OURPLACENews

The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

AUGUST 2020

Inside this issue...

Good skills

8 very different digital skills that you can learn from home

Get baking!

8 technical baking skills that you can learn at home

All steamed up?

How to stop your glasses fogging up while wearing a mask

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7 ways that coaching could help you to get more from life

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Letter from the Luitor

Welcome to Our Place - The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

Every month, we bring you news and features on; Health & Beauty, Money & Work, Leisure & Travel, Food & Drink, Arts, Crafts & Hobbies, Home & Garden, plus... our Charity of the Month!

Our Place was founded with a mission to connect the mature online community to a world of news, features, offers and life changing products they may have missed out on. Bring them all into one place, Our Place.

What makes us special is that we are a vibrant team of all ages, from 21 to 65 who are all passionate about living life to the fullest irrespective of age. We have built strong relationships with some of the best UK age related businesses with the aim of brokering discounted rates for our Over-50s community.

Become a Friend of Our Place and receive our exclusive newsletters. They are a great way of keeping updated with the latest news and promotions. We aim to bring a smile to your face every time you open your inbox by selecting exclusive vouchers and discounts just for you.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy Our Place.

The Editor - Our Place

PS. Do you have an interesting story or article? If so, send us an email by visiting: www.ourplace.co

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (where this absolutely cannot be done from home)
- Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Anyone can spread the virus

Full guidance on staying at home and away from others

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

Details

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is now (23rd March 2020) introducing three new measures.

- Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
- 2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
- 3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them - including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Symptoms and what to do

Do not leave your home if you have coronavirus symptoms

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

Advice for people at high risk

Who's at high risk from coronavirus

Coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill, but there are some people who are at a higher risk.

For example, you may be at high risk from coronavirus if you:

- have had an organ transplant
- · are having certain types of cancer treatment
- have blood or bone marrow cancer, such as leukaemia
- have a severe lung condition, such as cystic fibrosis or severe
- have a condition that makes you much more likely to get infections
- are taking medicine that weakens your immune system
- · are pregnant and have a serious heart condition

Who's at high risk from coronavirus

If you're at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, there are extra things you should do to avoid catching it.
These include:

- not leaving your home you should not go out to do shopping, pick up medicine or exercise
- stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people in your home as much as possible

Ask friends, family or neighbours to pick up shopping and medicines for you. They should leave them outside your door.

Self-isolation helps stop coronavirus spreading

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. This is called self-isolation.

If you are self-isolating, you must:

- not leave your home for any reason, other than to exercise once a day - but stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people
- not go out to buy food or collect medicine order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home

You can use your garden, if you have one.

STAY AT HOME!

Multigenerational households and coronavirus

Older people have been shown to be particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus (COVID-19).



Mature Times reports that over 80% of deaths registered up to 26 June 2020 that mention COVID-19 on the death certificate in England and Wales relate to someone aged 70 years or over according to figures released by the Office for National Statistics.

Most people in the UK that fall within the over 70 years age group live alone (44%) or with just one other person (47%), the majority of whom are another adult aged 50 years or over.

However, a small proportion of the population in this age group live as part of a larger household with a mix of ages, and this is more common among people from certain ethnic groups.

People aged 70 years or over of Bangladeshi or Pakistani ethnicity are more likely to live with those from a range of ages compared with people of white ethnicity of the same age group.

Three-quarters of households containing someone aged 70 years or over whose ethnicity is White are either single-person households or only have people aged 70 years or over within them.

This compares with around a quarter of households that have at least one person aged 70 years or over whose ethnic group is Bangladeshi. Just over half of these households contain more than one generation living together with at least one person aged 0 to 19 years, one person aged 20 to 69 years and one person aged 70 years or over.

Older people living in households with younger adults and children may be more exposed to COVID-19, as these younger people go out to work or return to school. The figures also show that there is some evidence that infection rates for coronavirus are lower in two-person households than in larger households.

(Story source: Mature Times)

Over-50s like Boris Johnson mustn't be overlooked in the government's post COVID obesity drive

A post-COVID drive to tackle obesity will be hugely welcome. But those in their 50s and 60s must not be left out.

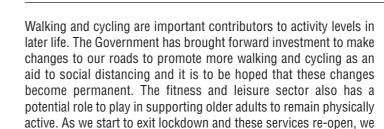
Ageing Better reports we heard this morning that Boris Johnson's brush with death as he battled with coronavirus has produced a new zeal for tackling obesity among the UK's population.

This is a well-overdue focus, and it's absolutely right that the health crisis we're facing today should point government minds in this direction: many of the underlying conditions that put someone at a greater risk from the disease, such as diabetes and heart disease, are linked to obesity. Obesity also affects lung function and interferes with the body's immune response to viral infections. There are fears that in countries with high levels of obesity, coronavirus will affect more people at younger ages than was previously thought.

It is vital that we help people develop the right health behaviours and attitudes at the earliest stages in life, but all too often, public health initiatives to tackle obesity focus only on getting kids running around - and write off those at older ages. But as Mr Johnson now well knows, those in their 50s and 60s face serious risks to their health with the potential to mar or even cut short the many years of life still ahead of them. As our report on The State of Ageing showed last year, levels of obesity in later life are shockingly high: more than 7 in 10 people between the ages of 45 and 64 in England are either overweight or obese.

There are of course huge wealth inequalities within these numbers. Almost half of the poorest men (47%) and women (45%) aged 50 and over in England are obese. If we didn't already understand the tragic impact of health inequalities like this, surely the spread of COVID-19 deaths has brought it home to us: death rates for the poorest in the UK are twice as high as those for the most well-off. This realisation surely must spur real action to tackle the preventable causes of ill-health that lead to such different outcomes for the richest and the poorest in our society.

Improving levels of physical activity is of course central to this and the Prime Minister's interest in promoting cycling is very welcome. Activity levels decrease with age - currently, nearly half of people aged 55-64 aren't physically active enough to achieve good health, and the implications of inactivity at this age are just as serious as a sedentary lifestyle for kids. Tackling the barriers that stop people from being active in later life is absolutely vital to reducing health inequalities and improving healthy life expectancies.



However, we also need to see strong action taken to tackle our food environment. In 2018 the Government published part 2 of its childhood obesity plan. Many of the policies it set out have yet to be implemented. Now is the perfect time to pick up that agenda and address the price, location and promotion of food products that are high in salt, sugar and saturated fats. Coming out of lockdown, the majority of us will welcome action to help us lose the extra kilos we've gained.

need a wider range of offers that meet the needs, capabilities and

aspirations of older generations.

We're likely to be looking at many things differently as we emerge from this coronavirus outbreak, and it is to be hoped that a greater understanding of the need to prevent ill-health, rather than just treat it, is one of them. The news that the Prime Minister plans a renewed attack on obesity is a hopeful sign. But if this new drive is to succeed where previous measures have failed, it must look across the life course, not just at any one age group, and it must address the obesogenic environment we currently live in.

(Story source: Ageing Better)

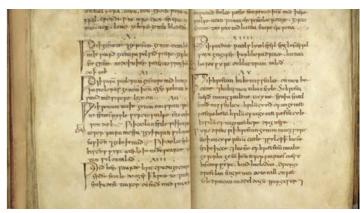
1,000-year-old medieval medicine could help fight modern infections

'Bald's eyesalve', containing onion, garlic, wine, and bile salts, was shown to have promising antibacterial activity.

Inews reports that a medieval medicine remedy could provide new treatment for modern day infections, researchers studying 'ancientbiotics' have suggested.

Scientists at the University of Warwick reconstructed a 1,000-year-old medieval remedy known as 'Bald's eyesalve', containing onion, garlic, wine, and bile salts, and showed it to have promising antibacterial activity. The mixture also appeared to cause low levels of damage to human cells.

The use of garlic, which contains allicin, could explain the mixture's activity against single-cell bacterial cultures, however, garlic alone has no activity against multicellular bacteria, known as biofilms, and therefore the anti-biofilm activity of Bald's eyesalve cannot be attributed to a single ingredient and requires the combination of all ingredients to be effective.



Dr Freya Harrison from the University of Warwick's School of Life Sciences said: "Most antibiotics that we use today are derived from natural compounds, but our work highlights the need to explore not only single compounds but mixtures of natural products for treating biofilm infections.

In this first instance, we think this combination could suggest new treatments for infected wounds, such as diabetic foot and leg ulcers."

'Medicine through the ages'

The Ancientbiotics research team was established in 2015 and is an interdisciplinary group of researchers including microbiologists, chemists, pharmacists, data analysts and medievalists at Warwick, Nottingham and in the United States.

In previous research, Dr Christina Lee, from the School of English at the University of Nottingham, had examined the Bald's Leechbook, an Old English leatherbound volume in the British Library, to see if it really works as an antibacterial remedy.

The Leechbook is widely thought of as one of the earliest known medical textbooks and contains Anglo-Saxon medical advice and recipes for medicines, salves and treatments.

Dr Lee said: "Bald's eyesalve underlines the significance of medical treatment throughout the ages. It shows that people in Early Medieval England had at least some effective remedies.

The collaboration which has informed this project shows the importance of the arts in interdisciplinary research."

(Story source: Inews)



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All steamed up? How to stop your glasses fogging up while wearing a face mask

As the wearing of face coverings and masks becomes mandatory in our daily lives, we look at ways to stop your glasses fogging up whilst wearing one.

Why do glasses fog up when wearing a face mask?

Due to the limited airflow, glasses fogging tends to be more common when wearing a medical or cloth face mask because your breath mostly escapes from the top of your mask.

When you exhale, your warm breath comes into contact with your cooler lenses, which steams up your lenses and clouds your vision. This steam also creates excess moisture around your glasses which reduces the grip of your nose pads, and makes it easy for them to slip down your face.



Here are some top tips for fog-free glasses:

It's a good idea to try these tips before leaving the house to ensure your mask is secure and you don't have to fiddle with it or touch your face once you're out in public.

Make sure your mask fits snugly

A tightly fitting mask is the first thing that you need to check for. Not only does this help to keep you protected against any airborne particles, but it also stops too much breath from escaping and fogging your lenses.

For the best fit, your mask should be snug against your nose and cheeks, and there shouldn't be any slack or gaps for the air to escape. If your mask is not tight enough when you first put it on, try tightening the straps for a secure fit or opting for a smaller size.

Secure the mask around your nose

Securing your mask around your nose is another way to limit the amount of breath that escapes upwards. Try moving your mask further up your nose (if this is comfortable for you) and resting your glasses on top of it to help seal the mask. If this does not work, or your mask cannot be pulled this high, try using a small piece of surgical tape to secure the mask to the bridge of your nose. This helps form a seal to prevent your breath from escaping upwards.

Think your mask is too big? Tighten it with the ear loops

If your mask doesn't fit tightly, you can try adjusting it yourself. If you have enough slack in the ear loops, try twisting them into an 'X' shape and then putting them around your ears. With the self-tying face masks, you can adjust it yourself so that the mask fits closer to your face - just make sure you don't tie them so tight that you get red marks behind your ears.

Stop your glasses from slipping down your nose

Glasses constantly slipping down your nose can be a pain, so why not try wrapping the string of the mask around the sides of your glasses rather than your ear.

This might help to make your glasses and mask more secure just be careful when taking off your glasses as the mask will be attached. It might be that your glasses are slipping down because your frames are not fitting you as well as they did, this can happen over time as we use them day in and day out - they may simply need adjusting. If so, just call your local opticians and they'll be able to adjust them for you, though at the moment this may be by appointment only.

Breathe downwards into the mask

Instead of fiddling with your mask and trying to adjust it, you might find that changing your breathing helps just as well. To prevent your glasses from steaming up, try to push the air downwards when you exhale. It might take a bit of getting used to, but once you've got the hang of it, it's a pretty simple solution.

Add a folded tissue to absorb moisture

Fold a tissue into a strip and then pop it inside the top of your mask or tape it in place so it fits securely over your nose - the tissue should absorb the excess moisture.

Clean your lenses

It might be that your lenses are prone to fogging if it's been a while since they had a good clean. Using a cloth and cleaning spray, or, if they're particularly dirty or smeared, put a small drop of washing-up liquid on the lenses and rub lightly with your fingers. Then rinse them with warm (not hot) water and gently dry with a soft tissue.



Adjust your glasses

It may seem a little counterintuitive, but pushing your glasses down on your nose slightly will create more space between your lenses and your eyes, allowing for more air to circulate and keeping your breath from fogging up your vision.

Switch to contact lenses

If none of the above tips are helpful, it might be worth switching to contact lenses for the time being. This eliminates any worry that your vision might be impaired by steamy lenses, which is especially important if you're at work where it might be difficult to keep defogging your lenses.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

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Nearly a fifth of over-50s think Covid-19 will affect retirement plans

Nearly a fifth (18%) of people aged over 50 have said the coronavirus pandemic may affect their retirement plans or has already done so, according to a survey.



Evening Express reports that among those whose plans have been hit, a quarter (25%) said they have not been able to retire due to their finances. Co-op Insurance found.

And more than a fifth (22%) have had to use some of their savings after being out of work.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has also encouraged almost a third (31%) of over-50s who are yet to retire to perhaps do so sooner.

Among those who have already retired, nearly a quarter (23%) said the virus has affected their plans to spend time with friends and family, and a fifth (20%) have not been able to travel as they had planned.

Graham Ward Lush, head of life insurance at the Co-op, said: "It's perhaps no surprise that so many people over the age of 50 are disappointed with how the pandemic has affected their retirement plans."

Some 2,000 people aged 50 and over, including some who have retired and some who are still working, were surveyed across the UK.

(Story source: Evening Express)

Do you have an interesting story or article?

If so, send us an email by visiting: www.ourplace.co

From home life to work and money: the impact of lockdown on people in their 50s and 60s revealed

A new report by Ipsos MORI reveals the impact lockdown has had on those in their 50s and 60s.

Centre for Ageing Better reports that a new report by Ipsos MORI and the Centre for Ageing Better shines a light on the impact lockdown has had on those aged 50-70, revealing dramatic changes to people's lives and their plans for the future.

Some have seen their health decline, with one in five saying their physical health has worsened since lockdown. Over half have had a medical or dental appointment cancelled. 32% have been drinking more, and 36% have been smoking more.

At the same time, the lockdown has prompted worries about people's finances, with almost half of people in their 50s and 60s saying they expect their finances to worsen in the year ahead. Nearly seven in ten (68%) of those who are currently workless do not feel confident that they will be employed in the future.

For some, however, this period has been a positive one, prompting reflections about family, work and community. 30% have been volunteering informally, such as running errands for neighbours. The majority of those who have taken up volunteering expect to carry on doing so in the future. Many have enjoyed spending more time with loved ones, and as a result are re-thinking their priorities: nearly half of those in work would consider changing their working pattern in future, and a quarter would consider a career change.

It's crucial that the government acts to capitalise on these positive changes, while supporting those who have been negatively impacted.

This group is in a particularly precarious position as they approach retirement, and any reduction in savings could leave them without enough to fund retirement. Job losses could hit this group particularly hard, as over 50s face significant barriers to returning to work once they become unemployed. At the same time, if health conditions or unhealthy habits are left unchecked at this age, they could have a serious impact in later life.

We're urging action from the government to ensure this group isn't left behind in recovery plans, which so far have typically focused on younger age groups. The key support they say is needed includes:

- · Preventing ill-health and promoting physical activity
- Supporting over 50s to remain in work
- Taking action to improve the poor condition of homes
- Encouraging people to continue helping out in their communities



Anna Dixon, Chief Executive at the Centre for Ageing Better, said:

"The lockdown period has had a huge impact on people in their 50s and 60s, with all elements of people's lives turned upside down from their finances to their family lives.

"For many, this has been an incredibly worrying time. Lockdown has taken a toll on people's health, and put many at risk of financial insecurity. But for some there have also been opportunities to rethink their work-life balance, get involved in their communities, and build new, healthier habits.

"It's crucial that the needs of this group aren't overlooked as we move into the recovery period. We have a window of opportunity to build on the positive changes many people have been making, from exercising more to connecting with their communities. "But without action to support people's health and help those who have lost jobs back into work, many in this generation face a retirement scarred by the impact of lockdown."

Ben Page, Chief Executive of Ipsos MORI said:

"There has been a great deal of coverage of the financial plight of young people, and the much higher mortality rate among older people. This new study shows how the over 50s' health, finances and employment prospects have suffered in lockdown. "As in the aftermath of the 2008 crash, the risk we face is of older people seeing their prospects collapsing: even before COVID-19, employment fell off a cliff after 55 - despite rising longevity. "It is vital the post-COVID world does not reverse the gains made for older people in the last decade."

(Centre for Ageing Better)

The benefits of retirement living have never been so clear

In previous articles we've explored the benefits of independent retirement living developments and looked at the positive contributions it's had on the retirees who have made the move.

50 Plus reports that in recent months, we've been so heartened to see the many benefits of retirement living we've talked about being realised through these challenging times.

Seeing the positive impact these communities can offer has certainly sparked an interest for many who had never previously considered retirement living as an option. It's also confirmed to those who are living in a retirement development why they made the move in the first place.

Safety at the heart

You might have seen independent retirement properties in the news over the last few weeks, referencing how they have been much safer during the COVID-19 lockdown, with significantly fewer residents passing away compared to the general over 65's population.

Every loss is felt deeply by everyone in retirement communities and a personal tragedy for family and friends but, in the context of the many news stories about care homes, it's an important contrast to see that retirement living developments have proved much safer during this pandemic period than either care homes or even the general retired population.

At the developments we market - managed by our sister company, FirstPort - early action was taken to support our retirement residents well ahead of the UK lockdown announcement, with enhanced cleaning protocols, restrictions on communal lounges and visitors and laundry room rotas to name just a few.

A supportive environment

We know just how important the support of a Development Manager can be to those who live in retirement communities, particularly through lockdown. They have been on-hand to provide guidance to residents who are struggling during self-isolation with a friendly ear, and support with things like online shopping and access to local services.

At Jubilee Court, Development Manager Sondra has been called a "shining light through a dark period" by her residents. She has been actively keeping spirits high with initiatives including singalongs and fish and chip nights - all while socially distanced, of course. Residents at Tylers Ride have also praised their Development Manager, Tracey for helping to make sure those who are self-isolating have access to food supplies and medicines through lockdown. One resident said: "Tracey has once again proved she is a diamond...! would like to thank her for her wonderful way with people and for helping us all."

It's not just residents who value this support, our Development Manager, Suzanne from Bucklers Court received a letter from a resident's relatives all the way from Canada. They wrote to thank her for all her efforts during the pandemic to keep residents safe and happy. They said that knowing she's there makes being so far away much easier.

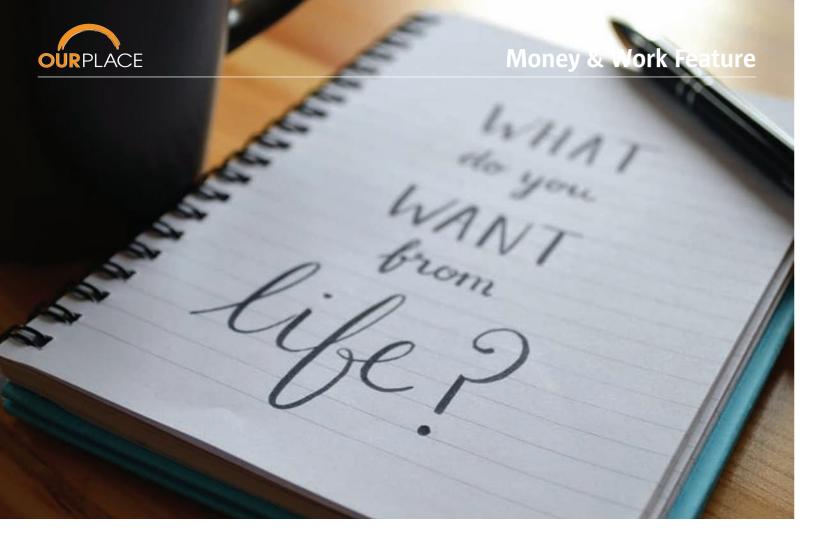
Supporting wellbeing

At retirement developments managed by FirstPort, residents have been provided with weekly entertainment pack including puzzles, crosswords, adult colouring sheets and recipes to help beat the boredom.

Every week, Development Managers have been popping these packs under the door of any of their residents who may find them useful to help keep them entertained while they're spending more time at home.

These have received many compliments from residents and their families on how our activities and updates are really helping them to stay positive, one resident commented: "There are plenty of self-isolating weekly puzzles and word searches, and more or less daily up to date news. If I am going to have to be isolated better to be here with everyone in same situation".

(Story source: 50 Plus)



Get the best out of life: 7 ways that coaching could help you to get more from life

You may have heard of a life or career coach in the past - but have you ever wondered how coaching could add value to your own life?

If you've never considered coaching before, or you have, but you'd like to know more about what you could stand to gain, then have a read of the following 7 ways that coaching could help you...

What is coaching?

Coaches help people to take a step back from their daily lives and look at the bigger picture, so they can identify which aspects of their lives they'd like to improve. They can also help you to gain a better understanding of issues you might be facing, and to increase your own awareness of your perceptions, behaviours, values and beliefs - which can bring you clarity over what you want in life and how you can go about getting it.





Money & Work Feature

Some people might find that they are generally dissatisfied with their life and could use some help exploring and evaluating possible ways to make a positive change, whilst others might have specific areas that they already know they'd like to work on.

For example, wanting to feel more confident generally in their work and social life, or going after their dream job.

Exploring and reevaluating your future can be exciting, but also daunting and feel like hard work - which is where having a coach can be particularly useful.

They can offer you support, encouragement and motivation to help you get where you need to go. They can also help you work on believing that you can get there by helping you to bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be.

The relationship between a coach and coachee is a collaborative one. They can't fix your life for you - only you can do that - but they can help you to identify and develop strategies and techniques that will help you to reach your goals faster.

It can be helpful to think of a coach in the same way that we might think of a personal trainer. Personal trainers are essentially a coach for the body, whereas coaches are more like personal trainers for your mind.

They can help you to unlock your full potential by giving you the confidence and tools you need to move towards your goals, and get the most from life.

There are different types of coaches that specialise in different areas of life - including health and wellbeing, redundancy, relationships, general life, careers, and so on. So it's up to you to decide which type of coaching you think you could benefit from most.

7 ways that coaching could help you

Explore what you want to get from life, why you want to it and how you can get there

Some people already have a clear idea about where they want to go in life and what they want to do. For example, perhaps you've worked in a financial role in the city for many years, but would now like to make a switch and work with animals instead.

Or maybe you've already decided that you'd like to leave your partner but feel scared, and need some help seeing it through. Even if you're already clear on the significant change that you'd like to make, you might need some help in working through the steps needed to get there.

Or perhaps you have no idea what changes you want to make in your life just yet - but you're aware that you're feeling bored, unsettled or unhappy. Or you've just been made redundant and you're unsure where to turn next.

Whatever your circumstances, a coach can help you to explore and evaluate all your options so that you can pinpoint exactly what you want to achieve next, and how you can create realistic short and long-term goals to get there.

This includes exploring not just what you feel you want to do, but also considering what you feel that you should or ought to do - or even what you know you definitely don't want to do. Distinguishing between these things can help to give you extra focus and clarity over what changes you want to make to your life.

Gain a better understanding of your values, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes

If you've been doing the same things for a long time - whether that be a job, a relationship or a bad habit - then it can sometimes be difficult to break away from it, or to see yourself in any other role.

When you've become stuck in a certain routine, it's also easy for your core values, beliefs, and attitudes to become buried beneath the surface. Perhaps you've stopped considering how you feel about certain events or issues, or you've stopped paying attention to what your likes and dislikes are.



Or maybe you're no longer sure what really makes you tick, or what you're really passionate about. Coaching can help you to reconnect with your inner self, by helping you to question and explore these things.

Just because you've become used to doing something, it doesn't mean that you have to keep doing it if it no longer aligns with your core values and beliefs.

Acknowledging this thought can be scary, but it's easier to change our actions if we have a greater understanding of how our current actions or circumstances could be holding us back from reaching our full potential.

A coach can help you to work out how to take positive action based on your current beliefs and values, so that you can strive to get the most out of life. This is important because, often, our relationships with ourselves will improve and we will like ourselves a lot more if we are living a life that we enjoy and that fulfills us.

Continued on pages 12-13...



Bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be

Once you've identified what you want to gain from life, it can sometimes feel hard to know where to start, especially if there is a significant gap between where you are now and where you want

This can be demotivating and can lead you to believe that you will simply never get there, or that your goals are silly. A coach can show you how to create manageable, realistic goals that feel as though they are within your reach.

This will help to give you reassurance that even if your progress is slow and steady, you are moving the right direction and will get there eventually.

Coaching can also reinforce the idea that if you want to change your life, you have to take different actions. It can be easy to rest in your comfort zone because it feels like a safe place - but it's only when we take steps outside it that growth and development can take place. The gap between where we are and where we want to be, will usually start to shrink if we can take these first uncomfortable steps.

Build confidence and overcome insecurities that could be holding you back

Many of us have goals and ambitions, but it can be easy to put them on the back burner because we don't feel we will be good enough to achieve them, that we can always put them off until tomorrow, or because we have too many obstacles in the way like finances or other commitments.

Coaching won't magically make these issues disappear, but it can help you to analyse your own thought patterns and if appropriate, develop solutions to any issues that could be holding you back.

For example, if you've been avoiding applying for any jobs that mention their method of screening will require a video interview - then a coach can help you to work on overcoming this fear, so that you can increase your job options.



Or if you're unsure whether you can afford to go self-employed, then a career or financial coach could help you to look more closely at this to decide whether, with the right planning and support in place, you could still make it happen.

A coach can often help you to see ways around obstacles, rather than seeing them as things that simply put an end to your dream or goal.



Money & Work Feature

Learn strategies and techniques that will help you reach your goals faster

A coach won't attempt to run your life for you, nor can they alone fix all your problems. But they can work with you to apply strategies and techniques to your daily life that will help you to reach your goals faster.

For example, if you're someone who struggles to make decisions and is finding it difficult to move forward, then they might suggest decision-making strategies that can help you to make confident, well-informed choices.

Coaches can also help you to uncover new ideas and possibilities, by asking you challenging and thought-provoking questions.

Then, once you've decided on a particular path, they can help you to ensure that you commit to your decision fully, and keep moving forward.

You'll receive support, encouragement and motivation

Even if you have plenty of ideas about your long and short-term goals, sometimes having someone cheering you on, helping you to believe that you can do it, can really help.

Similarly, even when we know what actions we need to take to achieve our goals, sometimes we can struggle because we don't feel motivated enough to carry them out.

A coach will be fully focussed and committed to helping you get where you want to be, and will be able to give you that extra nudge or boost when you're in need of some support, encouragement or motivation.

This can be incredibly empowering, and open up a world of possibility.

You'll receive long-term gain

Even if you only have a coach for a short-time, the techniques and strategies that you'll learn will stay with you, and can be useful in multiple aspects of your life.

Coaching can also help you to break down those initial barriers that are getting in the way of your goals, and convince you that they are within your reach.

Once you achieve even one small goal that means a lot to you, you will hopefully see what else is possible and feel inspired to pursue your other aspirations.

Coaching can be seen as an investment into your future that can help you to push limits, always strive for more and believe in endless possibilities.

It will also give you a better idea about how to effectively plan ahead, so that your goals can always be transformed into actions, and you avoid becoming stuck.

Final thoughts...

Most of us can benefit from coaching in some way - either personally or professionally. We all have ideas of things we want to achieve, and with a little help, the process of getting there can become as streamlined and stress-free as possible.

Whether you're looking to change careers, work on your relationships or take better care of your general health and wellbeing, coaching can help you look towards a more positive



Tips on finding the right coach for you

 Browse a range of different coaches before you make a final decision. This will help you get a feel for what sort of services they offer, and whether you'd be better off going with a general or more specialised coach.

For example, if you've been made redundant, you might automatically turn to a career coach, but there are also coaches who deal specifically with redundancy too.

 Consider cost. It's important to consider how many coaching sessions you are likely to want, and how much this is likely to cost you over time.

Coaches charge by the hour and prices can vary considerably, so it's worth making sure that you find a coach that fits your budget.

 Have an introductory call to check the chemistry. Before committing yourself to one particular coach, it's a good idea to have a quick call to see whether you it's a good fit.

A coach is a confidante and someone you will turn to for support and encouragement, so it's important to make sure that you feel at ease with them, and that you feel confident that they will be able to help you achieve your goals.

(Article source: Rest Less)



Good skills: 8 very different digital skills that you can learn from home

While lockdown can feel frustrating and isolating, there have been many positive stories about people using their time to learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby.

During the lockdown, many of us have also developed a deeper appreciation for technology because it's allowed us to keep busy, connect with loved ones and gain access to essentials like food and medicine.

And with our technology use set to increase as we settle into a new normal post-lockdown - it feels like a great time to consider learning some new digital skills from home.

Whether it's coding, video production or getting to grips with social media - digital skills can be used to boost your CV, start a business, or simply have some fun. With that in mind, we've come up with eight very different digital skills you can learn from home, along with suggestions on how to get started.

1. General office skills

These days most companies expect employees to be familiar with standard office tools like Word, Excel and PowerPoint - but if you've never had to use them before, it can be hard knowing where to start.

Thankfully, there are simply hundreds of free online courses promising to take you from a novice to an expert in a few hours - but which are the most worthwhile?

How to get started

If you want to improve your general IT skills to increase your chances of finding a job or advance your career, it might be a good idea to get a Microsoft Office certification.



Leisure & Travel Feature

This means you'll be able to demonstrate your expertise in Excel, Outlook, Word, and other Microsoft Office applications on your CV or LinkedIn profile. It's a great way to let your employer - or potential employer - know that you're tech savvy.

And because today's world is an increasingly digital one, you'll probably find many reasons to use your new skills in your personal life, too - whether it's writing a novel or building a budget.

If it's just Microsoft Word you're looking to improve in, LinkedIn offers 30 days free access to their classes, and there are several first-rate Word courses that will soon have you writing, editing and designing documents like a pro.

If you want to learn how to use Microsoft Excel, a popular data analysis solution, you could have a look at this free 3.5 hour online course with the Corporate Finance Institute.

Or, if you want to really get into how it works, there's a great 12 hour course that's also free; with 26 different modules where you'll learn all the tips, tricks, functions and formulas you need to become an Excel expert.

For PowerPoint, there's a great free course available on Udemy. Mastering Microsoft PowerPoint Made Easy Training Tutorial is a 6-hour course that will help you get familiar with the PowerPoint environment, learn how to create basic presentations and apply animation. The course will allow you to see each function performed as though an instructor is sitting right there with you.

2. Photo editing

Today, being able to take beautiful photos is only one part of creating great images. Editing, enhancing and manipulating digital images is an essential part of photography, and can turn an average photo into an astounding one. It's something that once you've mastered, you'll probably use far more than you might expect; who hasn't wanted to remove red eyes from an otherwise lovely family photo?



On a professional level, photo editing allows you to enrich a presentation and improve website images (as well as add another ability to your CV's skill section...), but photo editing is also just a fun way to express yourself and enjoy some quiet time.

How to get started

Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom are some of the most popular photo editing software used by professionals and amateurs alike - and while they can be complex tools, that's only because they have so many great features. You can trial Adobe Photoshop for a week for free to see whether it's right for you. If you like it, you might want to take one of their courses for beginners or experienced users, which can teach you how to lighten a photo, add a logo, or completely overhaul an image. Adobe Photoshop tutorials are created by Adobe and are all free.

It's also worth checking out free learning resources online, too. Sites like YouTube and PSD Stack have lots of free tutorials from beginner to advanced to help you get to grips with learning how to use Photoshop.

If you're serious about improving your photo editing skills, or thinking about pursuing a career in photography, you might benefit from a more in-depth course. The Adobe Lightroom CC Photo Editing: Your Lightroom Masterclass is one of the best-rated photo editing courses, and it teaches you all the essentials. From fixing basic issues like exposure and white balance to using sharpening and noise reduction, the course aims to take you from total novice to expert in 16.5 hours of video tutorials.

If you just want to have some fun editing your photos online, without having to commit to full membership at any point, then you could also try out Pixlr X. It's established itself as some of the best free video editing software out there and will allow you to edit an image's colour and saturation, get rid of unwanted features with a touch up tool, and adjust the white balance. Pixlr X has a number of free tutorials on their YouTube channel that can help you get the most out of this free software.

3. Coding

n simple terms, the practice of coding involves writing in a language that a computer understands. You're using a programming language to get a computer to follow a set of instructions, and the potential benefits of being able to code are huge. The ability could lead to you developing a mobile phone app, starting a new company, or even landing a role as a software engineer or IT specialist. It's true that coding can seem like a skill that requires a background in IT and/or a computer sciences degree to master, but this isn't the case. Anyone can learn to code at any time, and many master the basics by teaching themselves at home.

How to get started

If you're completely new to coding, why not follow in the footsteps of over 45 million people and take a course with CodeAcademy? There are free classes and also paid memberships where you can take advantage of expert guidance by coding teachers, get stuck into projects, and receive support from other students. There are courses that cover all sorts of programming languages from HTML and CSS to JavaScript.

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Alternatively, head over to The Odin Project (named after the Norse god whose trademark was a thirst for new knowledge). This open source project promises to turn coding amateurs into coding experts. While it has enough free courses for someone to eventually pursue a career in software engineering (there are 1000s of hours of classes!), there are also plenty of classes for beginners - so it's ideal if you're keen on learning to code but not sure how far you want to take it. Or if you just want to jazz up your own website, you can learn to do that here too!

4. Copywriting

Copywriting may not instantly spring to mind when you think of digital skills, but every great site requires decent copy - and in the world of digital marketing, "content will always be king". There are plenty of reasons to improve your copywriting skills, and you certainly don't have to be an established writer to take a class or course. Whether you want to spruce up your CV, write compelling copy for your website, or simply add another string to your bow, copywriting is a useful skill to have.

How to get started

The internet is jam packed full of helpful resources for budding copywriters - and luckily, many are free. If you're a beginner, LinkedIn offer a great free course exploring the different ways that you can use copy to promote a product or service. LinkedIn Training instructor, lan Lurie, will teach you how to write in a way that tells your story, sells your product or service, and promotes your brand. Combining online lectures, exercises, quizzes and assignments, the course will guide you through the process of writing and editing a draft, how to best use typography, and how print and online copy compare.

If you're committed to improving your copywriting skills, and perhaps even thinking of pursuing it professionally, there are several top-rated copywriting courses available on Udemy. If you hope to put your skills towards boosting your own business, check out The Complete Copywriting Course, which promises to let you in on secrets from the world's best copywriters and teach you the sales psychology you need to grow a business. Or, if you have more of a general desire to learn copywriting, the Copywriting Secrets course might be for you.

5. Design

Let's say you've built a website. You've written the copy. What does the site need next? Good design, of course! The importance of design can't be minimised - and 94% of first impressions of a website are design-related. The ability to design digitally can also be just as helpful in your personal life as it can professionally. For example you can just as easily use these skills to design invitations for a loved one's anniversary or a party you're planning, as you can to design a work-related website.

How to get started

If you're just starting out, then have a look at The American Institute of Graphic Arts' list of 16 free design eBooks. Covering topics as diverse as logo design, finding inspiration and knowing which font to use, there's a book here for everyone - whatever type of design you want to learn about. And because all the books are free and in eBook format, you won't have to clear any extra space for them at home - so there's nothing stopping you downloading and reading all 16 if you want to!



Leisure & Travel Feature

If you'd prefer a course or workshop, head over to DesignDesign.Space. Due to lockdown, this top design academy can no longer hold in-person workshops, so they're offering free digital workshops over the next few months. Skillshare also offers a great range of free design courses - particularly recommended are the Graphic Design Basics and Demystifying Graphic Design: How Posters Work.

6. Video production

Whether you've always dreamed of making your own films, want to use video to promote your business, or just want to be able to shoot family videos that look professional - video production can be a fun, yet useful skill to have. There's a lot involved in the video production process. You'll need to figure out which editing programme you want to use, which camera is the best fit and whether to use lighting and audio equipment.

How to get started

Creative Cow is a great free resource to check out when you're getting started. Here you can find a list of video tutorials that will help you learn the basics of video production software from Adobe, Apple and Sony. There's also a great podcast series which will teach you certain tricks of the trade. A big perk of Creative Cow is its forum community, where you can connect with other budding filmmakers and video editors to ask questions, give advice, and swap tips and stories.



For more in-depth tutorials, Skillshare's Video Production: The Complete Course is perfect for beginners. By signing up to their free trial, you can watch it at no cost. It takes you through the ideation process, gives a thorough introduction to equipment, shows you what makes a good video, and teaches you how to compose and expose your shots. Udemy also has a great selection of video production courses, whether you want to use your new skills for video marketing, or creatively, to make beautiful and inspiring films.

7. Digital marketing

Over the past decade, businesses have digitized the way they work, and a result of that means that jobseekers today will seriously benefit from having some digital skills on their CV. Digital marketing, and everything it encompasses (search engine marketing, email marketing, social media marketing etc.) is one of the most useful skills to have. Everyone can benefit from a better understanding of digital marketing; whether you use it to promote that book you're working on, help your business gain visibility, or give your job applications a serious boost.

How to get started

If you're interested in learning digital marketing to help your business or career, then why not get certified in the Fundamentals of Digital Marketing, with Google's free course? There are 26 modules in the course, all created by Google trainers - and all chock full of helpful exercises and practical examples. Getting certified can improve your CV and significantly help your chances of finding a job, as it proves you have a good understanding of the main concepts of digital marketing.

If there are specific areas of digital marketing you want to explore, have a look at this list of 17 free courses compiled by marketing data site, Ahrefs. There are courses in SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), email marketing, social marketing and advertising - to name a few. With the courses created and taught by digital marketing giants like HubSpot, Buffer and Moz, you'll be learning from the best - and because they're all free, there's no limit to how many you can try.

8. Social media

Whether you use it or not, there's no denying how much social media has permeated our society. It's impossible to minimise the impact and influence of social media: globally, there are 2.7 billion active social media users, and it's fast become the main source of information and communication between content creators and consumers.

Being able to use social media and understanding how it works is a skill that can be learnt like any other. It can benefit us professionally - and of course, in our personal lives too. If you want to learn how to set up Zoom video calls with loved ones, or create an Instagram account to stay updated with your friends' lives, then there's never been a better time to learn.

How to get started

If you're new to social media, the free Social Media Quickstarter course from Constant Contact is a good way to kick off learning. Covering the main social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, the course offers a thorough guide to building a presence on each platform and how to best utilize them. The free Accenture Digital Skills: Social Media course on Futurelearn is also excellent if you want to learn how to use social media for business. It's totally free - as are these 12 social media marketing courses.

A final thought...

Whether that's making a career change, finding an exciting new job, or simply staying connected with loved ones. If you want to use lockdown to develop your skills but haven't found anything above that takes your fancy, then why not head over to the learning section of our website. There's over 50,000 courses covering a wide range of topics - from quick taster courses, through to heavyweight learning opportunities.

(Article source: Rest Less)



Get baking! 8 technical baking skills that you can learn at home

Since lockdown began, many of us have spent more time in the kitchen than ever before. If you've developed an interest in baking in the past few months, you might have already tried making some easy recipes - but what if you want to take your skills to the next level?

While it's a creative process, baking can also be pretty technical, and learning to master a few key skills can soon take you from baking beginner to connoisseur. From learning how to score bread, to making mouthwatering macarons, here are 8 technical baking skills you can learn at home.

1. Learn to make dough

Of all of the baking skills out there, being able to make your own dough from scratch is perhaps the most versatile. Once you've mastered the art of dough making, a whole world of baking opens up to you - you can cook homemade pizza, bread, doughnuts, pies, rolls...the list is endless, and delicious. Plus, as an added bonus, kneading dough is a pretty good workout for your arms, wrists and hands!





Food & Drink Feature

There are lots of different types of dough, and the technique for making pizza dough can differ from making dough for a loaf of bread - and then, of course, there are more complex doughs, like sourdough bread, which involve a more intricate technique. But once you know how to knock up a simple dough, you'll soon be able to progress and develop your skills.

All you need to make dough is water, sugar, yeast, flour and salt. The exact measurements vary depending on how much you want to make, but the process remains the same: mix together the warm water, sugar and yeast, and let it sit for 5 minutes. Then add flour and salt to the mix, knead until smooth, and then let the dough raise for 10 minutes.

At this stage you can work the dough into the correct shape for the type of bread you're making (e.g. pizza, a loaf, etc), before letting it sit for another 10 minutes before baking (the temperature and duration of baking will depend on what exactly you're making).

2. Macarons (pictured left)

Macarons can look so beautiful that many bakers never attempt them. It's true that macarons can be tricky to make... that's why they're so expensive! But if you're skilled in the kitchen and fancy a challenge, macarons might be the perfect way to develop your skills.

Even if you're a baking beginner, with a bit of patience and practice, and perhaps a few attempts, you can still master the macaron. And once you bite into these tasty goodies, with their crunchy exterior and soft inside, all your hard work will pay off. The fact that these treats make the perfect present is just an added bonus.

The main ingredients for macarons are almond flour, confectioners' sugar, and egg whites, and you can fill them with anything you fancy: caramel sauce (see above), chocolate ganache, lemon curd, etc.

3. Learn to caramelise sugar

If you have a sweet tooth, you're probably well aware of just how delicious caramelised sugar is. Whether you're biting into a crispy crème brûlée or savouring sweet caramel sauce, caramelised sugar can upgrade a dessert to a new level of lusciousness.

Many people are apprehensive about trying to make caramelised sugar, but while the technique might seem daunting, the process itself is actually very simple - and watching snow white sugar transform into a golden brown liquid is pretty magical.

Once you master it, you can use it in many different ways and your dessert repertoire will be considerably more alluring. You can practice by making salted caramel sauce, or this beautiful chocolate caramel tart.

To make caramel, just pour golden caster sugar into a solid saucepan. Place the pan on a medium heat, and leave it for around four to six minutes until the sugar starts to melt and liquify around the edges. Don't be tempted to stir it before this, but once it starts to melt around the sides, give the pan a shake and leave it again until around a quarter of the sugar has melted.



Then, use a wooden spoon to stir it gently until the sugar crystals have liquefied and there's nothing stuck to the back of the spoon. Continue to stir now and then until the melted sugar turns the colour of dark honey - this should take around 10-15 minutes. Then, remove the pan from the heat and add two tablespoons of water (it might splutter a bit here, so be very careful!). Finally, put the pan back on a gentle heat and stir to remove any lumps that form. And that's it - a perfect caramel sauce!

4. Learn to make pastry



Pastry and dough might seem similar, but they're not the same. It might be helpful to see pastry as the finished product, whereas dough is a work in progress that goes into the oven as dough, and comes out as bread. Dough is also very malleable, which means it's worked in a totally different way - plus it usually contains a raising agent like yeast, whereas pastry doesn't. But just as being able to make your own dough opens up a new world of baking possibilities, so does being able to make your own pastry.

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Tarts, pies, puddings or quiches...there's a pastry recipe to suit every palate. There are also plenty of different types of pastry: puff, shortcrust, filo, choux and flaky. If you're a beginner, it might be best to learn to master shortcrust pastry first. This is the simplest form of pastry, but according to Delia Smith, it's one of the best pastries of all. Because it has a light, crisp crust, it's perfect for pies and quiches, and has a lovely melt-in-the-mouth flavour.

Shortcrust pastry is made from flour (1 cup approx), butter or margarine (½ cup approx), and water (a tbsp) - that's it. All you need to do is sift the flour into a bowl, add the butter or margarine, and rub it in until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. Then, add the water, a little at a time, and shape with your hands until it all comes together. Wrap the dough in cling-film and chill for about 15 minutes before using, then roll out with a rolling pin and follow your chosen recipe.

If you're already pretty confident with making pastry, then you can test out your skills by having a go at making light, fluffy choux pastry - perfect for dainty treats like eclairs, profiteroles.

5. Learn to score bread

If you're serious about learning to bake bread, making the perfect dough is just the first step. After you've shaped the bread, you then need to score it. Not all breads are scored - loaves baked in pans often aren't - but if you're baking free-form, scoring is important. Scoring simply means cutting into a loaf of bread before it's baked. It helps prevent the bread from splitting, and controls the direction the bread will expand in as it bakes. Plus, it makes your homemade bread look even more beautiful.

Like many technical baking skills, there's an art to scoring. The pattern of the cuts, the angles at which they're scored, and their depth all affects how the bread expands, and how the "ear" forms - the raised edge of crust beside a cut. There are lots of traditional ways to score bread, but scoring can be very creative - some bakers compare looking at their unscored bread to an artist looking at a blank canvas. You can score stars, leaves, flowers geometric shapes... if you want inspiration, check out the tutorial video below on how to score different patterns on bread



If you're just starting out, it might be best to begin with more simple designs, but whatever you score, it's important to use the correct knife. Blades for scoring should be very sharp and thin, and you should let the knife do the work. Try to make quick, confident cuts that are still gentle - and try not to press on the dough. It's helpful to dip the blade in water in between cuts, particularly if you're working with sticky dough. On your first attempt, your loaf might not come out of the oven looking quite as elaborate as you'd hoped, but do remember, it's all about practice.



Food & Drink Feature

6. Learn to make fondant (pictured left)

Many bakers begin their baking journey with cakes. Almost anyone can tackle a simple sponge cake, but decorating the cake can be much more complicated. If you're dreaming of making cakes that are as beautiful as they are tasty, you might want to consider learning how to make fondant. Fondant is made using icing sugar, but unlike traditional icing, which is in a liquid form, fondant is workable and can be rolled into pretty shapes and figures. You can also roll it out to use it as a thick layer of icing to cover an entire cake - it looks far more professional than just using icing sugar and water.

Fondant is traditionally made by boiling sugar, water and cream of tartar (potassium bitartrate) until the syrup reaches the 'softball stage'. This is the point where you can begin kneading it into a dough, and adding colours and flavourings, before shaping it into your desired figures or shapes. However, recently many bakers have been swapping more traditional fondant recipes for a recipe with a more modern twist: marshmallow fondant. Marshmallow fondant is easier to make and shape, and according to most bakers, it's much tastier too.

All you need to make marshmallow fondant is icing sugar, shop-bought mini marshmallows and water - food colourings and flavourings are all optional. Simply microwave the marshmallows until they're puffy (usually for a minute), then stir until they melt (it's best to use a rubber spatula for this so it doesn't stick to your spoon). If you're adding colours or flavours to your fondant, now's the time to add them - and then add the sugar until the mixture is thick and impossible to stir any more. Then, empty out the mix and knead it like dough until it's smooth and non-sticky.

7. Learn to temper chocolate

If you're a chocoholic - or want to treat someone who is - then perhaps the most valuable baking skill you can learn is how to temper chocolate. Tempering chocolate is the process of heating and then cooling chocolate to enhance its texture, taste, and shine. If you like chocolate, you'll love tempered chocolate. It has a lovely glossy appearance, feels firm, and breaks with a satisfying snap. Plus it melts smoothly in your mouth. If you want to make a chocolate cake, truffles or ganache, or surprise a loved one with chocolate-dipped strawberries, learning to temper chocolate will be a very valuable skill.



The tempering process is quite simple - you just melt the chocolate, allow it to cool until crystals of cocoa butter form, then warm it back up to a temperature you can work with. However, you do need to be precise to get it right. If the chocolate isn't tempered correctly, the crystallisation process of the cocoa butter will be uneven, and you might be left with tacky, chewy chocolate with pale streaks running through it.

8. Learn to bake vegan treats

The rise of veganism is impossible to ignore, and whether you're interested in plant-based eating for health, environmental or ethical reasons - or you simply want to bake for a vegan friend-there's never been a better time to learn. Because eggs, milk and butter are such an integral part of 'normal' baking, it's easy to think that it's impossible to make moist cakes, or creamy pies without using any ingredients derived from animals. But thankfully, this isn't the case.



Often all you need to make a vegan version of a recipe is to simply use plant milk instead of cow's milk, or to use margarine instead of butter (interestingly, most ready-made pastries, like the JusRoll brand, are vegan). Replacing eggs isn't always quite as simple, but you'll be amazed at the plant-based alternatives from making an 'egg' out of flaxseed or chia seeds, to using aquafaba (the liquid in a can of chickpeas). Getting to grips with vegan baking will open your eyes to a whole new world of baking.

Final thoughts...

Baking is a skill that you can constantly learn and develop. As soon as you've mastered the perfect sponge cake, you can start to think about how you can decorate it to make it even more special. Then, when you've nailed the art of flaky shortcrust pastry, you might want to challenge yourself to try the notoriously tricky choux pastry. This is the beauty of baking. It's an adventure and learning journey you can explore for the rest of your life.

Like any skill, you need to put in patience and practice, but the benefits of baking are enormously satisfying. Making delicious baked goods from scratch is rewarding and meditative, and surprising loved ones with homemade treats is a wonderfully personal gift. And of course, sampling the fruits of your labours along the way is just an added, but very welcome, perk!

(Article source: Rest Less)





Glorious gardens: 10 of the best gardens to visit this summer

Short of things to do during summer holidays? Why not visit some of our most glorious gardens, which have reopened to the public.

They all detail the Covid-19 safety measures they've put in place on their websites. Most require pre-booking tickets (check websites for specific details) and all have regulated social distancing - take a mask to be on the safe side too. Here's 10 of our favourites...

Arley Hall and Gardens, Cheshire (arleyhallandgardens.com)

It's not just the south coast that is benefiting from a surge in demand. According to the property website Rightmove, the most in-demand coastal locations currently are Whitby in North Yorkshire, followed by Whitley Bay in Tyne and Wear and Troon in Ayrshire. Average asking prices are £213,053 in Whitby and £165,386 in Ayrshire.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (pictured above) (kew.org)

The world famous botanical gardens opened doors to visitors in June. They've now reopened the glasshouses too, so you can admire an array of tropical treasures, desert species and more in the Palm House, Temperate House and Princess of Wales Conservatory. In a final flourish to Kew Gardens' summer landscape, a bespoke botanical sculpture - created by the winning duo from the acclaimed Netflix television programme, The Big Flower Fight, will be on display in August. Pre-booking essential for timed entry. Toilets, shops and some outdoor food facilities are currently open and screened regularly. Check website for details.



Abbotsford Gardens, Roxburghshire, Scotland (scottsabbotsford.com)

Abbotsford was Sir Walter Scott's home, and his imagination extended to the outdoors with the creation of these beautiful formal Regency gardens. Highlights include the kitchen garden, the third of his interconnecting outdoor 'rooms', which house a mix of flowering and scented plants, herbs, fruits and vegetables. The gardens are currently open Wednesday to Sunday, with hopes to reopen the historic house in August. Check the website for updates.

The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Cornwall (heligan.com)

With some 200 acres of garden and estate, you simply can't do all of Heligan in one visit - so if you've only got a day, seek out summer highlights. An incredible 15 acres of wildflower meadow has been planted, featuring cornflowers, corn chamomile, poppies and corn marigolds, to create a stunning visual backdrop, perfect for butterflies and bees. Families are invited to pick up a 'Heligan Summer' booklet from the ticket office before setting off. Pre-booking essential for timed tickets.



Montalto Estate, Co. Down, Northern Ireland (montaltoestate.com)

The trails and gardens within this magical estate have now reopened, so visitors can explore a wealth of features - including the cutting garden made up of annuals, biennials, perennials and shrubs, the formal garden with its defined geometric shapes and stunning views of Montalto Lake and boathouse, and the alpine garden, with its impressive collections of plants. The trails and gardens are currently open Wed-Sun but all visitors must prebook tickets online. Access to some gardens may be restricted due to events.

Wightwick Gardens, Wolverhampton, West Midlands (nationaltrust.org.uk)

Comprising 17 acres, this might not be the biggest National Trust garden but it certainly packs a punch in the style stakes, thanks to 20th century Arts and Crafts garden designer, Thomas Mawson. The dominant design feature of the garden is its 'rooms' - areas marked by clipped yew hedges or terraces, giving the space a wide variety of different feelings. Tickets are released on Fridays for the following week and pre-booking for timed visits is essential. The Manor House remains closed until further notice.

Brodsworth Hall and Gardens, South Yorkshire (english-heritage.org.uk)

Spectacularly restored to their full Victorian splendour, the 15 acres of gardens at Brodsworth are home to a collection of grand gardens in miniature, filled with colourful seasonal plantings and displays. Stroll through the statue walks and the beautiful wild rose dell, with over 100 varieties of historic rose. You can also admire period bedding plants in the Flower Garden, including cannas and gingers for dot planting, with salvia, gazania, ageratum and verbena. Pre-booking essential for timed tickets. House and play area remain closed. A family-friendly summer explorer quest is taking place throughout summer.

RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey (rhs.org.uk)

Visitors to the jewel in the crown of the RHS gardens will be able to enjoy its summer highlights, including sizzling dahlias and tropical banana plants in its exotic garden, which showcases plants that have a tropical look but flourish outdoors in a typical UK summer climate. Don't forget to stroll along the mixed borders for a riot of summer colour and surround yourself with lavender on the viewing mount. Pre-booking essential for timed tickets, card transactions only on site. Glasshouse, alpine houses, learning centre and library and advisory desk remain closed

Wollerton Old Hall Garden, North Shropshire (wollertonoldhallgarden.com)

Set around a 16th century hall (not currently open to the public), Wollerton Old Hall incorporates a formal modern garden on an old site covering four acres. Its garden rooms are beautifully planted with stunning perennials and offer some terrific design ideas. The garden is famous for its salvias, clematis and roses and the clever use of colour, form and scale. The main perennial border in late summer is still awash with colour, so don't miss it. Currently open Thursday, Fridays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Pre-booked tickets essential.

Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire (english-heritage.org.uk)

Survivor of a devastating fire in the early 20th century, Witley's romantic gardens are full of delights. A spectacular lake, vast fountain of Perseus and Andromeda, and colourful French parterre are among the highlights. In summer, the East Parterre at Witley Court is spectacular and includes variegated pelargoniums, ageratum, evening primrose (Oenothera) and verbenas. This summer, take the family on a free fun adventure quest with an historical twist. You can download your trail map on the website before you go. Pre-booking essential for timed tickets.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Please help us rescue and care for vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's

favourite mammal

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years.

I am delighted to tell you that Britain's hedgehog has won favourite mammal in a UK poll.

The UK's only spiny mammal won with 35.9% of the 5,000 votes, more than double that of the Red Fox, who came in second place with 15.4%. The Red Squirrel came third with 11.4%, out of a shortlist of 10 charismatic UK mammals.

Unfortunately, hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside as numbers have <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

Henry Johnson, hedgehog officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) said:

"We Brits seem to love hedgehogs for a whole range of reasons, including their cute appearance, their role as slug controllers and the way they have colonised our gardens with such aplomb. This is why it is so sad to see them decline, with one in three lost since the millennium."

Threats to hedgehogs come mostly from us. In rural areas, our farmland increasingly lacks the diversity of habitats hedgehogs need and the invertebrates they feed on. In towns and cities green spaces are lost to development, paved over or increasingly fragmented. Hedgehogs are also very prone to road traffic accidents.

This is why we have launched this special Annual Appeal to protect Britain's favourite mammal.

At Hedgehog Rescue Rehabilitation and Care Centre we respond immediately to rescue injured hedgehogs. A vet is called in straight away and the hedgehogs are monitored and cared for. Once fit and well they are released back into the wild.

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life.





We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

'Julie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

Baby Hedgehogs

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue or write to: Raisemore, Unit 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wve HR9 5NB

