

OUR PLACE *News*

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

FEBRUARY 2021

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PLUS...

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Food & Drink • Arts, Crafts & Hobbies • Home & Garden**



Letter from the Editor

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.

1. 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 asthma
- 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 home
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home

You can use your garden, if you have one.

STAY AT HOME!

Study: Over-50s' mental health declined during lockdowns

Researchers at the University of Exeter and King's College London studied data from more than 3,000 people aged over 50.



Silver Surfers reports that older people's mental health declined during the Covid-19 lockdowns as their loneliness contributed to a rise in anxiety and depression, according to a study.

Researchers at the University of Exeter and King's College London studied data from more than 3,000 people aged over 50.

They said loneliness emerged as a key factor linked to worsening symptoms of depression and anxiety.

And a decrease in physical activity since the start of the pandemic was also associated with worsening symptoms of depression and anxiety. Women were also more likely to be struggling with their mental health, as were retired people.

Dr Byron Creese at the University of Exeter who led the study said: "Even before the pandemic, loneliness and physical activity levels were a huge issue in society, particularly among older people.

"Our study enabled us to compare mental health symptoms before and after Covid-19 in a large group of people aged 50 and over.

"We found that during lockdown, loneliness and decreased physical activity were associated with more symptoms of poor mental health, especially depression.

"It's now crucial that we build on this data to find new ways to mitigate risk of worsening mental health during the pandemic."

The study found that before the pandemic, lonely people would report an average of two symptoms of depression for at least several days over the previous two weeks.

During lockdown, lonely people reported either an increase in frequency of depressive symptoms, to more than half the days in the two week period, or a new symptom for at least several days in that time frame. In people who were not lonely, levels of depressive symptoms were unaffected.

Professor Clive Ballard at the University of Exeter added: "We are only just beginning to learn the impact that Covid-19 is having on the health and well-being of older people.

"For example, the effect of any economic impact may not yet have emerged.

"Our large-scale study will span a number of years, and will help us understand some of the longer-term effects of Covid-19 on mental health and well-being, and ultimately, on whether this has any knock-on effect on aspects of ageing, such as brain function and memory."

(Story source: *Silver Surfers*)

Nature can provide 'soul food' for people in lockdown - RSPB

People were encouraged to take part in the annual Big Garden Birdwatch at the end of January.



Silver Surfers reports that nature can provide "soul food" for people in lockdown, even in winter, the head of the RSPB has said.

Beccy Speight, chief executive of the wildlife charity, said people have found that reconnecting with nature is good for their physical and mental health in the face of the pandemic.

As the UK starts 2021 with further lockdowns, she said the natural world is already looking towards spring.

And she encouraged people to connect with nature on their doorstep by taking part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch at the end of January.

Let Echo deliver your prescriptions straight to your door

Looking for ways to make your life easier? Here's a quick and easy way to get your family medicine delivered when and where you need it.

Silver Surfers reports that in our hectic lives it's always a relief to find shortcuts that make everything a bit easier.

And wouldn't it be great if you didn't have the hassle of collecting NHS prescriptions any more?

Well, the good news is that those prescriptions can be delivered straight to your door for free, thanks to LloydsPharmacy.

No more joining the queue at your local chemist! If you sign up for our free NHS prescription delivery service, Echo by LloydsPharmacy, you get free, flexible delivery to suit you.

All you have to do is go to echo.co.uk or download the Echo app. In two short steps you tell the Echo team which GP surgery you're registered with and what medicines you need.

Echo will then send a prescription request to your GP and, once this has been approved, Echo will let you know so you can pay the standard NHS charge, unless of course you are exempt.

Once payment has been received, the Echo pharmacy checks and dispenses your prescription and delivers it to you at home, work, or one of 10,000 click-and-collect venues - whichever suits you best. In other words, Echo provides a shortcut to your prescriptions and your life gets a whole lot easier.

Echo even takes the hassle out of repeat prescriptions, because you'll receive reminders to reorder in good time.

Echo can manage up to six prescriptions per account, which helps keep you and your family fit and healthy seamlessly and without the stress.

Managing your household's medicine needs this way is a whole lot easier, saving you time and hassle so you can get on with enjoying life more.

So, if you've got a packed to-do list, or you'd just like to relax a bit more, here's one chore you can cross off permanently.

Anyone over 18 whose GP surgery is in England qualifies for this free and practical service. Hurry up and let Echo take care of your prescriptions - and deliver them straight to your door for free.

(Story source: *Silver Surfers*)

The nationwide survey, which volunteers carry out in their garden or local green space, helps scientists understand the fluctuations in fortunes of many of the UK's most common birds, and the wider natural world.

And it can act as a doorway to getting more involved in nature, which has seen a surge of interest in the pandemic, she said.

Ms Speight said: "I think nature is soul food, it's a way of connecting with something that is other than us, that is ploughing on regardless.

"In January, everything is looking towards spring, we've turned the corner in terms of the darkest day, so the whole of the natural world is starting to wake up to the fact there is more light and hopefully fairly soon more warmth."

And she said: "People have found it really beneficial to reconnect with the nature on their doorstep for their physical health and their mental health."

She said that during a walk in her local park in Nottingham in the previous lockdown she saw a group of people in the wooded end of the green space transfixed by the sound of a woodpecker drumming.

"People have woken up to what nature can bring them on their doorsteps."

As well as anecdotal evidence of the increase in interest in nature and green spaces, the RSPB has seen more visits to its website, including webcams and bird identification information, and a rise in sales of binoculars before Christmas.

For those who are keen to help wildlife such as birds in their gardens, it is "pretty straightforward", Ms Speight said.

She said providing high-energy foods such as suet balls and sunflower hearts in winter is important for birds, as is giving them access to water, and making sure feeders are kept clean to prevent the spread of diseases.

Householders could also think about providing bird boxes for the 60 species that use them, and leave parts of the garden unpruned or messier to provide shelter.

Taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch is a good way to get to know more about the natural world, learning to identify birds and involving all the family, Ms Speight added.

It also opens the door to learning more about the state of the natural world, encouraging people to take more action themselves, and to be engaged in major decisions on the international stage this year, including a new global nature agreement and action on climate change.

(Story source: *Silver Surfers*)

Do you have an interesting story or article?
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‘Use it or lose it’: 19 ways to keep your mind sharp as you age

Exercising the mind is just as important as exercising the body if you want to get the most from life. The mind is often thought of as a muscle, meaning that the more you challenge it, the stronger it will become.

Over the years scientists have frequently explored the ‘Use it or lose it approach’, which suggests that if we want our brains to stay in peak condition then we need to use them. Research also shows that people who do more mentally stimulating activities have better critical thinking skills later in life.

Whilst every brain will change with age, cognitive impairment doesn’t have to be an inevitable part of getting older. Here are 20 different ways that you can help to keep your mind sharp as you age.

Solve puzzles or play brain games

Sudoku, crosswords, word searches, jigsaw puzzles, memory games...there’s a puzzle or a brain game out there to suit everyone!

There are a whole host of mental benefits that come with puzzle-solving including enhancing your memory function, increasing your IQ score and improving your visual and spatial reasoning skills (the skills that we need to be able to perceive, analyse and understand visual information in the world around us).

If you’re looking for a good place to start puzzling or brain gaming, then it’s worth downloading the Luminosity app, which takes scientifically-validated tasks and turns them into fun games that you can play for a few minutes each day. Upon completing the games you’ll receive actionable feedback and rich insights into your cognitive abilities. You can access some Luminosity games with a free account, or you can upgrade to a premium subscription for access to all games and progress monitoring tools.

Use your non-dominant hand to perform tasks

If you’re right handed then consider challenging yourself to perform tasks like eating or writing using your left hand, and vice versa. Using your non-dominant hand is a chance for you to confuse your brain and encourage it to engage in a whole new way.

By using your left hand, when your dominant hand is your right, you are forcing your brain out of auto-pilot mode by making it think more about your movements. Using your non-dominant hand can feel incredibly awkward and tiring to start with, but this is actually a positive thing. Our brains will be working hard to develop new learning pathways to allow us to become more efficient at using our non-dominant hand to perform tasks.

Learning to use your non-dominant hand more often can also have physical benefits, such as avoiding injury from repetitive strain.

Mix up your diet

It’s easy for us to fall into a comfort zone with our food. Perhaps you have the same chicken wrap everyday for lunch, or you find yourself choosing from the same three dinner options every night out of convenience. Whilst there’s nothing wrong with sticking to foods that you know, every now and then it can be good to mix up your diet and try something new.

If you’re in need of some inspiration, then consider investing in some cookery books or browsing recipes online. It can be fun to have themed cooking nights to help you explore different cuisines. For example Tuesday could be Mexican cooking night, Friday could be your chance to cook Thai food, and on Sunday afternoons you could try different baking recipes. Increasing the variety in your diet will be a real treat for your taste buds, and will also keep your mind active while you enjoy and appreciate new flavours and try out new recipes.

Often when we start exploring and experimenting with different foods, we also learn more about food in general (nutritional breakdown, calories etc), and we start making healthier choices as a result. So, it’s a win, win.

Change up your daily routine

Our brains are always working, but they have to do far less when we simply repeat the same actions that we do all the time. For this reason, it’s a good idea to change up your routine from time to time to keep your brain on it’s toes. This is also the perfect opportunity to try something new. For example, if you usually walk, run or cycle the same route, then try a completely different way next time. Or consider slotting an entirely new activity into your daily routine - like 10 minutes of meditation first thing in the morning. It’s these changes in activity that take our minds off cruise control and put them back into gear, because they increase brain activity in several different areas.

Learn to knit

Physical benefits of knitting include helping to prevent arthritis and tendinitis, but knitting also has plenty to offer your mind too. When you knit, you use your whole brain. This includes the frontal lobe, which is responsible for planning, attention and processing; the occipital lobe, which processes visual information; the parietal lobe, which deals with spatial navigation and sensory information; the temporal lobe, which stores memories and interprets language and meaning, and the cerebellum, which coordinates timing of movement.

With your brain working in all areas, knitting has to be a top activity for helping to keep your mind sharp. It is often used to help people with diseases like Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s improve their motor function.

Challenge yourself to read differently

If you would usually read in your head, then consider reading out loud or listening to an audio book instead. Reading in a way that you wouldn’t usually do so, encourages your brain to use different circuits. You could also try reading different genres of books, or joining a book club, where you will be exposed to different interpretations of books that challenge your own.

Take an exercise class

Low impact classes that focus on slow, controlled movements and breathing

Low intensity exercise classes like yoga and Tai Chi allow you time to step away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and actively engage your mind and body as you focus on performing slow, controlled and precise body movements. In doing this, we are able to better focus on the daily practises that we often take for granted; such as breathing, grounding, balance and motion. Training your mind to focus so intently on every body movement is something that takes practice; offering your mind a great workout in the process. Research has linked both Tai Chi and yoga to improved brain health.

Faster-paced classes that involve a lot of hand-eye coordination

Higher intensity classes like dance or boxing-inspired workouts are also a great way to improve your brain function and boost your memory whilst working on your strength, balance and cardiovascular fitness. When you follow routines at a fast pace, your brain must work quickly to first process each movement that you see, and then perform it. Doing this allows you to work on your hand-eye coordination, which strengthens the quality of the neuromuscular communication in the brain. This will help to improve the accuracy and speed of which you are able to perform tasks and help with developing strength and balance.

Continued on pages 8-9...



Do your sums with a pen and paper (or in your head!)

Most of us don't think twice about using a calculator to work out maths equations - especially now that they are installed in every smartphone. However, if you're looking to keep your mind sharp, then it can be helpful to swap your calculator for a pen and paper, or just your naked brain if you fancy having a go at some mental arithmetic! It can feel like a slow and time-consuming process at first, but you might be surprised how quick your maths skills become with a little practice.

Play card games

Every card game is different, but they all require you make decisions based on what is put in front of you at the time. Playing cards is great for developing your problem-solving skills and helping you think on your feet. It is also thought to help improve both your short and long-term memory. Have a look at this handy list of one-player card games or these games for 2+ players. Play your cards right and you could keep your mind sharp for a long time to come!

Learn a new language

Scientists believe that learning a new language at any stage in life could help to improve your brain function. One suggested reason for this is that your brain has to work harder to learn how to switch back and forth between two different languages. Learning a language can also open you up to a plethora of new experiences - such as work and travel opportunities - all of which can stimulate and challenge your mind further.

If you're keen to learn a new language, but the idea overwhelms you, then consider downloading the Duolingo app, where you can start learning a new language in bitesize chunks for just a few minutes a day. Alternatively, if you'd prefer a more structured, in depth approach where you can work at your own pace, then you could consider taking a distance learning course.

Practice mindfulness

Many people don't initially think of mindfulness as a way to keep your mind sharp, because it involves quieting your mind. But in reality it's all about focus, and being able to train your mind. The ability to filter out negative thoughts and focus only on the present moment is a skill that has to be learnt and takes practise. Mindfulness also encourages you to engage more fully with your surroundings, and explore your senses. These heightened sensory experiences are great for stimulating your brain in all the right ways.

Make diverse social connections

When we spend time with others, we open ourselves up to new ideas and inspiration. However, our brain benefits most when we connect with people who are different from ourselves - perhaps they have a different career, culture or interests. We can learn far more from people that don't share all the same ideas as us, than from people who do, which lends way to mental growth and stimulation. Try to intentionally seek out people who are different from yourself. Doing so will open up your mind to new perspectives and experiences. Just because someone has interests that are wildly different to yours, it doesn't mean that you won't get along. As the saying goes, opposites attract!

Go back to basics, and rely less on technology

Technology has made so many aspects of life easier and more accessible, but it does also have drawbacks. When technology does things for us, we tend to switch off and think about things in far less depth than we usually would. For example, when we use GPS navigation to drive somewhere, we are less likely to remember how to get there without it, even after visiting the same location a few times. This is simply because we don't need to worry about remembering it, as we can always use the satnav next time. The days where people memorised one another's phone numbers are now also a distant memory, because our smartphones hold every number we could ever need.

Sometimes it can help to go back to basics to really engage and develop your mind. Consider using a paper map every now and then and really making a conscious effort to remember your route, or trying to learn a couple of phone numbers that you know you will use regularly.

An example of how memorising routes can benefit your brain is to look at London cab drivers, who have to build a map of London in their minds. Before they can become licenced cabbies, they must memorize 25,000 streets and 20,000 landmarks. And research has shown that the average London cab driver has a larger-than-average hippocampus (the part of the brain which is responsible for storing memories).

Learn to paint or draw

If you want to increase your concentration skills, reduce anxiety and improve your memory, then why not learn to paint or draw? As well as being a creative outlet, research also shows that drawing and painting can strengthen the neural pathways responsible for our focus and attention. Many people avoid artistic skills like these due to fear that they simply won't be any good at it, but anyone can learn to paint or draw with a little patience and practice. Appreciation of art is also largely down to interpretation, so while there can be room for improvement - it's something that's impossible to get "wrong".

Eat with chopsticks

Using chopsticks can be tricky to start with, and involve a great deal of patience - especially when you're really hungry. However, after the first time you spend 45 minutes eating your bowl of mushroom rice, things will usually get easier, and you will be able to appreciate the benefits for both mind and body.

Using chopsticks forces your brain to work harder to master the skill, which will improve your coordination over time. You will also tend to eat slower, and more mindfully - which is better for your digestion and will give you a heightened sensory experience, as you'll have more time to appreciate smells and flavours. You can buy chopsticks for a reasonable price in your local shops, or even online with someone like Amazon.

Watch thought provoking movies or TV

Most of us watch films and TV shows, but how often do you watch anything that really challenges your way of thinking? Whether we realise it or not, we pick up a lot of our information, understanding and cultural awareness from the things that we watch on TV. Documentaries, films based on true events, or those that offer a cultural experience, are all great places to start.

Learn an instrument

Learning to play an instrument can not only stimulate your mind, but it can also add a whole new dimension to your life. When we learn to play music, we naturally become more focussed and curious about songs we hear on the radio, in films or in the supermarket. Suddenly music has more meaning than it did before. Whether you want to learn how to play the guitar, or even how to write your own songs, there are plenty of great courses out there that can teach you the essentials.

Play video games

More and more people across the globe are taking up video gaming later in life; and for good reason. According to research, playing video games can make the regions in the brain responsible for attention and visuospatial skills (a person's ability to recognise visual and spatial relationships between objects) more efficient. They can also give you a chance to connect with your inner child, escape the stresses of daily life, and improve your hand-eye coordination and alertness. So if you ever needed an excuse to buy a games console, or borrow your children's or grandchildren's, then now you have it!

Keep up with events around the world

The world around us is constantly changing and it's rare for anything to stay the same for too long. But keeping up with global events can be a helpful way to stimulate your mind and keep it sharp. You might naturally be drawn to news about your specific interests such as sports, politics or science, but it's a good idea to delve into other news too if you really want to challenge yourself. Perhaps you could make it your goal to focus more on news and history from a specific region in the world that you know very little about, or maybe you'd be interested in reading some in-depth, personal items from people who have been personally affected by current events. The world is a diverse and fascinating place, with so much to learn about and explore - even from the comfort of your own living room - so it's important to stay curious about it.

Final thoughts...

Never be afraid to learn something new or to let your curiosity lead the way in life, because as Henry Ford once famously said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young."

(Article source: Rest Less)



Lockdown life: 15 adventures you can enjoy without leaving your home

With more time being spent at home, you might be looking for new, exciting, but safe ways to beat the boredom of being within the same four walls.

The good news is that not all adventures have to involve thrill-seeking activities, or jet setting around the world to a faraway place.

Believe it or not, it's still possible to indulge your adventurous side from the comfort of your own sofa.

When most people think of adventure, they think of escapism. But you can still take your mind to an exciting new place without having to be there physically.

So if you're looking for an adventure that you can go on anytime, anywhere, then here are 15 different ideas.

Watch NASA at work, and see Earth from space

Modern technology allows us to see places we might never normally be able to gain access to, from the comfort of our own homes.

If you're interested in space and the universe, then you might be interested to know that on YouTube, you can watch live round-the-clock footage of NASA Astronauts aboard the ISS -which means you'll get to see stunning aerial views of Earth from space. It's really quite breathtaking.

Travel the world with your taste buds

Travel may be limited right now, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy exploring in your own kitchen. OK, so it's technically not in your living room (unless you use a camping stove) but if you're longing for new and interesting experiences then why not explore some new cultures and flavours by cooking a delicious new dish? While most of us are familiar with lasagne and linguine, when it comes to foreign cuisine there are so many great-tasting dishes out there that most of us haven't even scratched the surface with. What's more, with plenty of smells, sounds and tastes to enjoy throughout, cooking can be a great way to focus your mind on the present moment and comes with a great tasting reward at the end. If you're interested in travelling the world with your taste buds, then consider going on a culinary adventure.

Get stuck into a good book

When you get truly lost in a good book, it can seem as though time is passing around you, without you even realising it. You can become transported to an entirely new world, where you can actually see, smell and hear the sounds that are being described, and feel the emotions of the book's characters along with them. When this happens, we tend to forget about our own surroundings and personal circumstances and immerse ourselves fully in this other world experience. There are few feelings like finding true escapism in a great novel - and the best thing about it, is that you can do it anywhere, at any time.

Escapism through reading is something that's very personal. Perhaps you'd prefer to be transported into the future, or hold the hand of a protagonist as they navigate the trials and tribulations of true love.

If you're looking for a few ideas for books to read, then you could try taking a look at our articles 27 of the best must-read novels, 20 of the best history books, or 17 books for your winter reading list. Some of our favourite adventure novels included in these lists include *The Life of Pi* (2001), *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), and *Wild* (2013).

Check in to the puppy playroom

If you're a dog lover, then chances are you'll love the opportunity to check in on a group of puppies in their playroom - even more fun, is that they don't know that they're being watched. So when these little pups aren't napping, you can expect to see a lot of mischief!

Live footage from the puppy playroom is filmed by hidden cameras located in the Warrior Canine Connection (Maryland, USA). This non-profit organisation is responsible for training therapeutic service dogs for war veterans. Puppies visit the playroom during the day from the age of about 4 weeks old to be socialised with each other, and with staff, volunteers and military personnel and their families. If you're having a bad day, and need a bit of cheering up - then footage of these happy, bouncy puppies is sure to put a smile on your face.

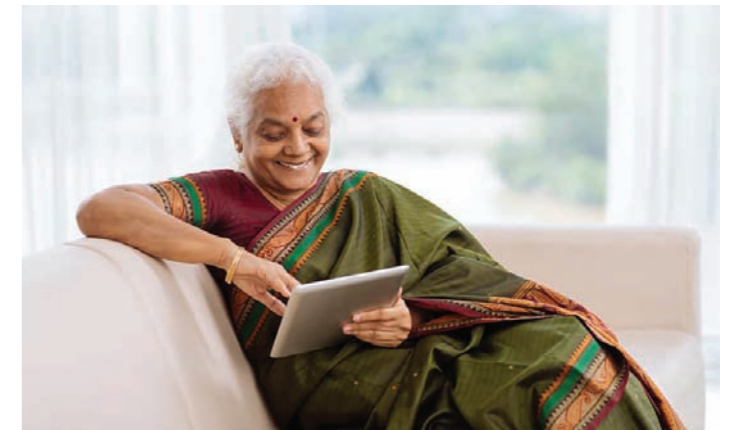
Explore any country in the world with MapCrunch (pictured left)

If you're not sure what sort of adventure you'd like to go on, but you know you like exploring, then MapCrunch could be a great place to start. As soon as you land on the site, you'll be shown a random Google street view of somewhere in the world. You can either choose to explore that area, venturing as far as you want to using the arrows - or you can hit 'Go!' in the top right-hand corner and be transported to somewhere else entirely. I hit the button three times and went to Mongolia, Jerusalem and Brazil!

Or if you'd prefer to choose where you want to explore, then you can visit Google Earth and 'fly' to your country of choice - where you can see detailed satellite images, and find out more about it.

Go on a quest for knowledge

It's possible to go on an adventure each time that you open up your mind to new ideas, perspectives or information. So, if you've got a few hours to spare, then why not consider choosing a topic - such as a country or an animal - that you know nothing about, and finding out as much as you can about it, using the internet, books or TV shows? There are thousands of online courses on a range of different subjects, that you could sink your teeth into, if you're looking for somewhere to start. A routine evening or weekend can quickly be turned into an exciting quest for knowledge. And the best thing, is that the adventure of knowledge never stops.



Join in with storm chasing

There's something incredibly fascinating about tornadoes and hurricanes, because they show us the true geological power that the Earth has over us. When Mother Nature wants to unleash her wrath, there's no stopping her! Because, here in the UK, we typically only see tornadoes and hurricanes on TV - for some reason, that makes them all the more intriguing.

There are plenty of YouTube videos and TV shows, showing recorded footage of tornadoes and hurricanes, but there's something quite thrilling about the idea of being able to see one in action - live. The good news is that Severe Studios are giving people the opportunity to tune into live storm-chasing videos on their website.

Continued on pages 12-13...



Tornadoes and hurricanes can be quite unpredictable, so unfortunately, it's hard to tell exactly when storm chasers will go live, but it's worth checking into their website every so often, to see if you can join in with the action. While you wait to catch a live storm, Severe Studios have plenty of archived storm videos for you to indulge in.

Visit gorillas in the Congo or pandas in China

You don't have to go on a safari or to a zoo, to see what some of the world's most beautiful creatures are getting up to. Thanks to modern technology, there are live webcams positioned all over the world that will let you get up close and personal with everything from big cats, through to birds and sea life - and all footage is available on YouTube.

With so many different options, it's totally up to you to decide where you want to go! Perhaps you'd like to visit gorillas in the Congo, pandas in China, or Hummingbirds in California, USA. There's something extra special about getting to watch these stunning creatures, when they think no one is watching!

Watch an adventure movie

In a similar way to reading a great book, it's also easy to find yourself getting lost in a great movie - particularly ones where the main character heads off on a long journey. Even though you're enjoying a movie from the comfort of your sofa, you can quickly feel as though you are walking beside them, experiencing the same senses, and sharing in their emotions. You know you've become really engrossed in a good movie, when you don't want it to end and you've gotten to know the characters so well, that it feels as if you know them personally.

If you're looking for some inspiration for adventure movies, then we'd recommend trying *Eat Pray Love* (2010), *Into the Wild* (2007) and *Back to the Future* (1985). You could also try engaging with other film lovers over on the Rest Less community forum - here you'll be able to discuss your favourite films, and swap movie recommendations with likeminded individuals.

Practice guided meditation

Practicing guided meditation is a great way to relax, unwind and transport your mind to somewhere more peaceful. Many people use meditation as a form of mindfulness to help them stay in the present moment and quiet negative thoughts. During a guided meditation, a soothing voice will talk you through each step - encouraging you to do things like visualise certain surroundings, focus on your breathing or let go of specific thoughts or worries that are affecting your daily life.

If you want to use guided meditation as an opportunity to go on a mindful adventure, then consider listening to those that focus on visualisation of surroundings - for example, imagining that you're listening to the waves as you walk along the beach, or taking in all the woody sights and smells as you take a wander through the forest. YouTube has a number of really useful, free guided meditations, so it's worth giving these a try.

You could also try downloading the Headspace app, which has plenty of guided imagery meditations. They offer a two week free trial, so that you can try some for free, before committing to a full subscription.

See what's happening at popular tourist hotspots around the world

Fancy popping over to Times Square or enjoying a view of the Ponte delle Guglie in Venice? If you want to take a sneak peek at what's going on at some of the world's most notorious tourist spots in real-time, then consider checking in to one of many live webcams across the globe. If you're someone who loves people, watching, then this is one for you!

If you're ever feeling particularly stressed or anxious, then there can be something very reassuring about watching the world go by. It can help us to see the bigger picture, and to realise that no matter how big or small problems are - the world will keep turning.

Take a trip down memory lane

If you've got a quiet afternoon, day or weekend, then consider having a bit of a declutter, and using this as a chance to take a trip down memory lane. Decluttering is a journey in itself, and it can be quite liberating letting go of things that you no longer need, organizing the things you want to keep, and seeing the neat and tidy end result. However, it also gives you a great excuse to get out your old keepsakes, mementos and diaries.



Reminiscing about the past can help you to see how far you've come and appreciate where you are at present, and it can also help you to revisit happy memories and indulge in a bit of nostalgia. Sometimes we can surprise ourselves when we remember how much we've already done, and how much we've grown as individuals. If you want to have an adventure at home, then getting lost in your past for a few hours can be a great way to do this.

Try to see adventure as a mindset

By choosing to see adventure as a mindset, then you'll never be short of them. We often lose our sense of adventure when we repeat the same actions and become bored with our everyday routine. But there's an adventure to be had in every scenario, if we choose to approach things a little differently than we normally would.

For example, instead of driving the same route to work everyday in autopilot mode, why not leave a bit earlier and explore a new route? Or instead of picking from the same handful of dinner options everyday, why not try a completely different recipe, that gets you excited?

Sometimes looking at the world a little differently, and making an effort to find adventure where we can - even in small ways - can open up a whole new and exciting world, wherever we happen to be.

Travel the world with this musical time machine

There's nothing like music to transport us to a different time and place. From gospel to motown, and from classical to the swinging 60s, it's amazing how quickly sounds can evoke feelings of escapism. With this musical time machine you can listen to music from any decade and country of your choice. Visit Brazil in the 1960s or China in the 1990s, or simply explore the sounds of the world....

There is a premium offering, but even the free version of the service had us transported out of our living room. The creators of Radiooooo built this tool with the goal of broadening people's horizons through musical culture.

Track turtles, sharks and dolphins

OCEARCH is a scientific research project trying to help ocean wildlife. With this tracker you can keep track of tagged ocean animals around the world and see where they are and where they've been.

You can find out each animal's name, their weight and their length! If you become attached to any specific animal, you can search for their name and see where they have ended up. My favourite is a White Shark, named Helena. She's 12ft 5ins, weighs 1314lbs, and I last spotted her along the Atlantic Coast of North Carolina!

A final thought...

Deciding to look at every aspect of your life as an adventure can make it a lot more fun, and can also offer you some relief from the stresses and strains of daily life. With life still being a bit strange and the majority of us still spending more time at home than we usually would, it's important that we all take steps to look after ourselves not just physically, but mentally too.

For many of us, this can mean finding ways to have fun and keep our minds engaged - and fortunately, there are plenty of ways we can do this from the comfort of our own homes. With a little imagination and curiosity, it's possible to start an adventure wherever we happen to be. Not all adventures are immediately obvious - but they are there.

(Article source: Rest Less)



Itchy feet? What is the future of travel in 2021?

With hope in sight, travel industry experts share their thoughts on how holidays might look this year.

After months of unpredictability, it's hard to imagine how holidays might look in the year ahead. But one thing's for certain: with a vaccine roll-out already in full flow, short breaks and long-haul getaways can and will resume once more in 2021.

Of course, like everything post-pandemic, travel will look a little different. But already, consumer demands are creating new trends and reshaping the industry - arguably for the better.

Here, some key players working in the travel business share their thoughts...

It'll be smooth cruising once the vaccine is out

"As a luxury river cruise company, where a good number of guests are on average 60-plus, we're confident the roll-out of the vaccine means that 2021 won't actually be too dissimilar from a 'normal' season," says Chris Townson, managing director of UK & Ireland for Uniworld.

"Based on current timelines, most Brits in our typical demographic will have received the vaccine by late spring, and once they do, there'll be no stopping them!"

Our booking patterns reflect that optimism and pent up demand, and our sailings across Europe for mid to late 2021 are filling up very nicely.

2022 seems to be the year of the bucket list, with our long-haul trips, in particular our Ganges cruise with the Golden Triangle in India, seeing a resurgence in popularity.

People desperately want to make up for lost time and turn that dream of escapism into a reality."

Glamping is here to stay

"Glamping was undoubtedly one of the biggest success stories for the domestic tourist industry in 2020," says Mike Bevens, managing director of Canopy & Stars.

"Our bookings for 2021 are already significantly higher than last year, our record year, with forward bookings up over 180% year-on-year in

December. Last year, we saw summer holiday bookings treble in the days immediately following the Prime Minister's announcement that restrictions would be eased, so guests would be wise to book ahead of the post-lockdown rush.

"Another exciting new development for 2021 is the Government's recent announcement to extend a scheme doubling the length of time (now 56 days) that temporary structures can be placed on land without needing an application for planning permission, until the end of 2021. We think this will encourage many more 'pop-up' glamping sites."

Demand will be high if you book too late

"When it's wet and gloomy outside, the idea of enjoying a cocktail at sunset on your balcony, overlooking the ocean, is a beautiful prospect," says Derek Jones, CEO of Kuoni.

"January has always been a popular time to book, as there are so many good savings, but this year it's advisable to book sooner rather than later, to guarantee you'll get away to the spot you want. Demand is going to flood back as soon as we're through this latest set of restrictions, so you could find that if you leave it, you may struggle to find what you want.

"Flexibility will continue to be a theme as complexity and uncertainty around travel continues. A move to trusted brands, with real people to help fix things if anything changes before or during the holiday, is going to be important this year."

It will be a time for new destinations to shine

"As consumer confidence grows, we will see a desire to make up for lost time, and to ensure the time we do spend travelling gives us as much enrichment and value as possible," says Jerry Inzerillo, CEO of the Diriyah Gate Development Authority, responsible for an exciting new cultural site in Saudi Arabia.

"Travel will become more meaningful again, with each trip offering the traveller an opportunity for consideration and depth of experience - places that were previously considered 'once in a lifetime' will move higher up consumers' lists, as the urgency and impetus for travel returns again.

"We will see more far-flung, adventurous trips in 2021, with the sentiment being that there is no time like the present. Emerging destinations that are off the beaten track and less well known, such as Saudi Arabia, will benefit from this, as people crave new experiences and seek out adventure."

Hobby holidays will be top of the agenda

"People have been prevented not only from travelling, due to Covid measures, but also from pursuing many activities," says Phil North, manager at Dive Worldwide.

"Our research indicates many people have used the time to take stock, and will be keener than ever to enjoy activities - such as scuba diving - in 2021. We're getting enquiries from qualified divers, but we also have non-divers wanting to learn.

We believe small groups may prove popular also, providing camaraderie within a small bubble, and have introduced small group adventures to the Red Sea, the Maldives and Indonesia. Indonesia is our biggest selling destination and it will always be a favourite with divers."

Africa meets new demands for private, secluded hideaways

"Our guests are looking for places that offer wide open spaces and lend themselves to physical distancing, or the novelty of exploring a completely new destination, knowing they're safe in the A&K cocoon," says Geoffrey Kent, founder of luxury operator Abercrombie & Kent.

"This is Africa's moment. Safaris are a natural fit as we begin travelling again, featuring small boutique camps with plenty of space and privacy.

Plus, tourism plays an important role in protecting endangered wildlife, not only by keeping poachers at bay, but also bringing much-needed funding to local conservation projects. It's a win-win all round."

People will invest in privacy and space

"There have been more bookings for upgraded rooms, focusing on larger suites with their own private pools, as well as private villas that are part of hotel complexes," says Erin Johnson, marketing director for Sovereign Luxury Travel.

"This gives customers access to hotel facilities, but means family bubbles can be together in their own space. Requests for in-room private dining have also proven popular, suggesting that after a year of cooking for themselves, customers want the joy of eating from a hotel restaurant, but to do so in their own space.

We have always offered private transfers as standard for all of our customers, as well as lounge access at the airport, but I think this will be something customers come to expect when they travel again, as it means limited exposure to large groups of people."

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

*Do you have a holiday planned this year?
tell us all about it by visiting: www.ourplace.co*

Over-50s rush to book holidays as vaccine boosts confidence

Coach and tour operators have seen an unexpected growth in bookings in the last fortnight.



BBC News reports that industry figures call it growing "vaccine confidence" about 2021.

Whilst there is no doubt that the pandemic continues to put huge pressure on lives and the NHS, this is a small amount of sunshine for the travel industry, which has had a tough year.

TUI, the UK's largest tour operator, says 50% of bookings on their website are currently by over-50s. This was previously a smaller market for them.

National Express's coach holiday businesses say bookings made by those 65 and over have increased by 185% in the last fortnight compared to last year.

Looking forward

"Since the announcement of the vaccine, it's given our customer base, predominantly those over 65, increased confidence to book and have that summer getaway in 2021" says Jit Desai, head of holidays and travel at National Express.

"We launched the brochure for spring-summer 2021 just this weekend gone, and on Monday we took a week's worth of bookings in a day and that's continued so far," says Mr Desai. "What the vaccine does is give certainty and confidence. "That then allows the customer and ourselves the ability to plan ahead".

The pandemic has been devastating for the travel sector. Tens of thousands of jobs have gone in the UK. Millions of Britons cancelled breaks because the health situation was in flux across the world.

But National Express now points to returning confidence to travel.

"Many we've spoken to have had the first jab. They know in 12 weeks they'll get a second jab. It gives them certainty that they can enjoy and look forward to their 2021 holiday. It is something to look forward to, to being with people, with friends, like minded and from the same generation."

Dawn and Ray - 75 and 78 years old - are from Hampshire and are due to have their first jab soon. They have just booked five UK holidays.

"We are raring to go once we've got that vaccine, we are really looking forward to it - both of us. We are going to Wales, Leicestershire, to York where there is a mystery tour - and to the Cotswolds", Dawn said.

For Dawn and Ray, it's the ease of coach travel that's appealing, as well as the safety. She adds "they've looked after us so well in the past, the coaches are clean, we'll all wear masks, we all look after each other."

At the moment, 90% of the bookings with National Expresses coach businesses are UK based, so it looks like another good year for the staycation.

"European bookings are lower because of the uncertainty on the continent," says Mr Desai. "The UK wins because of the lack of need to quarantine. And uncertainty about the moves other governments might make whilst away also creates fear."

Travel to Europe

It's not just UK breaks that are selling. The UK's largest tour operator TUI, famous for its sun-drenched European beach holidays, says there has also been a change in the last fortnight.

"We're seeing a customer base or age group that wasn't booking before, that is starting to book," says Andrew Flintham the MD of TUI UK. "The over 50s, we assume, is on the back to the vaccine news."

Whilst TUI UK boss acknowledges that "the market is still depressed and it's not where we want it - we are seeing glimmers of hope."

There are also interesting changes emerging in the types of breaks holidaymakers plan to take and the months they're planning to travel. "People are booking later into the summer, hedging their bets" said Mr Flintham. "More July and August and a lot of demand for September and October.

"People are booking longer holidays, we're seeing more people booking ten or eleven or 14 nights rather than seven. People are maybe catching up on what they've missed."

Holidays with grandma and grandpa?

As TUI analysed its recent booking data, one trend they spotted is the emergence of large, multigenerational group bookings.

"It is family time we've all missed. We can't get away from our own families, but our broader families we can't see, and that's feeding into our choices" Mr Flintham explains.

After such a bad 10 months, and TUI cancelling all holidays until the middle of February at the earliest because of the new lockdown, how does the rest of the summer look?

"I think the summer holiday is on" says Mr Flintham, "I think we just need time for people to get that confidence, but yes, we think there will be a good summer this summer".

For those who've watched the paralysis brought upon the travel industry since last winter, a morsel of good news about customers booking again is being celebrated.

"This is fantastic news and to be hugely welcomed by an industry that has been utterly devastated by the pandemic", says Sophie Griffiths, editor of Travel Trade Gazette. "Ten months into this crisis and the industry has still received zero dedicated support from the government despite being unique as a sector in terms of giving out thousands in refunds while getting next to nothing back in for 2020."

(Story source: BBC News)

Hotel quarantine countries: The 'high risk' Covid countries which could be on list under new UK travel rules

Although there had been reports of blanket travel restrictions, it is thought the UK could introduce a targeted hotel quarantine applying to certain countries.

Inews reports that although there have been reports of blanket travel restrictions, it is now thought that the UK could introduce a more targeted approach.

Which countries could hotel quarantine rules apply to?

Reports have suggested that ministers may opt for a system that targets passengers arriving from high-risk coronavirus hotspots.

Various publications have reported that a list of 30 countries will be announced, with the BBC reporting that arrivals from most of southern Africa and South America will be included. Portugal is also thought to be on the initial list, due to many flights from Brazil coming via its capital Lisbon.

Earlier this month, the Government banned direct travel from 16 countries, including all of South America and Portugal, in a bid to prevent the spread of the Brazil variant.

It followed a similar ban for South Africa introduced just before Christmas, which was subsequently expanded to include 11 other nations in southern Africa and the Indian Ocean.



While these countries would be expected to form the bulk of the reported 30-strong list, the Daily Mail is among publications reporting that the UAE - including celebrity winter sun hotspot Dubai - could be included.

African nations such as Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia have also been tipped to face restrictions.

A travel corridor between the UK and the UAE was removed from the travel corridor list earlier this month following a spike in Covid-19 cases.

What will the new quarantine rules be?

It is expected that arrivals from countries on the list will be required to self-isolate in a hotel for 10 days to protect against the arrival of new variants into the UK.

Details on which hotel companies and which could be used are not known, but it is thought that travellers will be asked to pay for their own accommodation, which could cost more than £1,000.

It is not yet known how long these measures will be put in place, and reports suggest, with many hotels closed due to low traveller numbers, it could take up to three weeks to implement the policy.

Australia became one of the first countries to introduce mandatory hotel quarantine in March, while the practice was also introduced in China, New Zealand, India, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, Qatar and Thailand.

Although the restrictions will initially apply to England, the Scottish Government has said it will go "at least as far" in enhancing quarantine measures.

Ministers in Northern Ireland were expected to discuss the issue on Tuesday, while there is currently no direct route into Wales for international travellers.

Currently, anybody entering the UK from abroad, including British nationals, must provide proof of a negative Covid-19 tests taken up to three days before departure.

All travellers must also self-isolate upon arrival even if they test negative, although in England travellers may end this period early if they pay for a private coronavirus test.

(Story source: INews)



Michelin 2021: First star for Glasgow in 18 years - as London restaurant recognised after 20 days of trading

‘This is a blessing. It’s special. I know we’re going to come out of lockdown even stronger,’ Andy Beynon says.

A global pandemic during which restaurants have been closed for months on end is a strange time to be handing out awards for fine cooking.

But Michelin was adamant in its desires to celebrate British and Irish hospitality this year and announced a reel of new accolades on Monday night, its inspectors having been busily dining between lockdowns.

“We want to shine a light on our industry, to keep people talking about it in the media and remind everyone of what we have, and to bring news of our great restaurants to a global audience,” said Michelin.



“And it’s not just the restaurants themselves. By celebrating our wonderful industry we also recognise all those who depend upon it and are part of the supply chain, from bakers and butchers, to farmers and fishermen.”

New stars

In Michelin’s 2021 guide, two new three star restaurants were revealed - Core by Clare Smyth, and H  l  ne Darroze at The Connaught - and a host of two and one star establishments were given the spotlight at a time when it is needed more than ever.

The most impressive of all the year’s graduates might be Andy Beynon’s young London restaurant Behind, a diminutive spot in London Fields, Hackney, which was awarded a coveted star after trading for just 20 days.

Beynon tells i: “On reflection, what we’ve managed to achieve - a star in 20 days of service - is completely mad. It’s something we didn’t expect. We cooked for 10 days, locked down, then cooked for 10 more before closing.

“Then again, it’s a credit to me, coming in with 15 years experience in this trade working with and learning from the best chefs in the country.

I learned my craft. “And it’s a credit to my team especially, the guys who stuck with me and worked so hard. This has been tough physically, mentally, and financially, so it’s awesome to be rewarded and this will really help when we reopen.

Glasgow win

“This is a blessing. It’s special. I know we’re going to come out of lockdown even stronger.”



Beynon has become one of 17 new Michelin starred restaurants in the UK. New awards span from country boltholes in Somerset to classic dining halls in Yorkshire estates.

North of the border, Glasgow has earned its first Michelin star in 18 years by way of the chef Lorna McNee, who took over Cail Bruich in spring 2020.

“It’s an amazing achievement and it’s been a goal of mine for a very long time,” McNee tells i. “I’ve always wanted to be a female chef in Scotland to win a Michelin star. It’s massive, it’s great for the city, and it’ll bring more people here.”

McNee, a former Scottish Chef of the Year and champion on the BBC’s Great British Menu, says Glasgow is strengthening as a culinary destination.

New start

She says: “We have a very good food scene. But it’s been an incredibly tough time and we do need a push, we need support. I’m glad inspectors have been out and I hope the awards help bring things back to normality.

“I’ve been here for eight months now and have dreams to keep improving. Who knows what’s next. For now, I want to focus on championing Scottish produce.

Our shellfish, our crab and langoustines, is the best in the world. So I’ll carry on developing dishes and when we reopen we’ll be even better.”

For now, Michelin’s latest accolades bestowed on British and Irish restaurants have proven to be welcome respite amid the turmoil and uncertainty encircling hospitality.

When dining rooms eventually relaunch, restaurants such as Beynon’s and McNee’s will be waiting, starred up and willing.

Michelin Star requirements: how to earn the culinary world’s top award

Michelin Stars are the culinary world’s greatest status symbol, but what does it take to get a raving review from the famed restaurant guide?

Michelin stars for excellence are handed out by French tyre company Michelin annually in the Red Guide, a reference book for restaurants and hotels.

There’s no knowing exactly how restaurants are selected to receive a star. The publication is notoriously secretive about its selection criteria.

Anonymous inspectors can turn up at any time to review a restaurant. They do not identify themselves and eat and pay as any diner would.

Continued on pages 20-21...



It is down to their judgement whether an establishment receives a star or loses one, so if there are any Michelin Star requirements set in stone, it's to be at the top of your game consistently. One poor meal could cost you the chance to earn a Michelin Star.

While the exact Michelin Star requirements are unknown, here's a rough guide that provides a decent idea of what it takes.

How to earn one Michelin Star

According to the guide, one star is usually awarded to places that are worth visiting if you're in the area.

It's worth noting that Michelin Stars are awarded solely based on food quality. Inspectors take no interest in the restaurant's appearance, atmosphere or service.

In order to earn a Michelin Star, you must produce consistently high quality dishes. Chefs should be able to produce all dishes to the highest standard and show a "mastery" of their trade.

Likewise, your menu should have personality that distinguishes your restaurant from other establishments. The Michelin guide aims to highlight standout restaurants, so you're unlikely to feature if your French cuisine is no different to the French cuisine on offer up the street.

According to former Michelin inspector turned leaker Pascal Rémy, you first need to get on to Michelin's "to review" radar in order to earn a star. This list is compiled from past reviews on local blogs and publications.

The one Michelin Star club isn't as exclusive as you might think. In 2016, the guide included 2,114 one star restaurants.



How to get two Michelin Stars

Things get a little more difficult from here. The guide states that two Michelin Star restaurants are worth deviating from your planned route to visit.

In France, the country with the most Michelin Stars, there are 80 two star establishments, compared to 492 one stars.

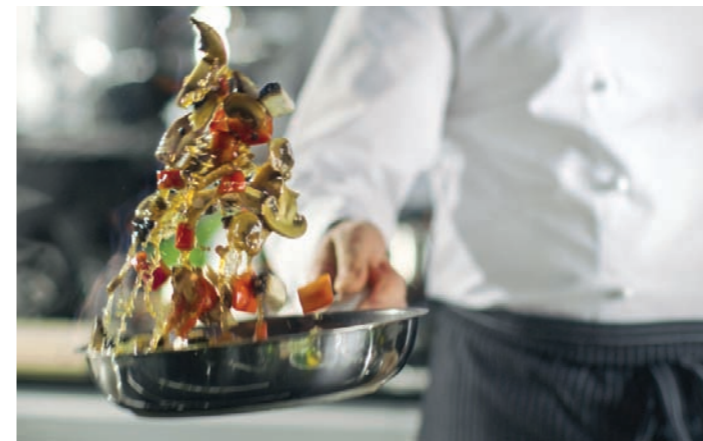
The two Michelin Star requirements are much the same. Inspectors will still focus on the taste of a dish. However, they are also likely to consider the quality of the ingredients used. Many two star chefs source unique and rare ingredients to add to their dishes in order to provide something that diners can't get anywhere else as a way of maintaining their rating.

Likewise, you must also step up your consistency. The odd kitchen mishap is unlikely to cause any major issues in a one star establishment. However, it might do in a two star restaurant.

One star restaurants are only inspected every two years, but two star restaurants are supposedly checked monthly.

How to get three Michelin Stars

Michelin only award three stars to restaurants that are worth going out of your way to eat at. Unsurprisingly, very few earn such a prestigious rating.



While earning one and two stars largely comes down to whether you're able to please a particular inspector on the day, entering the elite club of three Michelin Star restaurants requires the approval of a number of inspectors.

Once again, the requirements are largely the same. However, food quality, ingredients and chef technique must be exquisite.

Likewise, according to Rémy, reputation also plays a part in the three star selection process.

Restaurants and chefs that have been involved in scandals or have questionable backgrounds are unlikely to be awarded the guide's highest rating.

The former inspector points to famous German chef Alfonso Schuhbeck, who was previously accused of money laundering, as an example.

Creativity plays a big part in the selection process. Inspectors are looking for unique experiences, so creative chefs that start new food trends are usually top of the pile for a third star.

Heston Blumenthal is a notable example.



Michelin Star requirements: is Michelin an exclusive club?

Michelin is often wrongly branded as a fine-dining guide. However, that isn't the case.

Yes, many of the included restaurants do charge huge sums of money for fancy meals. However, there are no rules for types of cuisine or price of food where the Red Guide is concerned.

Last year's edition saw a Singapore food truck handed a Michelin Star. Diners can grab a meal from HK Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle food truck for approximately £1. In return, you receive a dish that Michelin inspectors deemed to be among the world's best.

Singapore's Hill Street Tai Hwa Pork Noodle, another food stall, also earned itself membership to the Michelin Star club.



Likewise, Britain's best fish and chip shop, Kingfisher Fish and Chips in Plymouth, has been tipped to earn a star in this year's edition.

Being trained by a Michelin Starred chef, having a popular inner-city eatery and serving up plates of le plateau de fromages affinés might make earning a star a little easier, but it definitely isn't required.

(Article source: Various)



Recycling revolution: 10 creative upcycling ideas that could save you money and help the planet

Repurposing or upcycling your clutter is a satisfying way to get creative, save money and give a new lease of life to items that you longer use.

Next time you go to throw out your bean can or you're wondering what to do with all your old cake tins that you no longer need - it's worth taking a moment to consider whether they could be used for something else. You might be surprised at what you come up with!

Methods of upcycling are becoming increasingly innovative and stylish - and are a great way to be kind to the planet. To help you get started, here are 16 clever upcycling ideas that will hopefully inspire you to get creative with your clutter...

Turn old jeans into a work apron

If you've got an old pair of jeans that you no longer wear, then you could turn them into a handy work apron. All you need is a pair of old jeans, some scissors and a needle and thread!



Turn an old stuffed toy into a door stop (left)

If your grandchildren (or you for that matter!) have stuffed toys that are no longer wanted or needed, then consider transforming one into a door stop. All you have to do is make a needle cut in the fabric, pull out the stuffing, fill it with something heavy like gravel or sand to make it weighted heavy - and then sew it back up!

Turn an old window into a piece of wall art

If you've recently had an old window replaced - or still happen to have one lying around from when you did - then you could give it a new lease of life by turning it into a piece of unique wall art. The video below will show you how to use wax paste and chalk-type paint to create a beautiful feature piece for your home.

Turn an old cable reel into a coffee table

This cute table will not only give you somewhere you enjoy your cake and coffee, it will also allow you to display and organise your books and plants in an interesting way. An added bonus is that it also spins!



Turn cake pans into a tiered organiser

Whether you've got too many cake pans, or yours are simply a bit worn out, they can easily be repurposed and used as a handy organiser. Whether you want to organise your cosmetics, herbs and spices, or random bits and bobs - your old cake tins could be the ultimate storage solution.

Give old wooden furniture a makeover

If you've got old wooden furniture that looks old and tired, or no longer matches your colour scheme, then rather than buying new furniture - why not just give your existing furniture a makeover? It's really quite amazing how with a fresh coat of paint, some varnish and/or a new set of handles, something like a dresser, chest or drawers or wardrobe can look brand new.

Turn tin cans into pretty pots

If you've got green fingers and you're keen to save money on plant pots, then why not consider keeping hold of some of your old tin cans? In a few simple steps, an empty bean tin can become a pretty pot for your leafy companions. Consider hanging them in an arrangement on a wall or garden fence, using them as a table centerpiece - or even giving them as gifts to friends or family members.



Create your own blackboard

If you've got an old piece of wood knocking around that you no longer need, then why not create your own blackboard, where you can keep track of daily tasks and reminders? All you need is some chalkboard paint, a brush, and eventually some chalk! If you don't have a piece of wood to spare, you can still create a blackboard on a wall in your home, using just the paint.

Turn bricks into planters

Plenty of us have a rogue brick or two lying around in the garden. If they're sitting there unused, then you could consider using them as planters for your greenery. Simply scoop some soil into the brick holes and add in a few small succulents. Succulents typically have shallow roots which means they should still be able to thrive in their new home, even though the holes are fairly small.



Make coasters out of wine corks

Rather than throwing your wine corks away, consider holding on to them and making some decorative coasters for your coffee table. All you need is some strong glue and little creativity!

(Article source: Rest Less)

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 **HALVED** 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 **HALVED** 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:

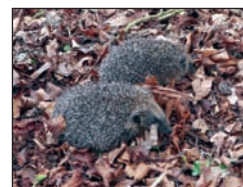
'Julie'



'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-Wye HR9 5NB

