

December 2020



TIS THE SEASON TO BE GRATEFUL

A positive mindset can have a hugely positive impact on your life. Focusing on negative circumstances, wallowing in bad feelings or allowing negative thoughts to dominate your day not only affects your mental health but your physical health too.

Research has shown that negative attitudes can create chronic stress, which upsets your body's hormone balance, depletes the brain chemicals required for happiness and damages the immune system.

But what can you do about it? What can you do when life gives you lemons and you're stuck in a negative cycle?

Your friends and family might try to help, sending you positive quotes on Facebook and telling you to just "stay positive". But does it really help?

There is a simple solution. Gratitude.

Now, I know it might sound a little too new-age and airy-fairy for some of you, but there's actually a science behind how gratitude works.

Studies have indicated that simply expressing gratitude may have lasting effects on the brain.

While not conclusive, the findings suggest that practising gratitude may help train the brain to be more sensitive to the experience of gratitude in the future, and this could contribute to improved mental health over time.

So how can you make gratitude work for you? Keep a gratitude journal.

It's really simple to do. Keep a notebook by your bed and every evening, just before you go to sleep, write down all the things you're grateful for that day. It could be big things or small things like the cup of coffee your partner brought you this morning. Try to really focus on feeling grateful as you write to help increase the power of this practice.

As we come to the end of a tough year, it's the perfect time to take a little control over your mindset and put some healthy habits into practice for the year to come. So grab a notebook and start making gratitude work for you too.



Winter Warmer VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

INGREDIENTS

- › 1 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
- › 1 onion, finely chopped
- › 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- › 1 tsp smoked paprika
- › ½ tsp ground cumin
- › 1 tbsp dried thyme
- › 3 medium carrots, sliced (about 200g)
- › 2 medium sticks celery, finely sliced (about 120g)
- › 1 red pepper, chopped
- › 1 yellow pepper, chopped
- › 2 x 400g cans tomatoes or peeled cherry tomatoes
- › 1 vegetable stock cube made up to 250ml
- › 2 courgettes, sliced thickly (about 300g)
- › 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- › 250g cooked lentils

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onion and cook gently for 5 – 10 mins until soft.

STEP 2

Add the garlic cloves, smoked paprika, ground cumin, dried thyme, carrots, celery sticks, red pepper and yellow pepper – then cook for 5 minutes.

STEP 3

Add the tinned tomatoes, vegetable stock, courgettes and fresh thyme. Cook for 20 – 25 minutes.

STEP 4

Take out the thyme sprigs. Stir in the cooked lentils and bring back to a simmer. Serve with wild and white basmati rice, mash or quinoa.

Enjoy!

GUNPOWDER, TREASON & PAIN?

'Tis the season of bonfires, jack o' lanterns and frosty mornings. While the cold winter weather can put a strain on your immune system, it's not the only thing this season that can be tough on your body.

I never realised how very British Bonfire Night was until I mentioned it in conversation to my Austrian friend and she responded with just a very confused look. She'd never heard of it - so I tried to explain.

"It's a national holiday that celebrates the day that a man named Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the houses of Parliament and failed. We have firework displays to

symbolise the gunpowder explosions and we get the children to build life-sized replicas of "Guy" out of old clothes and straw - then we build a huge bonfire and burn him."

She looked fairly horrified - and after listening to myself explaining it - so was I!

But as if this cheerful winter holiday isn't dark enough, Bonfire Night has another dark side...

Standing in a field for hours on end, with kids on your shoulders and your head tilted up to enjoy the displays can wreak havoc on your neck.

You see, your head is incredibly heavy - around 5kg believe it or not. Your neck is designed to support its weight - but not when you hold it off balance for hours.

Neck ache, back pain and headaches can all be a sign that your holiday fun has caused you a mischief - but there are some simple stretches you can do to help.

Just a few minutes a day keeping your neck flexible could save you the pain and prevent problems from worsening.

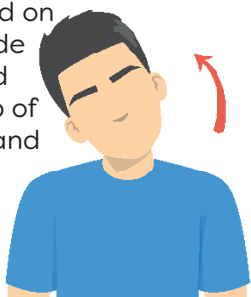
SIDE TILT

Do this while standing, with your feet hip-width apart and arms down by your sides.

Gently tilt your head toward your right shoulder and try to touch it with your ear. Stop when you feel the stretch. Don't raise your shoulder.

Hold the stretch for 5-10 seconds, then return to the start position.

Repeat on your left side. You can do several sets and work your way up to 10 repetitions. For extra stretch, put the hand on the same side of your tilted head on top of your head, and press lightly with your fingertips.

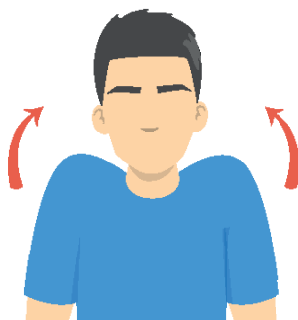


SHOULDER ROLL

This is best done standing up.

Raise your shoulders straight up and move them in a circle going forward. Do it 6 times.

Return to the start position, and make another 6 circles, this time going backward.



SIDE ROTATION

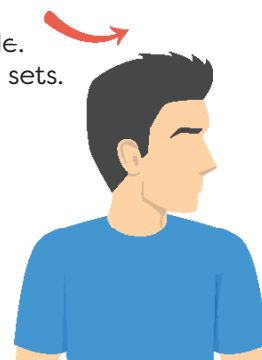
You can do this while seated or standing.

Keep your head squarely over your shoulders and your back straight.

Slowly turn your head to the right until you feel a stretch in the side of your neck and shoulder.

Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds, and then slowly turn your head forward again.

Repeat on your left side. Do up to 10 sets.





WORDSEARCH CHALLENGE

Winter
Casserole
Sleep
Cold
Bonfire
Fawkes
Fireworks
Neck
Immune
Warmer

N	T	C	C	E	W	S	N	W	I	C	S	E	O
D	R	C	A	K	B	C	W	D	E	I	E	M	A
E	O	R	R	T	O	O	F	M	O	O	T	W	W
D	U	O	F	N	A	O	L	N	N	M	R	A	W
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F	E	K	L	S	E	E	I	L	U	M	B	R	R
B	A	F	T	E	M	C	O	K	O	A	F	A	L
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R	E	F	E	C	A	S	S	A	R	O	L	E	L
E	P	R	F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	S	R	D

WHERE TO FIND US:

SPINEWORKS

236 Kennington Park Road, London,
SE11 4DA

0207 7937454

Mon: 8:00 – 13:00 | 15:00 – 20:00

Tue: 15:00 – 20:00

Wed: Closed

Thu: 8:00 – 13:00 | 15:00 – 20:00

Fri: 8:00 – 13:00

Fun Facts

*Impress your family & friends over Christmas
Dinner with these winter facts!*

1. Earth is closest to the Sun in winter.
2. Stonehenge was set up to frame the sunset of the winter solstice.
3. Snowflakes almost always have six sides.
4. The winter solstice is the “shortest day” of the year.
5. The first Winter Olympics were held in Chamonix, France, in 1924.