcomes.

Can diet help with osteoarthritis?

A recent article published in Nutrition & Dietetics gives us insight into how eating habits could improve this degenerative inflammatory condition. The article compares a number of recent studies on people with osteoarthritis, assessing how their dietary patterns contributed to their level of joint pain.

The results showed that anti-inflammatory diets, which contains mostly whole, plant-based foods and fish, were associated with reduced joint pain. The results also suggested higher fibre consumption may reduce knee pain.

Benefits of eating anti-inflammatory foods for osteoarthritis

Foods that fight the inflammation of joints have 3 important ingredients: fibre, omega-3s and antioxidants. These are found in fresh fruits and vegetables, oily fish and whole grains and legumes. While it's possible to take antioxidant supplements for joint health, evidence suggests they don't work as well as antioxidants that occur naturally in food. This means following an anti-inflammatory diet for osteoarthritis has benefits you won't get elsewhere. However, choosing food to improve your joint health doesn't have to be complicated - it comes down to a focus on fresh, unprocessed food.

7 foods to keep your joints healthy

Many whole foods contain anti-inflammatory properties, and increasing your overall intake of whole foods could have an anti-inflammatory benefit. The following seven foods could assist with fighting inflammation of the joints.

1. Oily fish

Fish is a powerful source of omega-3 oil, which has been shown to potentially reduce inflammation and pain. Oily fishes, such as salmon, sardines and tuna are an even more powerful source, containing at least 10 per cent Omega-3. This is true for both fresh and canned fish.

2. Tomatoes

There are many different types of antioxidants, and it's important to consume a variety. Tomatoes contain high concentrations of not one but two types of antioxidants: vitamin C and lycopene.

3. Broccoli

Broccoli is a member of the cruciferous family, along with brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and kale. These vegetables all have high levels of inflammation-fighting antioxidants. Broccoli is also high in dietary fibre, which has been shown to potentially combat knee pain.

4. Walnuts

Like all nuts and seeds, walnuts are high in antioxidants and they have the added advantage of also being high in Omega-3. The recommended daily serve is 30 grams, which translates to about 10 whole walnuts.

5. Extra virgin olive oil

Olive oil is an important source of anti-inflammatory antioxidants and also confers other health benefits. Extra virgin olive oil is the highest grade of olive oil, meaning that it retains most of the healthy compounds from the olive fruit.

6. Herbs

Herbs are the leaves of a plant used in cooking, while spices are other parts of the plant, like the bark, roots or seeds. Herbs, particularly oregano, sage and thyme, are rich in antioxidants, and fresh herbs contain more antioxidants than dried herbs.

7. Wholegrains

When a grain is refined, the healthiest parts of it are removed. Grains that haven't been refined contain both omega-3s and a range of antioxidants.

Look for:

- wholemeal breads
- brown rice
- quinoa
- oats
- bulgur
- couscous.

NOTE: Please consult with your doctor or dietician before trying any foods mentioned in this article.

from our kitchen
to yours



take care

10 subtle signs of Burnout

Feeling irritable and on edge (not just at work)

Small tasks or decisions suddenly feel overwhelming

You find yourself procrastinating a lot more than normal

Struggling to recover from a cold, or lingering illness

Becoming suspicious of others and feeling cynical

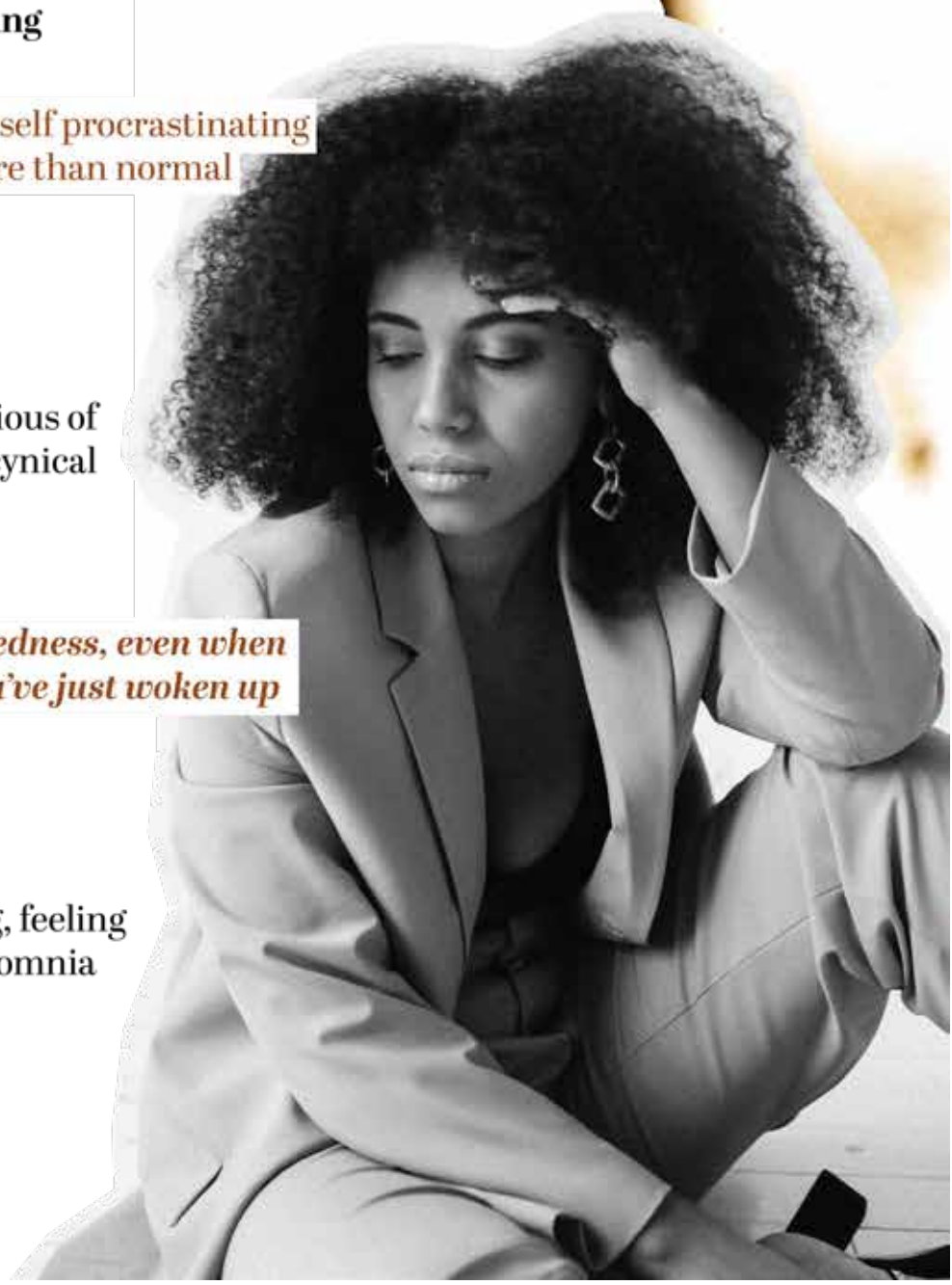
Difficulty focusing on tasks

Tiredness, even when you've just woken up

Lacking enthusiasm and motivation

Trouble sleeping, feeling restless, or insomnia

Feeling isolated or detached from others





COMMONYM

What's a commonym you ask?

It is a group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed.

For example: the words;

Ice / Sugar / Rubik's - they are all cubes.

Questions

- 1. A Wagon - A Weed- A Practical Joke**
- 2. New York - An Airline - A Jacuzzi**
- 3. Alarm - Grandfather - Cuckoo**
- 4. A Cherry - A Wine Glass - A Rose**
- 5. Gun - Baby - Talcum**
- 6. Fan - Express - Junk**
- 7. Mouse - Booby - Live**
- 8. I - V - X**
- 9. Palm - Pine- Christmas**
- 10. A Boat - A Cradle - Van Halen**

Answers

- 1. They are all pulled**
- 2. They all have jets**
- 3. Clocks**
- 4. They have stems**
- 5. Powders**
- 6. Mail**
- 7. Traps**
- 8. Roman numerals**
- 9. Trees**
- 10. They rock**

BRAINPOWER

DO YOU SEE
WHAT I SEE

BAH!

IF YOU
Haven't
found it yet,
KEEP
Looking.



How does the ear work?

The anatomy of our hearing or auditory system is extremely complex. But it can be broadly divided into two parts, one being called 'peripheral' and the other 'central'.

The peripheral hearing system consists of three parts which are the outer ear, the middle ear and the inner ear:

- The outer ear consists of the pinna (also called the auricle), ear canal and eardrum.
- The middle ear is a small, air-filled space containing three tiny bones. These are called the malleus, incus and stapes, but collectively they're called the ossicles. The malleus connects to the eardrum linking it to the outer ear. The stapes (smallest bone in the body) connects to the inner ear.
- The inner ear has both hearing and balance organs. The hearing part of the inner ear is called the cochlea. This comes from the Greek word for 'snail' because of its distinctive coiled shape. The cochlea, which contains many thousands of sensory cells (called 'hair cells'), is connected to the central hearing system by the hearing or auditory nerve. The cochlea is filled with special fluids which are important to the process of hearing.

The central hearing system consists of the auditory nerve and an incredibly complex pathway through the brain stem and onward to the auditory cortex of the brain.

How do we hear?

The anatomy of our hearing or auditory system is extremely complex. But it can be broadly divided into two parts, one being called 'peripheral' and the other 'central'.

The peripheral hearing system consists of three parts which are the outer ear, the middle ear and the inner ear:

- The outer ear consists of the pinna (also called the auricle), ear canal and eardrum.
- The middle ear is a small, air-filled space containing three tiny bones. These are called the malleus, incus and stapes, but collectively they're called the ossicles. The malleus connects to the eardrum linking it to the outer ear. The stapes (smallest bone in the body) connects to the inner ear.
- The inner ear has both hearing and balance organs. The hearing part of the inner ear is called the cochlea. This comes from the Greek word for 'snail' because of its distinctive coiled shape. The cochlea, which contains many thousands of sensory cells (called 'hair cells'), is connected to the central hearing system by the hearing or auditory nerve. The cochlea is filled with special fluids which are important to the process of hearing.

The central hearing system consists of the auditory nerve and an incredibly complex pathway through the brain stem and onward to the auditory cortex of the brain.

What's happening when you have problems with your hearing?

Hearing well depends on all parts of our auditory system working normally. This is so that sound can pass through the different parts of the ear, to the brain to be processed without any distortion. The type of hearing problem you have depends on which part of your auditory system is not responding well.

If you have a problem in the outer or middle ear, it means that there is inefficient transfer of sound to the cochlea in the inner ear. Generally, this affects the volume of sound so that it simply doesn't seem loud enough.

A typical example would be the effect of a blockage of wax in the ear canal or a perforated eardrum. This is called a conductive hearing loss because sound vibrations are not being conducted efficiently. The cochlea is still working normally but simply not receiving enough information via its connection with the middle ear.

If the problem is somewhere between the cochlea in the inner ear and the brain, this is called a sensorineural hearing loss (SHL). The pathway through the outer and middle ears is functioning normally but, after sound arrives at the cochlea, it isn't processed normally. This is either because of damage to the delicate 'hair cells' in the cochlea or to the auditory nerve. Or, because of defects in the auditory pathway leading to the brain.

There are many causes of SHL, but exposure to excessive noise or the effects of ageing are the most common. The typical signs of SHL are a general difficulty in hearing clearly and problems understanding speech in difficult listening conditions such as in background noise.

It is also possible to have both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss.

This is generally called a mixed hearing loss

NOTE: If you have any questions or concerns about your ears, please consult your GP.



SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES



Answers of the last page

COLOUR ME IN



6 BENEFITS OF MUSIC LESSONS FOR KIDS & ADULTS

BENEFITS OF MUSIC LESSONS FOR KIDS

Increases Intelligence



Studies show music lessons for just a few weeks increased brain activity

Confidence



Nothing builds confidence better than learning a new skill and seeing success in it



Increases Math Skills

Children learning music are also learning fractions, division, short-term memory, memory, and more



Improves Patience

Teaches children that practice leads to success and that practice takes time

Increases Dexterity & Motor Skills



Helps to develop coordination, motor skills, ambidextrous skills, coordination, and more



Encourages Creativity

Once children learn the framework of music, they can have creative freedom to explore



NONSTOP

Many people might think that music lessons are only for kids, but really music lessons have benefits for all ages. It builds confidence, improves memory, and helps in other areas related to mental health and strength. So, if you think you're too old to start learning a new instrument, we're here to prove you wrong:

BENEFITS OF MUSIC LESSONS FOR ADULTS

Decreases Stress & Anxiety



Music lessons help adults focus on the task at hand and to leave other stressors at the door, if only for a short time



Prevents Alzheimer's

Studies show that learning an instrument or listening to music reduces symptoms of Alzheimer's

Enhances Problem-Solving



One requirement of playing an instrument is problem-solving and learning this will help in other areas of life as well



Increase Social Skills

Learning an instrument opens the door to opportunities through group lessons or joining a band

Helps Learn Other Languages



Learning music is learning a new language, which then gives the skills needed to learn a second or even third language



Improves Patience and Discipline

Progress means staying patience and having the discipline to keep going even when it's difficult



LEARNED



TIME TO TRAVEL

PACKING SMART

1. Write It Down

The number one rule of smart packing is to create a list. Don't forget to include everything you will need, down to your phone charger. A list will keep you organised and will hopefully keep you from overpacking. If you want to pack light, cut your list in half. You'll never miss the extra pairs of shorts or shoes.

2. Plan Ahead

PLAN YOUR OUTFITS!

Make sure you're taking things you will wear, not the pieces you might wear. Take one pair of underwear for each day, plus a few extra, and the same goes for socks if you wear them daily. Try to get by with fewer than three pairs of shoes for a weeklong trip. Never take brand new shoes that haven't been broken in.

PACK AN OUTFIT IN YOUR CARRY ON

Always pack one outfit (plus underwear), medication, and essentials in your carry-on bag. You never know when your luggage will be misplaced by the airline, lost, or otherwise indisposed. Another great tip is to use Apple AirTags so you can track your luggage by Bluetooth.

CHECK THE WEATHER

When planning your outfits, don't forget to plan what you will wear on the day you travel home. Never pack things "just in case" because if you need a rain jacket, you can always buy a one-size-fits-all disposable poncho at a drug store. Follow the weather at the place you are traveling for a few weeks to discover trends and look at the 10-day forecast before you pack.

3. Get Rolling

When choosing a suitcase, it's always better to find a case with four wheels. They are easier to manoeuvre through busy airports and from cars to hotel rooms. Plus, if you must stand in long lines while traveling, you can use the handle for support if you need something to hang on to.

Speaking of comfort, don't be afraid to advocate for your needs when navigating through airports, cruise ships, museums, and other facilities. Most museums and theatres have technology or devices for those who are hard of hearing or deaf and most have braille materials for people who are blind. In those same places, airports, and train stations, wheelchair service is provided upon request. Remember to be prepared to tip; carry some cash.

4. Products That Help

TOILETRIES

Regarding your toiletries, use approved containers rather than buying expensive miniature products. Other common toiletries that must comply with the liquids rule include toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, mouthwash, and lotion. Each passenger is limited to one quart-size, clear bag of those items.

Have you heard of packing cubes? They are the best thing ever! Nylon, water-repellent, zippered bags keep your clothes from becoming wrinkly when traveling and prevent wear and tear from rubbing up against your other items. Packing bags keep you organized, save space, and eliminate the need to dig through your suitcase to find what you are looking for.

Pack jumpers and T-shirts in one bag cube, underwear in another, trousers in the medium-size bag, and you get the picture. You can even buy packing cubes of the same size and pack your daily outfits in their own bag.

If you don't like the cubes, you can roll your clothes instead of folding them to save room. Remember, whatever you use to help organize your suitcase, always put your heaviest items on the bottom.

When packing for a trip, add a few extra totes, plastic bags, and shopping bags – use for dirty laundry, toiletries that leak, and souvenirs you want to keep separate from your other items. Pack a portable, reusable water bottle – staying hydrated is very important.

When packing shoes, simple drawstring, dust-proof shoe pouches are perfect for not getting your shoes' dirty soles all over your evening wear.



first time ever...

Bonus recipe





Make
YOUR mental
Health a
Priority

2024 *Healthy* HABITS

Embracing the New Year offers a splendid opportunity to kickstart a journey towards a healthier, more balanced you. While it may seem daunting to overhaul your habits entirely, the key lies in cultivating small, consistent changes that endure. As we approach the upcoming year, let's explore some healthy daily habits that can transform your wellbeing.

1

WAKE UP EARLY

Rise with the sun, aligning with your body's natural circadian rhythm. This simple act can optimise your energy levels, productivity, and overall health by syncing with the body's cortisol levels.

2

HYDRATE FIRST

Before diving into your morning routine, prioritise hydration. Starting your day with a glass of water not only refreshes you but also kick starts your metabolism and aids digestion.

3

SWIM EVERYDAY

Include swimming in your routine for a holistic workout that boosts cardiovascular health and flexibility. Beyond the physical benefits, swimming offers a refreshing and meditative experience, making it a valuable addition to your daily habits.

4

EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS

Spending time outdoors, regardless of the season, exposes you to sunlight and promotes the production of essential vitamin D. This simple practice can elevate your mood and fortify your immune system.

5

CULINARY CONNECTION

Take time to cook. This fundamental skill not only allows you to control the quality of your meals but fosters a deeper connection with your food. Cooking becomes a daily act of self-care and mindfulness.

6

DIGITAL DETOX

Allocate time away from your phone, tablet, or computer. Constant digital connection can heighten stress and disrupt your circadian rhythm. Consider disconnecting at least an hour before bed-time for a restful sleep.

LAUGH

FACTORY



YESS! THIS IS OUR
LATEST "PHOTO"
OF OUR RESIDENTS
OFF ON A BUSS TRIP!

SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES



ANSWERS

Hope you enjoyed our newsletter

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