OURPLACENews

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

MARCH 2021

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Cabin Fever?

15 ways to stop you going 'stir crazy' during lockdown

Amazing Africa!

25 trips of a lifetime in Africa, from camping in the Sahara to cycling among hippos in Eswatini

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8 superfoods that you can grow from home

Spruce up for Spring!

Five low cost ways to improve your property

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PLUS...

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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

- 1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited
- 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
- 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 selfisolation.

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
- 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!



Health & Beauty News

Next stage of Covid vaccine rollout after over-50s 'to be decided partly by ethnicity'

It comes after it was revealed more than 15 million people in Britain have now had their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, according to Government figures.



The Mirror reports that the third phase of the mass coronavirus vaccine rollout will target people by ethnicity as well as age, it has been reported.

But the next stage after over-50s have the jab will not reportedly prioritise people based on jobs as doing so would be "too complicated".

It comes after it was revealed more than 15 million people in Britain have now had their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, according to Government figures.

The rollout has now moved to people aged over 65, with all over-50s to be vaccinated by the end of April. And the NHS is reportedly looking to double the vaccine rollout, meaning daily doses could hit one million.

Vaccinating the most vulnerable is key to the Government's lockdown exit strategy for England.

Schools in England are expected to begin reopening from March 8, with other measures to be lifted after that.

No decision has been taken who should be prioritised for vaccines after the over-50s.

So far age and health problems have been determining factors, but there have been calls for those in frontline jobs such as teaching, the police and supermarkets to be prioritised.

However, the Daily Telegraph reports that for the third phase of the inoculation programme people will be offered the jabs not based on their jobs, but their age and ethnicity.

The joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI), which meets on Tuesday, is reportedly set to recommend the continuation of an age-based approach when the programme moves on from jabs for the most vulnerable adults.

Sources on the committee said prioritising certain types of worker, like teachers, would "create too much complication" and "risk slowing the rollout down".

A source told the paper: "One of the main factors behind the success of the rollout so far has been the simplicity of the prioritisation rules because it has been based largely on age.

"Once you make things more complicated, you run the risk of slowing things down.

"You create more telephone calls for surgeries to make, while people are bashing on the door demanding a vaccine because they think it's their turn."

But the committee will reportedly urge ministers to take into account the higher mortality risk seen in some ethnic minority communities.

The paper claimed that a source had said committee members were said to be "particularly concerned" about the death rates from people from South Asian background.

Ministers have not yet set out how the vaccine will be divvied out among the remaining population.

The move would come as a blow to those campaigning for certain professions to be put at the front of the queue for the jab against Covid.

Calls to ensure teachers get the vaccine before other types of workers have grown in recent weeks.

Labour called on ministers to give the jab to teachers during February half-term so they are inoculated before face-to-face lessons restart.

Meanwhile, the largest vaccination campaign in British history is now moving on to the next priority groups.

NHS England said people aged 65 to 69 can get a vaccine if GPs have supplies, while Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford said they had already begun contacting some over 50s.

Overall, uptake of the vaccine has been high, with the Department of Health and Social Care reporting a 93 per cent take-up rate among the over 75s in England.

NHS England previously said the top four priority groups in England "have now been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated", while Wales said those groups had been reached.

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said she expects many in the 65-69 age group to have had their first jab by the middle of this month after the vast majority of older people were vaccinated.

(Story source: Silver Surfers)



Health & Beauty News

COVID-19: Government aims for all over-50s to be reached in vaccine drive by May

Given the pace of progress, attention is already turning to what will happen when lots of the population has been inoculated.



Sky News reports that all over-50s should be offered a coronavirus vaccine by May, the government has announced.

It is a significant target and the first time a firm date has been put on when all those in the top nine categories on the priority list for a COVID-19 jab will be offered one by.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock confirmed the ambition, saying in an interview: "My plan is that we should be able to offer a vaccine to everyone in categories 1-9 - that's all the over 50s - by May.

"Lots of things have got to go right to hit that goal - especially supply, which is the rate-limiting factor."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman would only say the deadline was the "end of spring" - and refused to explain whether that could be as late as mid-June.

But the new aim was slipped out by the Cabinet Office, when it announced that the upcoming local and mayoral elections will definitely go ahead, albeit with social distancing and in COVID-secure polling stations.

It confirmed: "The UK's vaccination programme is planned to have reached all nine priority cohorts by May, meaning that the government can commit to go ahead with these polls with confidence."

It then seemed the announcement had come out by accident, given Prime Minister Boris Johnson's deputy spokesman said hours later that the press release was sent out "in error" then admitted it was actually "correct".

Currently, the UK is on group four of nine, meaning jabs can be given to all those aged 70 and over, the clinically extremely vulnerable and care home residents and staff.

The remaining priority groups are:

5: All those 65 years of age and over

6: Adults aged 16 to 65 years in an at-risk group

7: All those 60 years of age and over

8: All those 55 years of age and over

9: All those 50 years of age and over

Britain's vaccine rollout has been one of the fastest in the world with the approval of three vaccines - two of which are already being produced and administered.

But given the pace of progress, attention is already turning to what will happen when a large part of the population has been inoculated. Sky News has confirmed with government sources that plans are being looked at for immunity passports, hoped to allowed Britons to travel abroad if the rules are changed to allow it.

Sweden's government announced on Thursday it plans to launch a digital coronavirus vaccine passport by summer, if there is an international standard in place by then. And Denmark also said it would launch a first version of the document by the end of February.

So far more than 10 million people across the UK have had their first dose of a COVID jab.

(Story source: Sky News)

Brain-training game that reduces dementia risk by 29% is the first to prevent the condition

A computer game that reduces peoples' dementia risk by 29 percent is the first to prevent the condition, new research has revealed.

The Daily Mail reports that individuals who completed as little as 15 sessions over 10 years were found to have just a 5.9 percent chance of developing a form of the disorder, a study found. And the more a person plays the game, the lower their risk becomes, the research adds.

Lead author Dr Jerri Edwards from the University of South Florida, said: 'Speed of processing training resulted in decreased risk of dementia across the 10-year period of, on average, 29 percent as compared to the control. 'We need to investigate what is the appropriate amount of training to get the best results. The timing of intervention is also important.'

(Story source: Daily Mail)



Your boots are made for walking: Exercise for all ages

Fitness and exercise are important health considerations for people over 50 - even in a lockdown. Here's how to give the old joints a spring clean with exercise.

Walking is the only exercise in which the rate of participation does not decline in the middle and later years. Studies have found the highest percentage of regular walkers (39.4%) for any group was found among men 65 years of age and older.

In fact in early 2021, it is practically the only regular exercise you can take safely. The health clubs, gyms and golf club are all off limits so now is the time to revisit walking to keep yourself mentally and physical healthy. Walking has been widely practiced as a recreational and fitness activity throughout recorded history. Classical and early English literature seems to have been written largely by men who were prodigious walkers, and Emerson and Thoreau helped carry on the tradition in America.

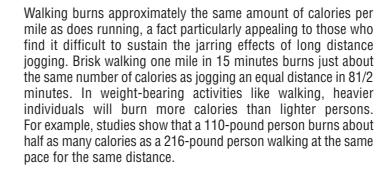
Walking today is riding a wave of popularity that draws its strength from a rediscovery of walking's utility, pleasures, and health-giving qualities. This article is for those who want to join that movement.

Walking: The slower, surer way to fitness

People walk for many reasons: for pleasure ... to rid themselves of tensions... to find solitude... or to get from one place to another. Nearly everyone who walks regularly does so at least in part because of a conviction that it is good exercise.

Often dismissed in the past as being "too easy" to be taken seriously, walking recently has gained new respect as a means of improving physical fitness. Studies show that, when done briskly on a regular. schedule, it can improve the body's ability to consume oxygen during exertion, lower the resting heart rate, reduce blood pressure, and increase the efficiency of the heart and lungs. It also helps burn excess calories.

Since obesity and high blood pressure are among the leading risk factors for heart attack and stroke, walking often protection against two of our major killers.



Although increasing walking speed does not burn significantly more calories per mile, a more vigorous walking pace will produce more dramatic conditioning effects. When looking at the benefits to heart/lung endurance, how far one improves depends on his/her initial fitness level. Someone starting out in poor shape will benefit from a slow speed of walking whereby someone in better condition would need to walk faster and/or father to improve. Recent studies show that there are also residual benefits to vigorous exercise. For a period of time after a dynamic workout, one's metabolism remains elevated above normal which results in additional calories burned.

In some weight-loss and conditioning studies, walking actually has proven to be more effective than running and other more highly-touted activities. That's because it's virtually injury-free and has the lowest dropout rate of any form of exercise.

Like other forms of exercise. walking appears to have a substantial psychological payoff. Beginning walkers almost invariably report that they feel better and sleep better, and that their mental outlook improves.

Walking also can exert a favourable influence on personal habits. For example, smokers who begin walking often cut down or quit. There are two reasons for this. One, it is difficult to exercise vigorously if you smoke, and two, better physical condition encourages a desire to improve other aspects of one's life.

In addition to the qualities it has in common with other activities, walking has several unique advantages. Some of these are:

Almost everyone can do it

You don't have to take lessons to learn how to walk. The only quality you need is to be motivated to step up your pace and distance and walk more often.

You can do it almost anywhere

All you have to do to find a place to walk is step outside your door. Almost any footpath, street, road, trail, park, field, or even a shopping mall will do. The variety of settings available is one of the things that makes walking such a practical and pleasurable activity.

You can do it almost anytime

You don't have to partner with someone from your bubble, you can go on your own and set your own schedule. Weather doesn't pose the same problems and uncertainties that it does in many sports. Walking is not a seasonal activity, and you can do it in extreme temperatures that would rule out other activities.

It doesn't cost anything

You don't have to pay fees or join a private club to become a walker. The only equipment required is a sturdy, comfortable pair of shoes.

Walking for physical fitness

What makes a walk a workout? It's largely a matter of pace and distance. When you're walking for exercise, you don't saunter, stroll, or shuffle. Instead, you move out at a steady clip that is brisk enough to make your heart beat faster and cause you to breathe more deeply.

Here are some tips to help you develop an efficient walking style:

Hold head erect and keep back straight and abdomen flat. Toes should point straight ahead and arms should swing loosely at sides.

Land on the heel of the foot and roll forward to drive off the ball of the foot. Walking only on the ball of the foot, or in a flat-footed style, may cause fatigue and soreness. Take long, easy strides, but don't strain for distance. When walking up or down hills, or at a very rapid pace, lean forward slightly. Breathe deeply (with mouth open, if that is more comfortable).

What to wear when walking

A good pair of shoes is the only "special equipment" required by the walker. Any shoes that are comfortable, provide good support, and don't cause blisters or calluses will do, but here are some suggestions to help you make your selection:

Good running shoes (the training models with heavy soles) are good walking shoes, as are some of the lighter trail and hiking boots and casual shoes with heavy rubber or crepe rubber soles.

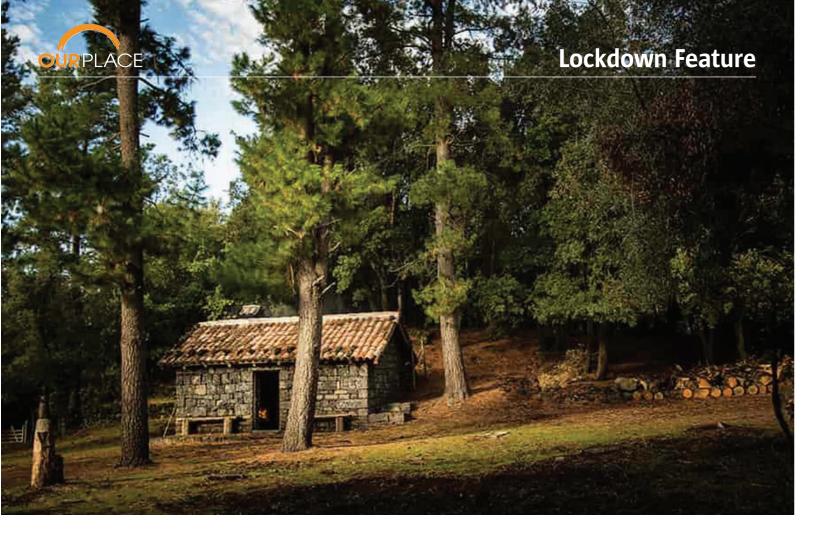
Whatever kind of shoe you select, it should have arch supports and should elevate the heel one-half to three-quarters of an inch above the sole of the foot.

Choose a shoe with uppers made of materials that "breathe," such as leather or nylon mesh.

Weather will dictate the rest of your attire. As a general rule, you will want to wear lighter clothing than temperatures seem to indicate. Walking generates lots of body heat.

(Article source: 50 Connect)





Cabin Fever? 15 ways stop you going 'stir crazy' during lockdown

Most of us can identify things that we love about being at home; such as the nook in the kitchen where you have your morning coffee, or your favourite comfy armchair. But too much time at home can be enough to make anyone stir crazy.

If you're experiencing "cabin fever" as a result of the current restrictions in your local area, or because you just aren't getting out as much as you usually would, then your stress levels may also be higher than normal.

Feelings associated with cabin fever can also be heightened in the winter months when the days are colder and darker. However, it's important to keep in mind that the current situation is only temporary, and it will pass - even if it doesn't feel like it at the moment.

In the meantime, if you're looking for a boost, and are wondering how you can look after your mental health during these unsettling times, then you might find it useful to read more about what cabin fever is, and discover 15 things you can do that might help.

What is cabin fever and what are the symptoms?

"Cabin fever" is a term commonly used to describe the feelings that are brought on by being isolated in a space - either alone or with family - for an extended period of time. During this time you typically won't spend much time out in the fresh air, or interact in-person with new surroundings or people outside of that which you live, causing you to feel under-stimulated.

Cabin fever is not a medical, diagnosable condition, but more of a common term that is used by psychologists to explain the symptoms of restlessness, boredom and claustrophobia that come with being stuck indoors.

The term has been around since the early 1800s when American pioneers who migrated to the Great Plains - west of Mississippi and east of the Rocky Mountains - often lived in small cabins and went without human contact (or contact only with family members) for prolonged periods. They could be miles apart from neighbours and during the winter months, it was common for them not to see or hear from anyone at all. The American pioneers were the first to use the term "cabin fever" to describe the mental stress of feeling confined and living in isolation.

Other symptoms reported by those who are experiencing cabin fever, include:

- Insomnia
- · Problems with concentration
- Frequent napping
- Irritability
- Feeling hopeless
- · Lack of motivation
- · Anxiety and/or depression
- · Inability to cope with stress
- Irregular eating patterns (including eating too much or too little)

Make sure you're getting enough sunlight and fresh air

It's important to try and get a good dose of sunlight and fresh air at least once a day. Whether you go for a walk, a run, or a bike ride, being outside even for a short time, can have a significant impact on how you feel for the rest of the day. If you're unable to get outside, then consider opening a window or two or getting outside in your garden instead.

The more oxygen-rich air we breathe, the more energised and alert we tend to feel. Fresh air has also been linked to improved blood pressure, lower stress levels and a greater sense of wellbeing. Sunlight stimulates our bodies to produce vitamin D, which is a great mood-booster.

Keep busy

You might have found yourself becoming hyper-focused on every news headline and/or feeling that you're unable to relax because of feelings of restlessness and anxiety about the future. If you are no longer stimulated by your surroundings and daily routine, then these anxious feelings can increase, as we tend to have more time to overthink and ruminate.

To avoid this, often the most helpful thing you can do is to keep yourself as busy as possible with tasks that do stimulate you and that offer a temporary distraction. This will work differently for each of us. Some may find that they can get totally lost in the task of organising the kitchen cupboards over the course of a few hours, whereas others may find it helpful to invest time in a new or existing hobby, such as blogging or baking.

The mind is a powerful tool and it will run wild if you let it, so it's worth giving yourself a positive focus that can steer you away from anxious thoughts.

Keep a gratitude journal

If the coronavirus pandemic and everything that has come along with it, has brought up a lot of negative feelings, then it's important that we don't allow these feelings to consume us. One most effective ways to manage negative feelings is to remind vourself daily of what you're grateful for.

Consider keeping a daily gratitude journal where you write down at least one thing every day that you're grateful for. This could be anything at all - from feeling grateful for the incredible work being carried out by NHS staff to help keep us all safe, to being grateful for your comfy bed, or the pretty plant on your windowsill. With so much negativity dominating the news headlines at the moment, it can be helpful to take a step back and remind ourselves of some small pieces of positivity - no matter how small.

Practice self-care, even if you don't feel like it

When we're spending more time at home that usual, it can be easy to shower less and sit in our pyjamas more. It can also be tempting to stop doing things like shaving or taking care of our hair or nails, because who's going to see it? Whether anyone is going to see you or not, it's important to consider each one of these tasks as an act of self-care, that will help to carry you through this period of uncertainty.

There's a lot we can't control about the coronavirus pandemic. But looking after ourselves in small ways can make a big difference, and help us to take back some control of our lives. The way that you present yourself (even if no one else is around) can have a profound effect on your confidence and self-esteem, and can also influence your overall motivation levels throughout the day.

It doesn't matter whether you have anyone around you to impress with a nice outfit, or freshly washed hair. Aim to impress yourself, and chances are you'll feel much better for it.

Rearrange your living space

If you're bored of looking at the same four walls, then it can help to change it up by moving some furniture around or giving the walls a fresh coat of paint. These may seem like small changes, but any positive change to your environment can offer new stimulation and mitigate feelings associated with cabin fever.

If you can't move your furniture around, then spend some time thinking about other ways that you could make small, yet impactful changes to each of the rooms in your house. Perhaps you've got some paintings that you've yet to hang in your front room, or you've got a bookcase that needs decluttering and reorganising in the bedroom. Whatever you decide to change, make sure it makes you enjoy your home that little bit more

Continued on pages 10-11...



Reach out to others in the ways that you can

To help take the focus away from the length of time that the pandemic could go on for (which remains unknown), it can help to adopt a lengthy project (or several smaller projects) that will take you a few days, weeks or even months. Make sure that you choose something that you're really interested in and will capture your attention for long periods of time. Having a focus and a sense of purpose during a period of uncertainty can be really important and help motivate you to get out of bed in the morning.

It doesn't matter what you choose to do, whether that's planning some living space improvements through to giving your finances a midlife MOT. It's helpful to have a project to throw yourself into.

Listen to music

Research has shown that listening to music can help to boost your wellbeing - both mentally and physically. When we listen to a song that we like, our brains release dopamine - a pleasure inducing neurotransmitter. Music has also been shown to reduce depression, and improve running performance and sleep quality. We've all lost ourselves in a great song at some point - in the shower, while cooking dinner or when out driving. People often say that listening to music helps them to express themselves, feel less alone and temporarily escape from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

So, if you're feeling overwhelmed, claustrophobic, bored (or something else entirely) consider putting some of your favourite tunes on full blast and letting yourself enjoy the moment. If you're worried about disturbing others in your household, then use headphones. Just be sure to dance like no one's watching!

Practice mindfulness

Staying present is one of the most effective ways to ward off feelings of stress, anxiety and hopelessness - which can often be exacerbated when you're stuck indoors. Rather than worrying about the past, or the future and what may or may not happen, try to take time throughout the day when you focus only on what is going on at that very moment.

For example, if it's a fairly bright day, then try sitting at an open window early in the morning and focussing on the sound of the birds singing. Or when you lie down in the evenings, focus only on the breath entering and leaving your body. These calm moments can be practiced anywhere at any time and can offer a lot of relief from stress and anxiety, or depression.

Some people report that when they first start practicing mindfulness, they find it difficult to stop racing thoughts from rushing in. But this does get easier to manage with time. It's best to start small, by trying to be mindful for 5-10 minutes a day. You can then build it up and will hopefully be able to use it as a reliable relaxation mechanism.

Set yourself some goals

At the moment, there are a lot of restrictions on what we can and can't do, and many of us have had to adapt to changes in our home and work lives. However, this situation is only temporary and one of the best ways to remind yourself of this is to set yourself some post-lockdown or post-pandemic goals. This will help you look toward the future in a positive way and see the light at the end of the tunnel.



Lockdown Feature

It doesn't matter whether these goals are big or small, as long as they give you hope. Perhaps you'd like to make a career change, or reach a fitness goal, like signing up to a half-marathon. It might be hard to make any concrete plans during this period of uncertainty. But, there's no reason why you can't spend some time researching and thinking about your goals to familiarise yourself with the steps needed to reach them. This way, when life starts to look a bit more normal again (or possibly even before depending on what your goals are), you'll be ready to get started.

Search for inspiration

During difficult times, it can be really useful to search for sources of inspiration to help keep you going. This could involve thinking about some of your post-lockdown goals and searching for stories from people who have achieved great things, or overcome similar obstacles. These could take the form of autobiographies, documentaries or articles. This process can be incredibly empowering, and build hope for the future.

Avoid using things like alcohol or comfort food as an emotional crutch

It can be tempting to use things like alcohol or fatty/sugary food to conquer boredom, give you comfort or distract you from the current circumstances. But, these things generally only offer temporary relief, can form bad habits if repeated too often and may have longer term consequences for your mental and physical health.

There's no reason why you can't still enjoy a glass of wine or a sweet treat occasionally. But try to make sure you're also getting enough water and eating healthy, balanced meals. BBC Food is a great place to look for inspiration.

Do some exercise (start small if you're struggling with motivation)

You may have heard this suggestion plenty by now, but that's because exercise really does have the potential to change your daily life. As well as helping your brain to release endorphins (hormones that lift your mood), exercise can also help us to gain a sense of achievement and improve sleep quality. Getting started is often the hardest part, but it becomes easier if you make exercise part of your daily routine and as always, it's best to start small - for example with a short, brisk walk or a 10-minute yoga routine.

Consider helping someone else through online volunteering

During a time when people are suffering, the desire to give back can be greater than ever. Even though we're practicing social distancing, there are still many ways that you can help others from the comfort of your own sofa. When we help others, we tend to focus less on our own situation and can get a lot of reward from knowing that we've made a difference to someone else's.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself

The coronavirus pandemic has presented challenges for people across the world and for many, this is a situation unlike anything we've ever experienced before. It's important to be kind to yourself during these difficult times by not putting too much pressure on yourself to adapt to the situation perfectly.

Do what you can and congratulate yourself for the little things. If you did a home workout yesterday, but aren't sure you'll get round to doing one today, then don't punish yourself for it - just aim to do one tomorrow instead, or go for a gentle walk locally. Just do your best and let that be enough.

A note for those who live with others...

Often one of the hardest things about being cooped up at home, is spending much more time with the people in your household than you normally would. Whilst it can be nice to spend more time with family (or your house or flat mate), too much time can sometimes lead to arguments and an increased desire to have your own space.

Even if you don't have much room at home, it's important to try and give each other space where you can. This could mean going out for walks at different times, working in different rooms or allowing one another half an hour to have a relaxing bath in peace. When living in such close quarters, it's important to be open and honest with one another about when this space is needed.

It's also worth keeping in mind that everyone will have their own way of dealing with this situation, but chances are they'll be doing the best they can. So before you snap at your other half about not having done their share of the housework, consider whether it's worth the battle. Try to be kind always, because it really does go a long way.

And finally...

Most of us who are social distancing and/or self-isolating at home will experience some symptoms of cabin fever at some stage - this is completely normal and we hope the steps above will help to lessen any feelings of boredom, restlessness and anxiety. However, if you find yourself getting increasingly low and you feel as though you're unable to find a way through it, then it's important to reach out for help. You could do this by speaking to a friend or family member about how you're feeling.

Alternatively, you can contact Silver Line on 0800 470 8090 or Samaritans on 116 123. Silver Line is specifically designed for older people and can offer information, friendship and advice. Both charities are available 24/7 to simply listen (and not judge), if you need someone to talk to.

Take care of yourselves in these difficult times.

(Article source: Rest Less)





Amazing Africa! 25 trips of a lifetime in Africa, from camping in the Sahara to cycling among hippos in Eswatini

This month we look at Africa, which is up there among the best when it comes to memory-making destinations.

Desert and delta in remote Botswana

See the arid wilderness of Nxai Pan - a fossil lakebed salt flat that is home to a cluster of seven ancient baobab trees - through the eyes of a San bushman guide, then glide along the Okavango Delta's shimmering channels, one of Africa's Seven Natural Wonders, on a mokoro boat.

You will also visit Chobe National Park to meet elephants you'll never forget. Eleven days from £5,000pp, excluding flights, tribes.co.uk/holidays/botswana-desert-delta



Tracking western lowland gorillas

Deep in the Congo Basin, the Central African Republic's Dzanga-Sangha Reserve is home to elusive rainforest species such as gorillas, bongo antelope and mangabey monkeys. Tourism is in its infancy here, making it a thrillingly back-to-basics place to see lowland gorillas. Nobody knows this remote, leafy wilderness better than the Ba'Aka tribespeople you will meet on this adventure. Eight days from £5,945pp, excluding flights, naturalworldsafaris.com

Leopards and culture in Zambia

A safari needn't be a mad dash; rather than hurrying from place to place, you could choose just one, richly diverse park. South Luangwa, where local guides lead leopard-spotting drives and walks, fits the bill: with masses of wildlife to see and local craft collectives to visit, you won't feel the need to move on. The Bushcamp Company's off-grid retreats (above) allow you to switch off and enjoy. Eleven days from £5,170pp, excluding flights, expertafrica.com

Cycling safari in Eswatini

The tiny kingdom formerly known as Swaziland, bordered by South Africa and Mozambique, is criss-crossed with quiet tracks, perfect for a guided cycling trip. You can even pedal through a wildlife sanctuary, Mlilwane, among zebras and hippos. Eleven days from £2,495pp, excluding bike hire charges and flights, with private tours available on request, skedaddle.com



Cruising the River Gambia and the Sine Saloum Delta

Comfortable but affordable, a small-ship river and ocean cruise pairs neatly with a Gambian beach break. You will venture into the heart of the Gambia and along the coast of Senegal for birdwatching and heritage experiences, as well as national-park visits to encounter chimps, hippos, crocodiles and monkeys. Seven nights from £1,649pp, excluding flights, gambia.co.uk

Overlanding through Ghana, Togo and Benin

A back-to-basics camping expedition through West Africa offers heat, dust, music and a slow-travel experience that gives a more in-depth experience. This is a region fizzing with cultural traditions, from Benin's royal palaces to Ghana's quirky coffins and Togo's market stalls crammed with amulets. 21 days from £1,900pp, excluding flights, dragoman.com

Rhinos, lions and warrior traditions in Kenya

The Saruni family of safari camps have superb locations and solid responsible tourism credentials. The panoramic views from Samburu are an unforgettable prelude to a stay at Rhino, for the rare adventure of tracking black rhinos on foot. The trip ends close to the Maasai Mara at Wild, one of Kenya's most intimate tented camps, for close encounters with big cats and the chance to learn survival skills from a Maasai warrior. Ten days from £4,540pp, excluding flights, expertafrica.com



Camping and culture in Ethiopia (pictured top left)

The Omo Delta is accessible only by riverboat, making this one of the most adventurous, culturally immersive destinations on the continent. It is inhabited by pastoral tribespeople and is home to some of the continent's most important palaeoanthropological excavation sites, where hominid fossils have been unearthed. Begin or end in the capital Addis Ababa for Ethiopian jazz, fine coffee and a culinary masterclass, learning the secrets of making injera flatbreads. One week from $\mathfrak{L}4,500pp$, excluding flights, anotherafrica.com

Birding in Kenya

Home to eye-catching species such as carmine bee-eaters and rosy-breasted longclaws, Kenya's Maasai Mara is as brilliant for birding as it is for big cats. Expect early starts to enjoy the dawn chorus. There is also a chance to stay in the former home of Joy and George "Born Free" Adamson. Ten days from £3,095pp, including flights, naturetrek.co.uk/tours

Continued on pages 14-15...

Meet the matriarchs in Namibia

A women-only trip embeds you with a team of conservationists who are helping to smooth relations between elephants and rural communities. Days begin with yoga, then head out on elephant-tracking expeditions, with time to chat with local women and share stories around the campfire. Ten days from £1,790pp, excluding flights, cathadventure.com

Gorillas, chimps and kayaking in Rwanda

The "Land of a Thousand Hills" is superb for active adventures, with smooth lakes, bird-rich rivers and leafy forest paths to explore. To crown an epic trip, take an excursion to track chimpanzees in Nyungwe and mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park. Ten days from £5,696pp, excluding flights, pioneerexpeditions.com

Island-hop in the Seychelles

There is no better way to enjoy the Indian Ocean than by sleek, modern sailing boat. Hire a skipper or take the helm, travelling at your own pace and dropping anchor to snorkel in hidden coves or visit secluded islands. Safe, peaceful and grouped into clusters, it is easy to hop from one island to the next, enjoying pristine tropical beaches and fabulous seafood. Five days from £2,799 for a two-passenger bareboat charter, excluding flights, sunsail.co.uk



Beaches, culture and wildlife in Sierra Leone

Re-emerging as a destination with depth and breadth after years of hardship, Sierra Leone has a glorious coastline, dotted with forts: tangible evidence of a complex and uncomfortable history. You will also visit Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary, home to monkeys, hornbills and rescued chimpanzees. Eight days from £2,305pp excluding flights, undiscovered-destinations.com

The Cape grape escape

South Africa is rightly proud of its delicious, moderately priced food and wine, so why not indulge in a culinary tour? Just 50km from arty, cosmopolitan Cape Town, the Cape Winelands town of Stellenbosch makes a delightful base. As a bonus, you'll watch whales from the shore in Hermanus. Nine nights from £1,895pp, excluding flights, kuoni.co.uk

Photographing spring blooms in South Africa

Every August, the Kalahari desert bursts into flower: a transformation so spectacular, it makes headlines. This is the perfect time to visit Namaqualand, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and Augrabies Falls. As a bonus, it is whale-watching season. 17 days from £5,795pp, excluding flights, wildlifeworldwide.com

Sudan's Bayuda Desert by camel (pictured left)

Imagine following ancient routes taken by desert nomads, enjoying the silence and serenity of the dunes and wadis, visiting Meroitic pyramids and sleeping under dazzling starscapes. Travelling by camel and on foot, a camping adventure offers precious glimpses of a little-visited region. 15 days from £3,499, excluding flights, anotherworldadventures.com

Bush and beach: from Tanzania to Zanzibar

For adventure-seekers, northern Tanzania contains some of East Africa's very best bits. On a camping trip, you will watch teeming herds in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater, hike in the Usambara Mountains, then top it all with seafood and sun on the island of Zanzibar. Twelve days from £1,790, excluding flights, intrepidtravel.com

Climbing Kilimanjaro in Tanzania

You don't need specialist gear to make it to the Roof of Africa, but you have to be altitude-tolerant - the summit is a dizzying 5.895m up. The Machame Route is tough but scenic, featuring lush rainforest and ancient giant groundsel plants. Eight days from £1,589pp, excluding flights, gadventures.com

Uganda's gorillas, chimps and lions

Packed with natural wonders, Uganda offers thrilling safaris at a reasonable price. A Natural World Safaris trip introduces you to some of East Africa's wildlife superstars: Bwindi's mountain gorillas, Kibale's chimps and the lions of Queen Elizabeth National Park. Ten days from $\mathfrak{L}4,750$ pp, excluding tracking permits and flights, naturalworldsafaris.com

Canoeing the mighty Zambezi in Zimbabwe

Are you brave enough to tackle one of Africa's most ambitious paddles, dodging elephants and hippos en route? From April to November, conditions are perfect on the Zambezi. Following the river past Mana Pools to the Mupata Gorge, you will explore fascinating ecosystems and enjoy fabulous views of the forested riverbanks.

One week from £990pp, excluding flights, aardvarksafaris.co.uk

(Article source: Inews)

Have you experienced any of these amazing places? tell us all about it by visiting: www.ourplace.co



Rainforest and island adventure in Madagascar

Madagascar's loveable lemurs are dwindling in number, but are surprisingly easy to spot on guided forest walks on this fascinating island, which help to protect their habitat among bulbous baobab trees, spiny forest, rainforest and wetlands. For a change of pace, visit the charming Île Sainte Marie for diving, kayaking and whale-watching. Twelve days from £3,320pp, including flights, rainbowtours.co.uk

A family safari in Malawi

With peaceful protected areas, beautiful lakeside landscapes and friendly rural villages, Malawi is an ideal destination for outdoorsy families. A trip might take in Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, a conservation success story - 520 elephants were translocated here in 2017 - then head for relaxation by Lake Malawi. Twelve days from £4,820pp including flights, audleytravel.com

Dive from a dhow in northern Mozambique

Whether you are a qualified scuba diver or just a master of snorkel and fins, the pristine coral reefs surrounding Mozambique's Quirimbas Archipelago are heavenly to explore. Mooch between islands by sailing in dhows, sleeping in tents or gorgeous eco lodges back on land. Two weeks from £7,070pp, excluding flights, originaltravel.co.uk

Flight-free trekking in Morroco's Atlas Mountains

There is so much more to Morroco than Marrakech. Its dunes and mountains are closer than you think: hop on the train and you could be climbing Mount Toubkal. To unwind, spend a few days camping with Imazighen (Berbers) in the Sahara. Six nights from £486pp, excluding trains and ferry, muchbetteradventures.com



Explore Namibia's wild north-west

With semi-nomadic cultures, huge desert landscapes, a windswept coast and yawning skies, Namibia's Kunene region is breathtakingly remote. A trip with Natural Selection promises encounters with rhinos and seals and a stay at the mildly eccentric Shipwreck Lodge on the Skeleton Coast. One week from $\mathfrak{L}3.315$ pp, excluding flights, naturalselection.travel

A light at the end of the corridor for Africa: why the continent should be on your travel wishlist

It is likely travel to Africa will take longer to resume than to destinations closer to home, but with the range of memory-making possibilities the destination holds, it will be worth the wait.



Inews reports that do you remember travel corridors? As messy and frustrating as they were, they at least offered the prospect of a holiday for a few short months last year.

That's unless you wanted to visit Africa. The entire continent was seemingly left out in the cold until the scheme's final days, when Rwanda and Namibia were added to the Department for Transport's 'safe' list for visitors in late November 2020.

Cricketer Kevin Pietersen called the persistent disregard "discriminatory", given that, at the time, the UK had higher rates of Covid infection than many African nations.

Since the emergence of the South African variant, a visit to much of southern Africa will now conclude with an expensive stay at an airport hotel back in the UK - not exactly the trip of a lifetime.

However, the journeys suggested by writer Emma Gregg in our latest instalment of trips of a lifetime will be memory-making, in the best possible way.

Emma has been a regular visitor to Africa since the 1990s, sampling everything from music festivals to five-star safaris in more than 20 countries.

A personal highlight was "taking an open-air bath by lantern-light in a clearing just outside our fly-camp in the Serengeti, after a long. lovely guided walk through the bush.'

Wildlife

Her top recommendation from these 25 trips is Leopards and local culture trip in Zambia. As well as looking out for these elusive big cats in the country's flagship national park, South Luangwa, it offers the chance of a close encounter with elephants - as well as being drawn to the Mfuwe lagoon, they often wander through the reception of the neighbouring Mfuwe Lodge.

Looking forward

It is likely that travel to Zambia and across the continent will take longer to resume than destinations closer to home. But with conservation issues in sharp focus, there will be increased pressure to facilitate tourism's return. Some parts of Africa, as well as Latin America and Asia, have reported an increase in poaching and human-wildlife conflict as a tourism vacuum reduces resources.

A recent Conservation International report noted that "Governments in countries experiencing a rise in deforestation, illegal mining and poaching urgently need to maintain enforcement efforts, even during the Covid-19 pandemic."

(Story source: Inews)

Holidays abroad are back on the horizon after lockdown - but the future for long-haul travel remains uncertain

With a roadmap to freedom now set out for much of the country, providers are raring to get us going again. But travelling further afield could look markedly different to prepandemic times.

Inews reports that not long ago, the concept of hotel quarantine was about to become a reality for thousands of travellers returning to the UK from destinations that ranged from Portugal to Panama.

And while that expensive conclusion to a trip is still very much a possibility for those who need to travel during lockdown, holidays are back on the horizon.

We're not quite there yet, but with a roadmap out of lockdown now set out for much of the country, travel providers are raring to get us going again.

Even prior to the pandemic, travelling to the other side of the world was likely to be the trip of a lifetime - having flown over the vast, red outback, I'm eager to touch down in Australia again. But when?



One month ago, Australia's Department of Health Secretary Brendan Murphy said that "we'll go most of this year with still substantial border restrictions."

The nation's borders have been closed to all but citizens and permanent residents for almost a year - and they must return to compulsory hotel guarantine. However, this week Prime Minister Scott Morrison hinted that a successful vaccination programme could help reopen borders earlier. A lot can happen in a few weeks.

The long-haul landscape could look markedly different to prepandemic times when it restarts. Flights could be pricier, tour operators fewer. Which puts trips in sharper focus - perhaps you'll stay longer, maximising bilateral value. If anything we now realise the privilege of travel. David Whitley, author of the final instalment of our Trips of a Lifetime series and founder of holiday advice website australiatravelquestions.com, highlights the benefits.

He has been writing about Australia for two decades - either living there or visiting twice a year. In those 20 years, he has tried to use a different stopover on the way Down Under each time, exploring Asia and the Pacific.

His top recommendation from these 25 trips is swimming with whale sharks on the Ningaloo Reef. "When I did it, two whale sharks were circling each other in front of me. The water was astonishingly clear, and I've never felt so privileged."

(Story source: Inews)

What the lockdown roadmap means for hotels, holiday parks and campsites

There are plans for loosening restrictions on self-catering facilities as part of the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown.

Inews reports that Boris Johnson's roadmap announcement means people could be able to take staycations in England within weeks.

As part of the Prime Minister's roadmap there are plans for loosening restrictions on self-catering facilities, while Mr Johnson has also provided a target date for the reopening of hotels and B&Bs across the country.

Self-catering in England

Self-catering holidays in England can go ahead from 12 April, Mr Johnson said, subject to review of the scientific data ahead of that

One household will be allowed to stay overnight elsewhere in England, meaning holidays can go ahead. This will include holiday cottages and some Airbnb rentals where facilities are not shared between more than one household.

Campsites and holiday parks are also included in this category.

The "stay at home" rule for England is expected to end on 29 March, and will be replaced by the guidance to "stay local".

Until then the Government's advice to residents of England states: "You must not leave your home unless you have a reasonable excuse (for example, for work or education purposes).

"If you need to travel you should stay local. This means you should avoid travelling outside of your village, town or the part of a city where you live. You should reduce the number of journeys you make overall."

Holiday rules for Wales

In Wales, self-contained holiday accommodation could reopen in time for the Easter period, First Minister Mark Drakeford said last week, "where there aren't shared facilities and there isn't social mixing".

This could mean cottages, lodges and potentially hotel rooms taking

Mr Drakeford also indicated that the stay-at-home rule may be relaxed in mid-March.

This would allow day trips within Wales but cross-border journeys to and from England would not be permitted, and visitors from England would still not be allowed.

What about Scotland?

The Scottish government is expected to publish a "revised strategic framework" and set out guidance for internal holidays.

But First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said travel restrictions are likely to stay in place and Scots have been warned against booking breaks within the country during the Easter holidays.

Ms Sturgeon said it was "highly unlikely" that hotels and selfcatering venues would be fully open by then to accommodate people within the next few weeks.

(Story source: Inews)







Grow your own: 8 superfoods that you can grow from home

Growing your own food is one of life's unique pleasures. Not only is it cheaper than buying fruit and veg from the shops, but it's greener too and eating food you've grown from scratch is enormously satisfying. Plus, the growing process itself is relaxing and enjoyable.

It might be cold outside right now, but spring is just around the corner - and because we're all spending so much time at home, there's never been a better time to start growing your own food.

What many people don't know is that you don't need a big vegetable patch to grow fruit and vegetables; you don't even need a garden. If you're interested in boosting your health by growing some nutritious and delicious superfoods this spring, here's everything you need to know.

What are superfoods, and how easy are they to grow at home?

Whether you've always dreamed about growing your own food or have only just started thinking about it, the good news is that almost everybody can grow their own produce from home.

While growing your own fresh herbs is relatively common, growing your own fruit and vegetables is a little more unusual but if you like the idea of growing superfoods yourself, there's no reason why you can't do so.

First things first, what exactly are superfoods? Superfoods are essentially just foods that are deemed to be especially nutritious - things like tomatoes, blueberries, broccoli and kale. They usually contain high amounts of vitamins, antioxidants, fibre, or essential fatty acids.

The term 'superfood' has become a bit of a buzzword over the past decade, and many people associate superfoods with elusive, expensive and exotic ingredients - things like goji berries, cacao, and 'ancient grains' like quinoa. But many superfoods can be easily grown at home - and while not all superfoods are expensive, growing your own still means that you'll spend far less than you would if you were buying superfoods from a supermarket.



Food & Drink Feature

You might assume that growing your own superfoods will be time-consuming and difficult, but this isn't the case: some of the most delicious superfoods can be grown indoors in pots. So even if you have limited space, you can still grow an abundance of delicious, healthy food.

Before we take a closer look at some of the different types of superfoods you can grow, let's consider the two different options for growing your own produce at home...

Growing superfoods in a garden

It doesn't matter how big or small your garden is - if you have space for a lawn or raised beds you'll be able to grow your own superfoods. Growing fruit and vegetables in your garden isn't especially complex, but you do need to do some research before you start planting. You'll need to calculate how big your vegetable patches will be, and figure out how to plant in raised beds, how to round out the soil properly, and when different seeds need to be planted.



If you like learning from books, you might want to have a look at Amazon's best-selling books on growing fruit and veg from home. If you prefer learning from videos, you may find B&Q's guide to growing your own veg useful - although if you want more personalised guidance, you might want to pop into your local B&Q store and ask to speak to an advisor (B&Q stores are currently open around the country).

Growing superfoods in containers

Don't have a garden? No problem. If you have a balcony, you can get into vertical gardening, which has rocketed in popularity over the past year. By planting upwards instead of outwards, you'll have far more space to plant fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Even if you don't have a balcony, you can get to grips with vertical gardening from inside your home, too. Window sills are also suitable for growing your own superfoods, so no matter how small your place may be, with a little creativity and ingenuity you can still grow delicious produce - from strawberries to tomatoes.

To find out more about growing food in containers and small spaces, head over to Vertical Veg: this site has a blog, videos and resources, and even a community so you can chat to other small space gardeners, ask questions, and receive advice. You might also want to buy a copy of Grow All You Can Eat in 3 Square Feet, which will teach you everything you need to know about small space and vertical gardening - from how to access soil to choosing the right plants for different spaces.

If you enjoy growing your own fruit and veg from home, you may want to think about applying for an allotment in the future. This will provide you with more space and will give you more opportunities to grow different types of produce. Plus, working on an allotment is a great way to stay active, relax, and meet new people.

Which superfoods are easiest to grow in the UK?

The good news is that seeds for most superfoods are best sown in early spring, from February onwards - so now's the perfect time to start planning your grow-your-own-superfood adventure.

You can buy seeds and bulbs and everything else you need from your local garden centre - or, if you prefer, from online stockists like Seed Pantry. Below we've compiled a list of some of the superfoods that are easiest for budding gardeners to grow in the UK.

Blueberries

Blueberries are among the most popular superfoods around, and are exceptionally good for us. They're packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, and are also high in fibre and vitamins. Research shows that blueberries can even boost brain health: one study showed that they can improve memory and learning in older adults.



Blueberries can be grown either in the garden or in containers from early spring. While blueberries are pretty simple to grow, they do need very acidic soil to thrive. You can test the acidity of your soil by buying pH testing kits, which are available from most garden centres or online. Your soil needs to be pH 5.5 or lower for blueberries to grow, so if your garden soil has a higher pH than this, it's probably best to plant your blueberries in a container, where you can purchase the right soil.

Continued on pages 20-21...



Food & Drink Feature

Jerusalem artichokes (pictured above)

Jerusalem artichokes are very easy to grow, low-maintenance, and ideal for beginners. Jerusalem artichokes are related to the sunflower plant, and their tall yellow flowers brighten up any garden or balcony. However, it's what's underneath the soil that really counts here, and the edible tubers are packed with potassium, magnesium, iron, and vitamin B. Plus, they're absolutely delicious, and can be eaten raw as well as in soups and other savoury dishes.

Best planted between February and April, Jerusalem artichokes thrive in well-spaced soil, but they also grow in large pots filled with high-quality compost. Ideally, pots should be at least 1.5ft deep and a similar width. As a plant, Jerusalem artichokes are pretty resilient, and they grow in just about any soil, although alkaline is best (around pH 6.5).

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are one of the most delicious, versatile and accessible superfoods around. You can easily grow them indoors in pots, so if you only have a window sill available, tomatoes are a safe bet

They're packed with vitamin C, potassium, folate, and vitamin K, and growing them in your own home means you'll always have an abundance of superfoods on hand - plus, they'll probably taste much better than the ones you buy from supermarkets, too.

The good news is that there are so many different types of tomatoes available - from tiny cherry tomatoes to giant beef tomatoes - that there's usually a type perfectly suited to every space. If you want to plant your tomatoes outside, it's best to sow your seeds from late March to early April, but if you're growing them inside, late-February to mid-March is ideal: you just need to find a sunny spot or window ledge.



It might be one of the most celebrated superfoods, but kale is also one of the easiest to grow, so it's a great choice for anyone who's just starting out on their growing adventure. Packed with vitamins and antioxidants, kale is best planted in early spring in well-drained, light soil - and whether that's in raised beds in your garden, or containers on a balcony or patio is up to you.

Kale thrives in both sunny and shady spots, and they're not too fussy about soil either - meaning they're one of the most resilient superfoods you can grow from home, as well as one of the most nutritional. Plus, their frilly dark leaves look very attractive, too. You can buy baby kale plants (called 'plugs') from garden centres, but because they're so easy to grow from seeds, it's often more rewarding to start from scratch.

Chilli peppers

Aside from fresh herbs, chilli peppers are probably the most common edible plants that are grown indoors - and that's because they're so low-maintenance and thrive in pots placed on window ledges. Chillies may be small but they pack a serious punch in terms of nutrition: they contain lots of vitamin C (up to three times more than citrus fruit!) and are also high in fibre and minerals. Chillies are incredibly diverse, coming in all different colours, shapes, flavours and heat-levels, so growing your own means you'll always have your favourite chillies on hand. Plus, when the plants start to bloom, they add warmth and colour to your kitchen.



This time of year - late winter to early spring - is the ideal time to sow chilli seeds if you're planning on growing them indoors. All you need is a small pot, some seed compost, and a sunny window sill. Chillies like heat and humidity, so it's often helpful to place a clear plastic bag over each pot and tie it with an elastic band: this raises the humidity and helps the plant germinate. As the chillies continue to grow, you can move them into larger pots - and if you have a balcony or garden, you may want to move them outside at this point too (though they'll be happy remaining in containers inside, too).

Beetroot

Beetroot contains high amounts of potassium, magnesium, and vitamin C - and they're also packed with nitrates, which means they're especially good for your heart. Plus, their green tops are delicious too, and can be cooked like spinach or eaten raw in salads. More good news is that beets are simple to grow, and thrive in containers as well as raised beds outside. If you're growing your beetroot in containers, it's best to opt for round varieties that are at least eight inches deep.

Best sown between February and July, beets are usually ready after 90 days, meaning you can look forward to eating plenty of delicious beetroot from late spring onwards.

Broccoli

Broccoli is another popular superfood that grows well in colder climates. It's packed with vitamins, minerals, and health-boosting beta-carotene - and because it's pretty easy to grow from home, it's another great choice for budding gardeners. Plus, broccoli is versatile and absolutely delicious.

Seeds are usually sown between March and June, and a popular way of growing broccoli is to first grow your seedlings in containers, and then when the plants have grown to around six inches, move them to raised beds or vegetable patches.

However, it's possible to grow broccoli solely in containers - but because the plants have a widespread, you need to sow the seeds sparingly and ensure the pots are big enough.

Carrots

Carrots are one of the most popular grow-your-own vegetables, and for good reason. They're quick and easy to grow, packed with nutrients, and take up very little space in a vegetable patch. Carrots can easily be grown in pots and containers too, and are best sown from February until mid-July. Carrots need sun and fertile soil, but because they're drought resistant they rarely need watering, making them very low maintenance.

If you're growing carrots in containers, depth is the most important factor to consider: you need a pot that's between six to 15 inches deep, so you can space out the carrots and allow them to fully develop.



Final thoughts...

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is enjoyable and relaxing - and cooking and eating food you've grown from scratch is wonderfully satisfying. If you're looking to include more superfoods in your diet, growing your own is one of the best ways to do so - plus, as an added bonus, it's cheaper and greener too. While it might take a bit of research and preparation to begin with, once you've got started you may well discover that you've found a life-long hobby.

(Article source: Rest Less)



Spruce up for Spring! Five low cost ways to improve your property

The lockdown has prompted many of us to embark on DIY projects at home such as painting and decorating or getting to grips with our gardens.

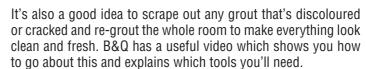
Until now, any plants, compost or garden tools had to be ordered online, but garden centres can re-open from today (May 13) provided they have introduced social distancing measures. While homeware, building supplies and hardware stores have been classed as essential businesses by the government, many of them still chose to close after the lockdown was announced. Recent days, however, have seen growing numbers re-open their doors to customers.

As well as making your home a nicer place to live, making home and garden improvements can help boost your property's value which could be useful if you're considering selling in future. According to a study carried out by Halifax earlier this year, on average, people who have recently carried out home improvements reported that doing so had added an average of £4,806 to their house price. Here, we look at some simple ways to update your property and improve your garden without breaking the bank.

Update your bathroom

There are plenty of ways to give your bathroom a makeover without having to get a plumber involved and it could be a good way to add value to your home. According to the website Propertypriceadvice.co.uk, updating or fitting a new bathroom can add between 3% and 5% to your property's value.

Even changing a few fittings, such as installing a new loo seat and towel rail can make a big difference. If you fancy a change of colour scheme, then as well as painting the walls, you could consider using tile paint to paint over existing tiles. Make sure you buy paint that is specially for bathrooms though so it can survive in damp conditions. Tins of tile paint usually start from around £20 for 0.75l, so this can be a cost-effective and low effort way to give your bathroom a fresh new look.



Give your kitchen a makeover

If you want to update your kitchen, but don't want the upheaval or expense of fitting a new one, fitting a new splashback can be a good option. You can buy stainless steel or PVC 'peel and stick' panels starting from around £40. You might also want to think about giving your kitchen cabinets a lick of paint and changing the handles on them.

Spruce up your garden

If you're lucky enough to have a good-sized outside space, separating it into separate zones can help make each area work better for you. For example, dedicate one area to eating outdoors, with a table and chairs and barbecue, and another part of the garden to growing vegetables.

Your garden should be an extension of your home, and having different areas for different activities can make it a much more enjoyable place to be. If you can't afford to buy new plants, and already have a decent selection of perennials, try dividing them up to increase the number of plants in your garden.



Even if your only outside space is a balcony, or even just a window sill, you can still make it look more welcoming with the addition of some plant pots or window boxes.

Make your home more energy efficient

Fitting draught-proofing round your doors and windows and replacing incandescent bulbs with LED ones might not be an obvious visible improvement, but it could make a big difference to your energy bills over the long term.

For example, according to the Energy Saving Trust, each traditional light bulb you replace with an LED one will save you up to $\mathfrak{L}2$ a year, whereas draught-proofing doors and windows will save you around $\mathfrak{L}20$ a year. If you have an open chimney, draught-proofing this could save you a further $\mathfrak{L}15$ a year.

Boost your home's kerb appeal

First impressions count, so if you want your home to have the wow factor, look at ways you can improve it from the outside as well as the inside. If your front door is looking a bit tired, consider painting it and updating the hardware such as the letter plate, house number and door knocker.

If you have a front path, give this a thorough weed and plant some pretty flowering shrubs and bedding plants if you have any flower beds. If not, a couple of pots either side of your doorway can provide a splash of colour.

Think about investing in a bin store too to hide unsightly rubbish bins. These can vary widely in price, but a triple bin store that you'll need to assemble yourself typically starts from around £150.

Can I get a trader in to help me with my home improvement projects?

Government guidelines state that tradesmen can carry out repairs and maintenance in people's homes, provided they are able to keep a two-metre distance from anyone living there.

Work should not be carried out in your home if anyone living there is isolating or shielding. In these circumstances, only emergency jobs can be carried out, for example, if a pipe is leaking or there's a dangerous electrical fault.

Make sure you're covered

While the home improvements we've mentioned here won't usually require you to notify your home insurer, it's still worth checking your policy to see if you're covered if, for example, you spill paint on your carpet, or chip tiles when you're removing old grout.

Most buildings and content policies don't include accidental damage as standard, so you may need to pay an additional premium if you want this cover. Ben Wilson, from GoCompare Home Insurance said, "Before undertaking any home improvements it's a good idea to dig out your household insurance to check whether you're covered if things go wrong.

While you don't need to inform your insurer about routine decorating or maintenance, it's a worthwhile precaution to check whether you're covered for accidental damage.

"If you're planning a major renovation project, particularly if it involves structural changes, one of the first things you should do is to review your buildings and contents insurance to make sure that you have adequate cover both during and after the work has been completed. Otherwise, you could find that you aren't covered, or worse still you might invalidate your policy."

(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 <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

