

Helping you stay healthy, focused and motivated in these unprecedented times

We want you to stay fit and healthy, both physically and emotionally, so we've lined up a panel of health and wellbeing experts to bring you practical tips and advice on a weekly basis.

In this issue:

- **Caring for your Mental and Emotional Wellbeing - *One of the five Key Pillars of Health and Wellbeing.***

Lifestyle ideas, tips, and advice for maintaining mental health & wellbeing, with a particular focus on those working from home.

NEW YEAR BLUES?



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January has traditionally never been a contender for the “month of the year” award. However, this January has edged up the candidate stakes. As the New Year finally heralded the end of 2020, we all breathed a collective sigh of relief and said goodbye to a year washed away in a blur, a year that dominated all of our lives in so many different ways.

So here we are, one month into the New Year. The festive season of ‘relax and kick back’ is fast receding into the distant past, as we motor along through short, dark, winter days, accompanied, for the most part, by interminably bland, cold, seasonal weather. Daily updates on national and international news meddle with our anxiety and stress levels: the bugle call of ‘stay home, save lives’ messaging, infection rates spiralling, and restrictions being clamped back into place, irritate our mental wellbeing. We’ve been told to be patient, persevere, put on a brave face, and keep going. It’s all cumulative and wearing on the spirit, isn’t it?

NEW YEAR BLUES?

From office to home

Many of us have gone from an office-based work environment to working full time from home. We embraced the change initially; a longer lie-in, no tedious commuting, more flexibility for the working day, but, as time moved on, and we began to get into the rhythm of the new normal, the restrictions, pressures, and uncertainty began to test our resilience. There has also been the disconcerting sensation that many of us are feeling; that our days seem to be speeding up, blurring into each other, as if time is slipping away.

For many of us, going to the office, even on a flexible basis, provided us with a sense of routine, security, and balance. It gave us passive exercise, through our commute back and forth and moving around during the day. Human beings are essentially social animals and connection with others is an important factor in maintaining good mental wellbeing. Office life gave us the ability to make real connections with others, working face to face on projects, attending in-person meetings, and meeting up socially with colleagues during lunchtime or after work. We also need to be mindful of the loss of those other passing incremental interactions: the nod and smile from a colleague, or an occasional pleasantry in a shop, coffee bar, at lunch, or catching up at the pub/bar at the end of the day, all wiped out from our homeworking lives. We've swapped all this with staring at our own four walls all day, dealing with a stream of video calls and virtual meetings. It's not surprising many of us are feeling less than our best!

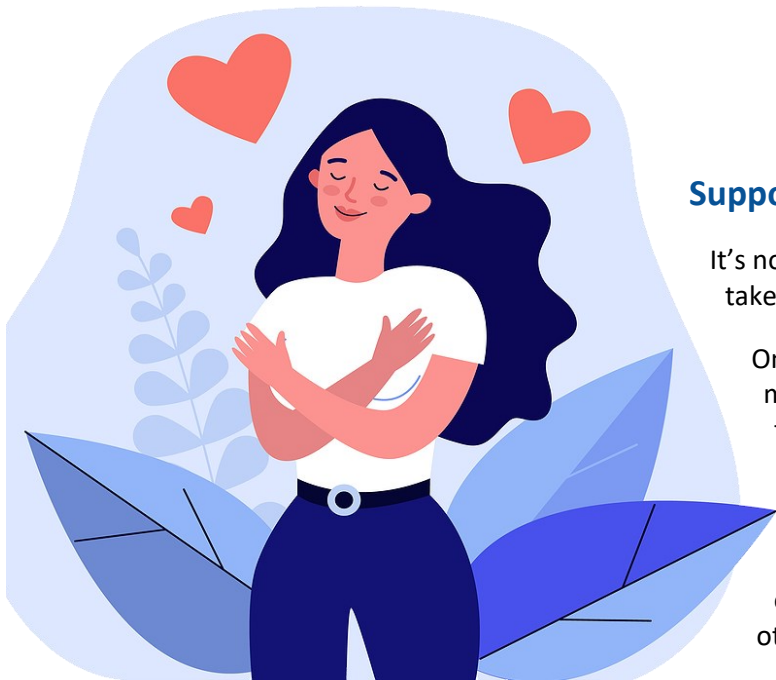


NEW YEAR BLUES?

In your own boat, but in the same stormy sea

'In your own boat, but in the same stormy sea' has been a popular metaphor of our times; with us all experiencing our own unique mix of frustrations and pressures in this crisis. Although there is a general feeling of separateness, that has resulted from us all having to live our own personal version of this pandemic – that feeling is something we all share.

For some, the journey up until now, has been traumatic and life changing, coping with illness and bereavement. Working from home has brought us extremes: loneliness has been a major burden for some whilst others struggle with the pressures of having a full house, whether family, or sharing with house mates. For parents, there has been the ongoing challenge of juggling work with childcare and home schooling. Some describe that they are feeling overwhelmed.

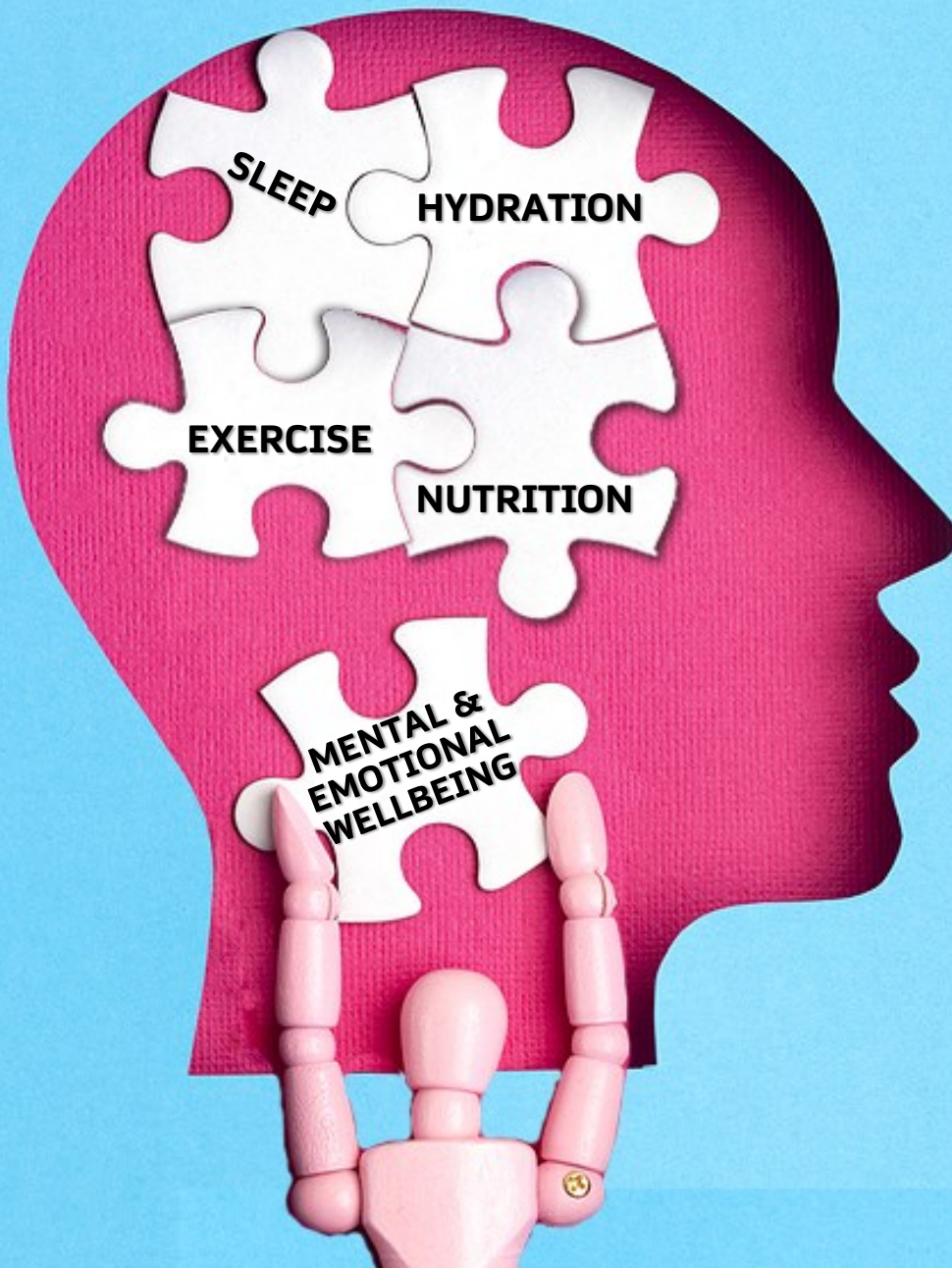


Support yourself on the 'home run'

It's not surprising that during this time, many of us struggle to maintain our mental wellbeing, but we must take courage; with the arrival of the vaccine, there's light at the end of the tunnel.

On the following pages, we bring together the best lifestyle ideas, tips, and advice for maintaining mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on those working from home, to support you through these last hard months and towards the 'home run'. Try some of the ideas that have relevance and appeal to you, but don't put too much pressure on yourself, if an idea doesn't feel possible right now.

Remember the power of 'incremental change'. Over time, small positive additions to a daily routine or change in habit can significantly support your overall mental health and wellbeing. Encourage others along the way by sharing ideas. Let's give it a go!



Five Key Pillars of Health & Wellbeing - Supporting Your Mental Health

Research has identified the five key support factors or 'Pillars of Health and Wellbeing' that are critical in supporting your mental health. These are: **Nutrition, Hydration, Exercise, Sleep, and Caring for your Mental & Emotional Wellbeing** (through stress reduction, relaxation and achieving balance).

By looking after these **five Key Pillars of Health and Wellbeing** you will be going a long way in supporting your mental health - and all-round physical health - during these critical times. The great thing is that all five of these key pillars **interrelate and work synergistically with each other**, creating a compound positive benefit effect on the other! Working on each of them will therefore exponentially help you with your all round mental and physical wellbeing. For example, exercise contributes to more sound and restful sleep, and a great night's sleep makes you more mentally alert and prepares you for the challenges of the day ahead!

Remember the power of 'incremental change'

We know things are tough all round for everyone at the moment, and there are many pressures that can knock our resolve on making the best health and wellbeing choices. It's important to understand that significantly improving your health and wellbeing doesn't necessarily require you to make big, sweeping changes to your lifestyle, so don't put yourself under pressure to achieve this. It is the smaller, incremental changes you make (and stick to!) that will make the real difference to improving your mental and physical health over time! We will be addressing all of the Pillars of Health and Wellbeing in due course, offering you ideas and tips to make those small changes, that will add up, to make all the difference in supporting your mental health and wellbeing through these tricky times and beyond.

In this issue we've focused on one of these Key Pillars of Health and Wellbeing: **Caring for your Mental & Emotional Wellbeing**, with a big focus on the home working environment.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

You may very well have others relying on you, whether they be family, friends or colleagues, but be mindful not to neglect looking after yourself. If someone is asking you for support, check out how you are feeling too. Like they say in the emergency guidance given before you begin a flight... fit your own oxygen mask first, before you help others to fit theirs. Taking time to look after yourself will mean that you're in a better position to support those that rely on you. Practice what you preach!

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT

Asking for help is hard for some people and very natural for others. If you find it difficult to talk, try not to suffer in silence and instead reach out for help if you need it. Whatever is troubling you, sharing it and reaching out for support is the first step in moving difficult situations or feelings forward, towards acceptance or change.

Reciprocally, try and support others with listening and supporting, whether it be a family member, a friend, or a colleague. Provide a safe space to talk, don't dismiss, and don't judge. Gently prompt with questions like "how are you feeling?" or "how are things at home?" and give the other person time to really explain their difficulties. Don't always strive to offer solutions; just giving someone the space to talk and listening non-judgementally, will go a long way in supporting someone to move on positively.

MAKE THE EFFORT TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS

It is essential to connect with others to keep feelings of loneliness at bay and to boost our mood. So, make full use of technology to keep you connected over these difficult months. Make the effort, pick up the phone, message or arrange a zoom meeting with friends or family or with colleagues for a social catch up.



LOOK OUT FOR 'CHAMPAGNE MOMENTS' AND 'POCKETS OF JOY'

In these tough times, and especially if you are feeling low, it can feel difficult to appreciate the uplifting moments in life. If you're vigilant, even in this restricted life we are all currently living, you will find them; it might just be appreciating a well-earned cuppa after hoovering the house, enjoying the sensation of being wrapped up warm on a walk after a fresh snow fall, completing the final touches to painting a room, or pressing the 'Send' button after finishing a work project. Learn to celebrate these 'champagne moments' of enjoyment or achievement and give yourself a moment to really appreciate them with all your senses, before moving on.

Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to share with you what's brought them joy. Encourage others to set little personal goals of finding the champagne moments and pockets of joy in their days too. They all count! Sharing these moments will compound these joyful feelings and will help to carry us all through the day!



THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

It's that time of year where many of us would normally be beginning to plan a summer holiday, a social event, a festival, or a sports challenge due to take place sometime during the year. With the majority of travel plans indefinitely on hold, a lot of people are feeling overwhelmed by the ongoing uncertainty and the inability to plan ahead.

Having things to look forward to is important, even if they are little things. Focus on shorter periods of time – even looking a week or two ahead. It could be organising a team social, starting a book club, or planning a Zoom quiz night with friends.

TIME OUTSIDE IS IMPORTANT

It's really important to get outside every day, for your mental and physical wellbeing.

It is so easy to look out of the window, see a dull, uninviting rainy day, and rationalise staying behind closed doors... for yet another day. But why not wrap up warm, take a flask if you need more encouragement, and get outside every day, and preferably in daylight hours, even if it's just for a walk around the block.

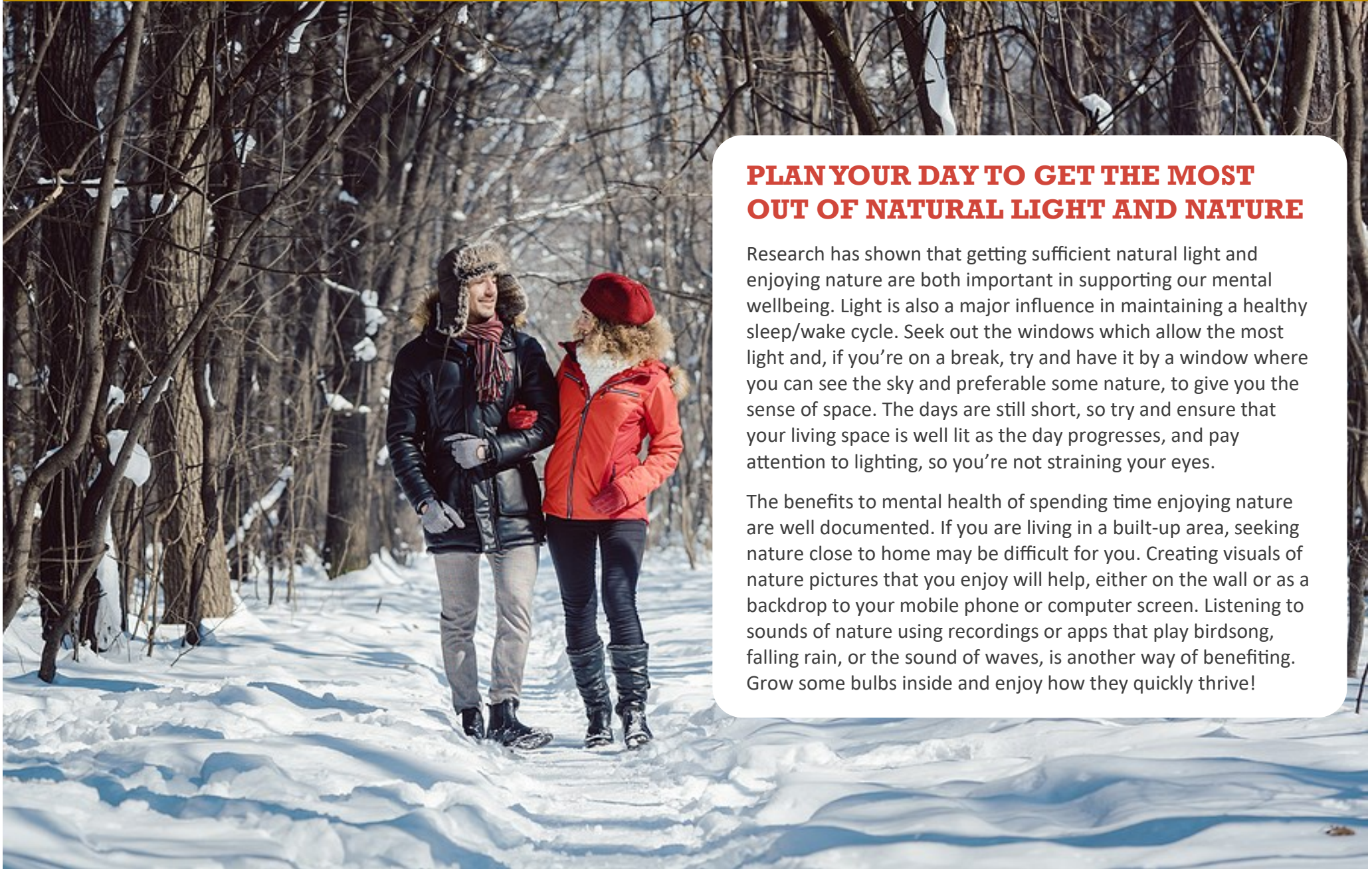
DOUBLE THE BENEFIT OF OUTSIDE TIME BY PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

Take some gentle deep breaths in and out, putting your focus firstly on the movement of your breath. Then place your focus into what you can see, hear, and feel. Focus on each sensory input, one sense at a time... what can you hear nearby? Then widen your perspective to more distant sounds... birds chirping... the sound of someone walking along... a car starting up nearby, the distant rumble of traffic... maybe the faint noise of a train or an aeroplane in the distance.

Then add to this awareness... what you can see? The new growth of early buds on shrubs, daffodils beginning to push through, branches on trees moving or still? The shapes of the clouds in the sky... keep building the sensory awareness of the present. You will be amazed at how much you have never noticed before! The more you begin noticing, the more you will build on this focused awareness.

If your mind wanders into other thoughts, let these thoughts gently drift away and re-focus on the input from your senses.

Come back refreshed and ready to continue your day!



PLAN YOUR DAY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF NATURAL LIGHT AND NATURE

Research has shown that getting sufficient natural light and enjoying nature are both important in supporting our mental wellbeing. Light is also a major influence in maintaining a healthy sleep/wake cycle. Seek out the windows which allow the most light and, if you're on a break, try and have it by a window where you can see the sky and preferably some nature, to give you the sense of space. The days are still short, so try and ensure that your living space is well lit as the day progresses, and pay attention to lighting, so you're not straining your eyes.

The benefits to mental health of spending time enjoying nature are well documented. If you are living in a built-up area, seeking nature close to home may be difficult for you. Creating visuals of nature pictures that you enjoy will help, either on the wall or as a backdrop to your mobile phone or computer screen. Listening to sounds of nature using recordings or apps that play birdsong, falling rain, or the sound of waves, is another way of benefiting. Grow some bulbs inside and enjoy how they quickly thrive!

CHANGE YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

By now, many of us have established our homeworking routine. Routine is important for multiple reasons; without structure and routine, time seems to speed up and your days will feel like they are blurring into each other.

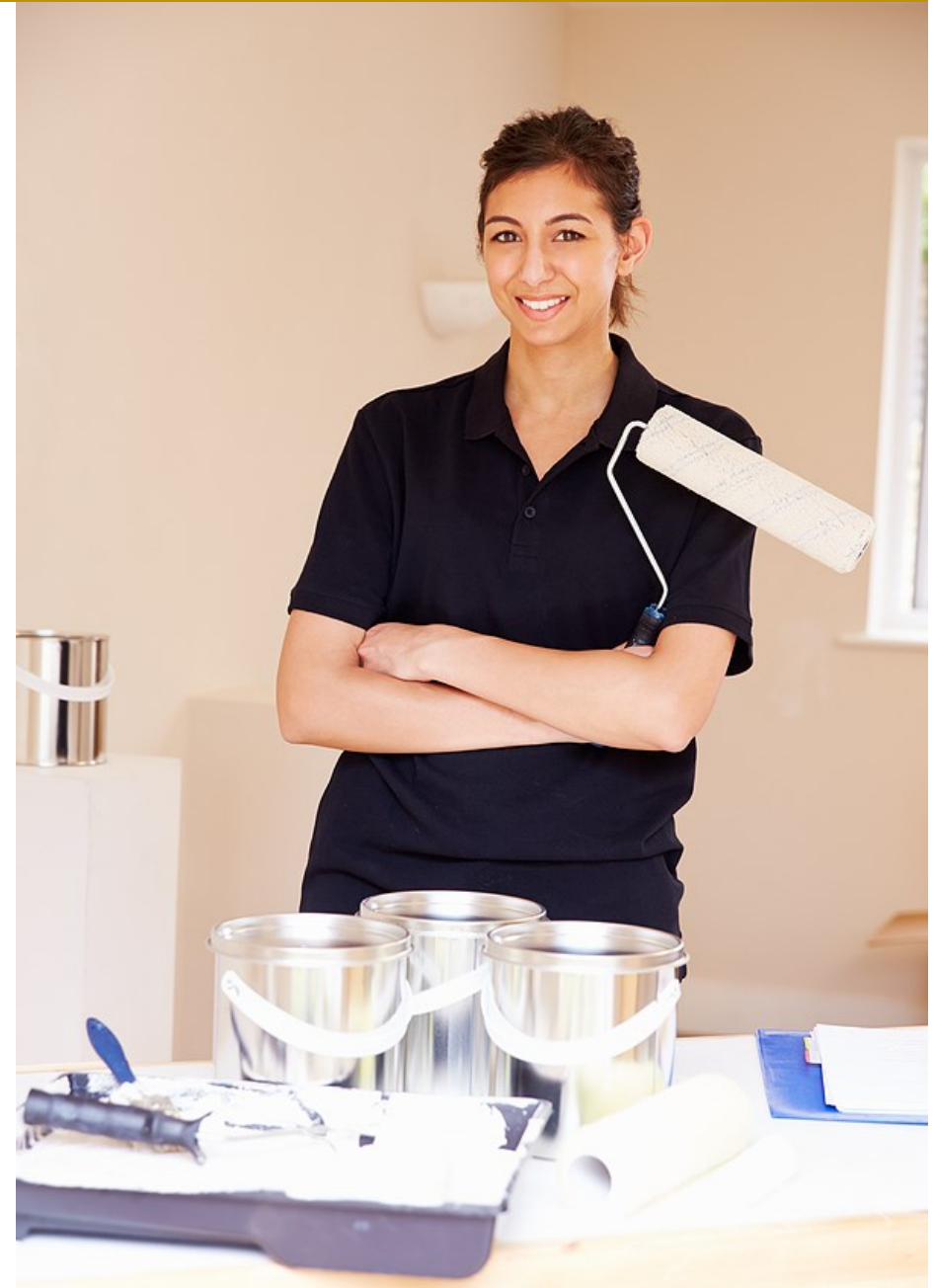
A healthy sleep/wake cycle also depends on routine and the regularity of set wake up/go to sleep times, and regular meal times. It's important for your mental health too, it gives your mind a sense of order and calm, and being organised helps you to maintain a good, balanced routine between work and leisure.

Now we are well into the winter months, it may be helpful to adapt your routine. Try changing the way you run your day, as this may help you if you are struggling with the monotony of the pandemic.

TRY ACTIVITIES THAT PROVIDE A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

When you look back on your day, and feel like you've achieved something, it makes you feel good.

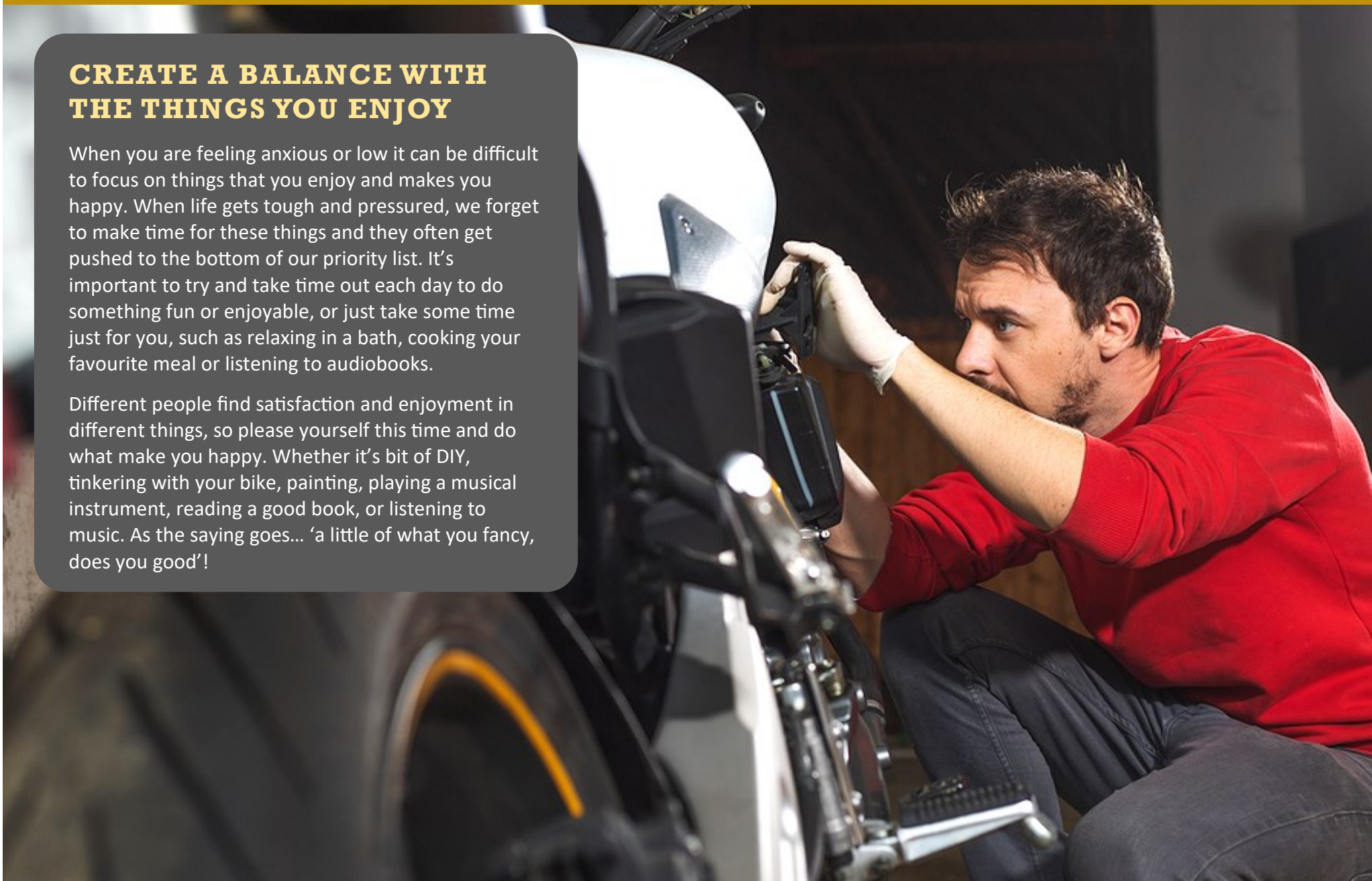
Build in some time each day to do something that gives you a sense of accomplishment. This can be as simple as getting the ironing done, checking through your bank statements, sewing a button on a shirt, or finishing some decorating.



CREATE A BALANCE WITH THE THINGS YOU ENJOY

When you are feeling anxious or low it can be difficult to focus on things that you enjoy and makes you happy. When life gets tough and pressured, we forget to make time for these things and they often get pushed to the bottom of our priority list. It's important to try and take time out each day to do something fun or enjoyable, or just take some time just for you, such as relaxing in a bath, cooking your favourite meal or listening to audiobooks.

Different people find satisfaction and enjoyment in different things, so please yourself this time and do what make you happy. Whether it's bit of DIY, tinkering with your bike, painting, playing a musical instrument, reading a good book, or listening to music. As the saying goes... 'a little of what you fancy, does you good'!



FOCUS ON THINGS YOU CAN POSITIVELY CHANGE

The pandemic means that your choices to change things may be more limited. Try and use this time to focus on the things that you can change for the better. It's helpful to write up a list of things you can, and want, to change. Pick a project and get to work on it.

You could commit to a larger project like re-designing one of your living space areas, such as your bedroom. Or a smaller project such as a declutter, or hanging a new set of curtains to brighten a room. If cooking is your thing, try widening your meal repertoire! If you like to use your mind, was there ever a better time to undertake some further skills training or learn a new language? The possibilities are endless!

FINDING 'ON/OFF LINE' BALANCE

It's a tricky one isn't it? Many of us are on a computer all day staring at a screen. Zoom meetings and telephone calls pepper your day. Technology has, of course, been a life saver over these long months in helping businesses adapt to the restrictive times, allowing us to swiftly re-locate and continue to work and interact with peers. But remember, it's really important for your musculoskeletal health and overall mental wellbeing to take regular breaks during the day, ensure you get up and move, stretch, and generally keep yourself mobile and give your eyes a rest from continually staring at a computer screen.

Outside of work it's also been critical in helping us stay in contact with family and friends. Group activities can be a fun way to connect and relax with family and friends: Zoom quizzes, charades or number games can be a laugh and break up the monotony of lockdown.



In-person appointments in the Lloyd's building (for Lloyd's pass holders)

The Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre is open for in-person face-to-face physiotherapy, osteopathy, massage and podiatry appointments.
A thorough infection control and screening policy has been implemented to facilitate a return to in-person appointments.

Remote (phone/video based) consultation services

We are continuing to offer physiotherapy and osteopathy consultations with our practitioners by phone or video link.

These can be conducted over the phone or by online video consultation. Remote consultations are priced at £45 for 30 minutes, or can be billed to your private medical insurance provider directly.

COVID-19 Policy and Infection Control Procedures

Our comprehensive COVID-19 Policy can be viewed on our website at www.lloyds wellbeingcentre.co.uk/covid19-policy

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us on 020 7327 5341 or info@lloyds wellbeingcentre.co.uk

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