# OURPLACENEWS

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

**AUGUST 2023** 

Inside this issue...

### Escape to the Med:

How to bring a touch of the Mediterranean to your garden

## Don't dight it, floats

10 water safety tips to remember at the beach this summer

## Carry on camping

10 of Britain's best vintage caravan stays

### **Boost your diet:**

5 ways to improve your diet that aren't about weight loss

PLUS...

What's on • Health & Beauty • Money & Work • Leisure & Travel
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

#### CONTENTS

Wildt 5 Ul	
Health & Lifestyle Feature	
10 water safety tips at the beach this summer	4-
Health & Lifestyle News	6-

#### Leisure & Travel Feature

į	10	of	Britain	's best	vintage	caravan	stays		8-9
3	Copie	78.7t		CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE	The second second	SHAPPING, YOU	7 77 7	(25 March 1 - 2 March 1	50, 107

#### **Food & Drink Feature**

5 ways to	improve	your diet		10-11
-----------	---------	-----------	--	-------

#### **Home & Garden Feature**

1 TO SEC. 10	THE REAL PROPERTY.	The state of the s	10 10
How to	bring the	Mediterranean to your garden	12-13

Our Charit	y of the	Month		
THE PARTY OF THE P	100	The second secon	The Real Property lies and the least of the	THE REAL PROPERTY.

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# dog in a hot car!

Every year, dogs suffer and die when their quardians make the mistake of leaving them in a parked car, even for "just a minute" while they run an errand.

Parked cars are deathtraps for dogs: On a 78-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar to between 100 and 120 degrees in just minutes, and on a 90-degree day, the interior temperature can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10

Animals can sustain brain damage or even die from heatstroke in just 15 minutes. Beating the heat is extra tough for dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paw pads.

If you see a dog left alone in a hot car, take down the car's colour, model, make, and license plate number. Have the owner paged in the nearest buildings, or call local humane authorities or police. Have someone keep an eye on the dog.

#### Don't leave the scene until the situation has been resolved.

If the authorities are unresponsive or too slow and the dog's life appears to be in imminent danger, find a witness (or several) who will back up your assessment, take steps to remove the suffering animal from the car, and then wait for authorities to

Watch for heatstroke symptoms such as restlessness, excessive thirst, thick saliva, heavy panting, lethargy, lack of appetite, dark tongue, rapid heartbeat, fever, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, and lack of coordination. If a dog shows any of these symptoms, get him or her out of the heat, preferably into an air-conditioned vehicle, and then to a veterinarian immediately. If you are unable to transport the dog yourself, take him or her into an airconditioned building if possible and call animal control: Tell them it is an emergency.

Provide water to drink, and if possible spray the dog with a garden hose or immerse him or her in a tub of cool (but not iced) water for up to two minutes in order to lower the body temperature gradually. You can also place the dog in front of an electric fan. Applying cool, wet towels to the groin area, stomach, chest, and paws can also help. Be careful not to use ice or cold water, and don't overcool the animal.

When walking your dog, keep in mind that if it feels hot enough to fry an egg outside, it probably is. When the air temperature is 86 degrees, the asphalt can reach a sizzling 135 degrees - more than hot enough to cook an egg in five minutes. And it can do the same to our canine companions' sensitive foot pads.

On an 87-degree day, asphalt temperatures can reach 140 degrees, hot enough to cause burns, permanent damage and scarring after just one minute of contact. Rapid burns and blistering can occur at 150 degrees. Hot sidewalks, pavement and parking lots can not only burn paws, they also reflect heat onto dogs' bodies, increasing their risk of deadly heatstroke.

If you wouldn't put your dog in a frying pan, please don't make him or her walk on a hot pavement. Always test the pavement with your hand before setting out (too hot to touch is too hot for your dog), walk early in the morning or late at night when it's cooler, carry water and take frequent breaks in shady spots and never make dogs wear muzzles that restrict their breathing.

#### Summer tips for your dog

#### 1. Exercise your dog early in the morning or late at night.

Since these are the cooler parts of the day, this will make the walk more comfortable for both you and your dog. I'm a believer in vigorous exercise for healthy dogs, but this is the time of year to back off on exercise intensity.

#### 2. Use doggie boots.

You can find these at your local pet supply store. If you can't walk your dog during the early and later hours of the day, this is a good way of protecting him. Heat rises from the ground, especially on surfaces like cement and asphalt, and dogs absorb and release heat through their feet. Just like boots prevent the dog from absorbing the cold in the winter, they also isolate heat.

#### 3. Keep your dog hydrated!

Different dogs have different needs when battling the heat. Keep in mind that darker coats absorb more heat than lighter coats. Also, overweight dogs are at higher risk for dehydration. Carry a bottle of water when going on a walk with your dog. Better yet have your dog carry it for you in a backpack or a vest! The water in the bottles will keep the dog cooler and also give the dog a sense of purpose.

#### 4. Keep your dog in the shade

Don't have air conditioning? No problem! Find a spot in the shade and set up a kiddie pool. Lay down a wet towel for your dog to lie on. Or simply set up a fan in front of a pan of ice.



# Don't fight it, float: 10 water safety tips to remember at the beach this summer

Summer's here... ready to hit the beaches? Learn how to look after vourself in the water with these top tips.

#### Float to live (pictured above)

Can you float on your back in a starfish shape, chin back, chest pushed skywards? Almost everyone can. "Float to live" reduces the accelerated heart rate and panicked breathing we suffer when we find ourselves in difficulty in water, including the effects of cold water shock.

Thrashing around and taking in water is a recipe for disaster, whereas floating on your back buys you vital time in which to decide whether to signal for help or try to swim ashore, says the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) head of water safety, Gareth Morrison.

He mentions the story of a 10-year-old boy rescued by the charity's Scarborough Lifeboat in 2020 - he had been swept out to sea, but knew about float to live.

"He floated for nearly an hour before rescuers reached him, which saved his life."

If you find yourself in the situation where you need to float to live, Morrison advises you tilt your head back with ears submerged, relax and try to control your breathing, and use your hands to help you stay afloat. "It's OK if your legs sink, we all float differently," he says.

#### Ditch the inflatable toys

According to Morrison, inflatable toys "are fine for a swimming pool", but ought to be avoided on open water. "I have seen first-hand how an offshore wind can take a child who is near the shoreline on an inflatable toy, within 20 or 30 seconds, to being barely visible out to sea, requiring a lifeboat rescue," he says. "Even an Olympic swimmer can't beat an offshore wind."



#### **Health & Lifestyle Feature**

If you see someone drifting out to sea, dial 999 and call that novelty unicorn armchair into the coastguard. Interestingly, Morrison says that the RNLI also wants people to call in empty inflatables: "They cause false alarms, so we may launch a lifeboat to retrieve them."

#### Be a hero... by not trying to be a hero

It can go against our instincts not to swim out to help a person in distress in the sea, but entering the water unexpectedly to try to save someone can put you at risk of drowning. "The rescuer is often the one who ends up in the worst trouble," says Morrison. Instead, call 999 and ask for the coastguard. "You can also try to throw the person something that floats, whether it's a lifebuoy such as a ring, or even just a ball," he says. "They might be able to swim to it and use it for buoyancy. Also remind them to float and stay calm."

## Make an online habit out of searching for lifeguarded beaches

Choosing which beach to head to in good weather or when on holiday is a decision that's often made the day before we go, according to Morrison. And, just as you might check out the parking options online, check the RNLI website to see if it's a lifeguarded beach - an interactive map lists hundreds across the UK at a glance.

#### **Know your flags and windsocks**

The red and yellow flags on a lifeguarded beach demarcate not only a stretch of water where a lifeguard has eyes on you, but also "a carefully chosen area where it has been assessed that there are not many rip currents or obstructions, and where there has not been a high number of historical incidents," says Morrison. "The flags might be moved during the course of the day as currents develop," he says. And beware the orange windsock, denoting dangerous offshore winds.

#### Plan to avoid being cut off by the tide

"More people are walking on the coast than in previous years - and the RNLI has seen a rise in call outs of people cut off by the tide," says Morrison. "If the tide is coming in while you're walking along or doing something socially, be aware that it can come back in behind you and cut you off very quickly, submerging parts of the beach or land." So think ahead and do a search for tide times. If in any doubt, even if you think you can make it back to shore in time without help, call 999 and inform the coastguard of your situation.

#### Stand-up paddleboard in pro style

The booming popularity of stand-up paddleboarding has led to many people who may not have much prior experience taking to the water.

Remember to wear a suitable buoyancy aid; carry a means of calling for help, such as a phone in a waterproof pouch; wear the correct leash and make sure it is actually attached to you. "Using the leash keeps the board with you, which also makes you easier to spot in the water if you get into difficulties and need help," says Morrison. "Never use paddleboards when the windsock is flying, as offshore winds will quickly blow you out to sea."

#### Tell children the plan before they get lost

At a lifeguarded beach, a lifeguard hut is a safe place to go that has a PA system, so find it at the start of your beach trip and let any children in your care know that it's where to meet if they get lost. Lifeguards are more than happy to talk to children, and don't worry that you will be distracting them from saving lives. "We patrol our beaches so that there is usually a lifeguard available to have a chat," says Morrison.

#### **Swim with others**

Think twice before heading out for that solitary sunrise swim to clear your head. "Swimming is an activity that you should do with someone else," says Morrison. That's because someone in the water with you can help you or signal to others if you get into difficulties, and vice versa. And if your companion is on land, says Morrison, they will know where you went in, and how long you intend to be, so they can raise the alarm if needed. Of course, it's always a good idea to make it as easy for them to spot you as possible, so you can increase your visibility by wearing a bright swim hat and tow float. Also consider taking a mobile phone in a waterproof pouch.

#### Know that your dog is worth it, too



You should treat a dog in difficulty in the water like a person: call the coastguard on 999, and don't try to rescue them yourself. "The RNLI will launch a lifeboat for a dog or a family pet, especially if it stops you going into the water after them," says Morrison. "People worry that we will think they are wasting our time, but we won't and we're happy to do it." Inland, for people or pets in trouble in, say, a river, ask for the fire and rescue service.

Play it safe this summer: visit an RNLI-lifeguarded beach. If you get into trouble in the water, float to live, until help arrives.

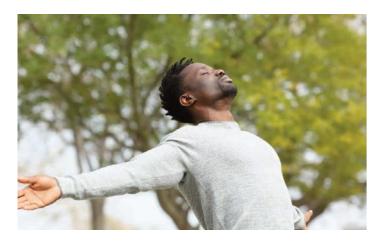
(Article source: The Guardian)



#### **Health & Lifestyle News**

# Beat stress, get to sleep and find your focus: seven ways better breathing can improve your life

We do it 20,000 times a day but the way we breathe in different scenarios can have a big impact. From tongue position to finding your D-spot, experts share breathwork techniques.



**The Guardian** reports that "running is often where it goes wrong," says breathing retrainer Jane Tarrant, founder of Link Breathing. "The errors are switching to mouth breathing, upper-chest breathing and thinking you need to go visually big by taking gulps of air when actually you want to breathe low and efficiently into the bottom of the lungs."

#### How to breathe... when you're exercising

Fast chest breathing will also raise the heart rate, which is natural in exercise, but ideally you want to try to lower it by slowing your breathing down, inhaling through the nose and expanding the ribs out sideways like an accordion. Tarrant suggests pacing your breathing - "Try going in for five, out for five, or whatever you can manage" - which should increase efficiency and help you exercise for longer.

"Humming is good for exercise, too, as it helps open up airways by creating more nitric oxide," she says, which acts as a blood vessel and airway dilator, helping deliver oxygen to your cells more efficiently. "I hum on my bicycle as it helps me slow my breath."

#### ... to help your core

Breath coach and Breathguru app founder Alan Dolan says he often sees clients who have a "master-servant" relationship with their body, where "they're amazingly toned but they're also imprisoned by their core as the muscles are so tight. It's important to put flexibility into your body as well as tension - if you're doing core work, what are you doing to release the core?"

He recommends some breathwork after every workout. "That might just be stretching - , or the yogic practice of shavasana - lying down on the ground doing nothing, just a very soft abdominal breath."

#### ... when you need to focus

"Box breathing" is a technique used by US Navy Seals to steel the nerves and increase focus, but it can be applied to civilian life when you have a daunting task ahead, says breath coach Aimee Hartley, founder of The Breathing Room and School Breathe CIC, which teaches primary schoolchildren the benefits of breathing well. "Breathe in for a count of four, hold for four, breathe out for four, then hold for four."

This technique is effective because you produce more nitric oxide on a breath hold, which helps lower blood pressure and calm the mind. "It's a proven breath technique that I often use in sessions when I'm coaching CEOs," she adds.

#### ... when you're struggling to sleep

Hartley recommends left nostril breathing if you're trying to drift off. This activates the right part of the brain, which stimulates the parasympathetic - or "rest and digest" - nervous system. Just lie on your side, block your right nostril and slowly breathe with your left.

Otherwise, Tarrant says two minutes of conscious breathing with an extended exhale - "a simple in for four, out for eight" - will help slow down the heart rate and relax the body, while Dolan recommends Yoga Nidra, "a beautiful guided relaxation throughout the whole body" which uses gentle abdominal breathing. Try YouTube for videos

#### ... when you're feeling stressed

A stressed person is like an upside-down pyramid, says Dolan: "The mind is super-stimulated and there's not much connection to the body." The best way to flip this is to focus on your feet.

"Stand still, with one or both hands on the abdomen and do a slow, abdominal breath through the nose. Then bring your attention to your feet - do this by envisaging the soles touching the ground, rather than physically looking at them - sending those energetic roots into the earth to recharge."

Another good stress-reduction technique is coherent breathing, says Hartley. "Try going for a walk, breathing in for five steps and out for five steps.

Depending on your pace this can bring you to the optimum breath count of about five breaths a minute." Most of us are overbreathers, with the average adult breathing at rest between 12 and 18 times a minute. Slowing things down can reduce stress and improve circulation and heart health.

"To be healthy you need to have a variety of spaces between heartbeats - like five milliseconds, 10 milliseconds, six milliseconds - ," she says. "This is called heart-rate variability, which coherent breathing has been proven to help with."



#### **Health & Lifestyle News**

#### ... when you're having digestive problems

Deep abdominal breathing massages the vagus nerve, which runs down the body through the diaphragm, and is the main component of the parasympathetic nervous system.

"We breathe between 17,000 and 20,000 times a day, so if each one of those breaths is massaging the vagus nerve it will help create a healthy digestive system," says Hartley.

One way to practise deep abdominal - or diaphragmatic - breathing is the "belly bag" method. "Lie on the floor, legs bent, hip-width apart with knees touching." says Hartley.

"Place a book or wheat bag on your stomach below the belly button. Breathe in for five, out for five, and feel the resistance of the book's weight as you breathe in. It comes with practice but this will eventually activate a diaphragmatic breath."

Though there is more to IBS than poor breathing, it doesn't help that many of us are in "fight or flight" mode at mealtimes, adds Tarrant.

"Your body will struggle to digest if you're in a stress state. The best thing to do before mealtimes is take some conscious slow breathing, just in the time it takes to walk to the kitchen. Slowing your breath down will switch your nervous system into 'digest' mode."

#### ... when you're having a panic attack

Tarrant says: "Someone having a panic attack will think, 'I need more air', but what they actually need to do is pause, and restart with a slower breath.

It's also important to stop upper-chest breathing, which is shallow, anxiety-inducing and inefficient."

She adds that when an attack comes on you should try to focus on your "D-spot" (the point just below the split of the ribs, where your diaphragm is - see Find your D-spot, below ) - to bring the breath down into the bottom of the lungs and breathe as quietly and calmly as possible.

Carbon dioxide acts as a dilator, which opens up the airways and blood vessels, says Tarrant, so by pausing or prolonging your exhale, you allow oxygen to be more efficiently delivered to the body's cells.

"During optimal breathing, imagine you have three red buses sideby-side on a 'motorway' (blood vessel) carrying oxygen to the cells. CO2 keeps the road wide as well as letting the oxygen off the bus, like porters opening the doors.

The CO2, finishing its shift, gets on the bus and goes back around to the lungs to be breathed out, but it needs time to do its job before it leaves

If you start to over-breathe, you don't maintain enough CO2 and your blood vessels reduce down to two lanes, and if you become panicky, then one lane. That's why you can't think clearly."

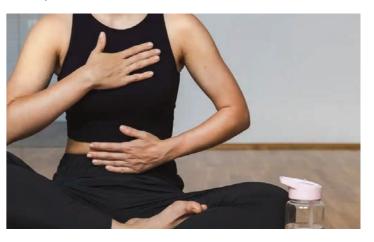
#### Getting the breathing basics right

#### Breathe through your nose

"Inhaling through the nose is better for a number of reasons," says Tarrant. Unlike the mouth, "it filters out viruses, bacteria and allergens, and it moistens the air and warms it in the cold." The latter is particularly important for asthmatics, as cold, dry air can trigger an attack.

"Then there is nitric oxide, which you make through nose but not mouth breathing," says Tarrant, and which can help lower blood pressure and boost exercise performance.

While some people have structural issues which can prohibit nosebreathing, Tarrant says for many of us it's about retraining. "Start with nose breathing for a minute, then two minutes, and slowly build up from there over time."



#### Find your D-spot

Place one hand on your chest and with the thumb of the other hand find the "bouncy" spot just below the split of your ribs, where your diaphragm is - this is what Jane Tarrant calls the "D-spot".

When we breathe in, the diaphragm is meant to plunge downwards, moving your thumb outwards.

"If you picture the lungs as an upside-down tree, we should be breathing into the canopy, with a slight flare of the ribs, but most of us are breathing into the lower branches (or upper chest breathing)," says Tarrant, which will move the hand on the chest upwards.

#### Don't forget your tongue

The position of the tongue plays a crucial role in supporting good nose breathing, says Tarrant. Ideally the tongue should be sealed against the roof of your mouth, but not touching the front teeth, in the shape it would be if you said the letter "N". This will open up the nasal airway.

"Try dropping your tongue to the bottom of your mouth while nose breathing, and you will notice that it feels narrower," Tarrant adds.

(Story source: The Guardian)

6



# Carry on camping! 10 of Britain's best vintage caravan stays

Here's why retro caravans with original features and wild surrounds are one of the coolest camping options around.

#### The Scrumpling, Somerset

Owners Ralph and Lucy found this 1950s caravan at the bottom of a field, where it had been abandoned. They restored it and fitted it with a double bed, kitchenette and bathroom, and even a mini wine cellar. The van is on a hill on Lucy's family farm near the village of Umberleigh, Devon, and has views over the Taw valley. It is insulated and connected to a biomass boiler (which is fuelled using wood from trees grown on the farm), so it is warm in winter. There is a covered terrace with a chiminea, pizza oven and barbecue, and - the pièce de résistance - a hot tub in a converted Land Rover.

From £130 a night self-catering, sleeps two, littleplaceinthecountry.com

#### Tina, Highlands

This forest-green caravan is in a large area of land, with a stream and wooded walk, near the Dundreggan Rewilding Centre, not far from the southern end of Loch Ness. There is a kitchenette, dining area, two sofas that turn into a double bed and a shower room. The van is under shelter and has outdoor seating and a fire pit. Guests can book the wood-burning hot tub, Finnish sauna and aromatherapy steam room, and the barbecue hut, provided with locally sourced meat and vegetables. There are walks through the woods and hills, leading to waterfalls and picnic spots, and wildlife including sika and red deer, black grouse, pine martens, woodpeckers and birds of prey. The owner is an artist and runs workshops that include a forest walk and studio session.

From £152 for two nights, sleeps two, airbnb.co.uk



#### **Leisure & Travel Feature**

## Mad Dogs & Vintage Vans, Herefordshire (pictured left)

A quartet of caravans are in a wildflower meadow and copse in the grounds of an old rectory near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. They are Gertie, a rare 1930s model; Sybil, a handmade 1940s van; Monty, a second world war military wagon; and Elsie, a 1950s van. All have original features and outdoor seating; three have wood burners and Monty has a private deck. There are communal showers, toilets, a summer kitchen and campfire, and an honesty shop selling farm produce, ice-cream and cider. Guests can hire individual vans or the site, and pitch a tent next to their van at no extra cost.

From £200 for two nights for four people, vans sleep two to five, maddogsandvintagevans.co.uk

#### **Fishing Hut, Scottish Borders**

This hybrid hideaway is in the grounds of a 1700s water mill, on the banks of the Boondreigh, a small river four miles from the town of Lauder. One end is a vintage caravan, which houses the bedroom, and the other end is a wooden cabin, containing the living, cooking and dining areas. The cabin has a stove for cooking and heating, a sofa and day bed, and a little reading nook. There is an eco toilet just outside, and a communal wash house a few minutes' walk away. The property has two decks: one overlooking the river and one that catches the evening sun and has a fire pit.

From £120 for two nights, sleeps up to three, oneoffplaces.co.uk

#### Van Goff, Powys

The Van Goff is a 1970s static caravan, still decked out in retro style but with some modern additions, such as LED lights, a fridge, a shower and a flushing loo. There is a wood burner inside and a raised deck with a chiminea outside. The van is in woodland in the grounds of Bodynfoel Hall, a 242-hectare (600 acre) estate with a river for swimming and a lake for boating (the rowing boat is shared with two yurts). It is an easy riverside walk to the village of Llanfechain, about a mile away, which has a pub and shop.

From £190 for two nights, sleeps up to three adults or two adults and two children, canopyandstars.co.uk

#### Cerys, Gwynedd

Nyth Robin is a small site in the Snowdonia national park with nine pitches for tourers, plus a handful of glamping options, including Cerys the caravan. Cerys, a refurbished 1960s van, has a hand-painted exterior featuring a woodland scene, and a swinging 60s interior: baby-blue kitchen, warm yellow walls and period fixtures. There is a double bed and a pull-out small single. The van is in the corner of the campsite with private outdoor space and a fire pit, a short walk from the toilets and showers.

The site comprises a large area of woodland alongside the Dyfi estuary, a few miles outside the seaside village of Aberdyfi (Aberdovey).

From £75 a night, sleeps up to three, from March to October, nythrobin.co.uk

#### **Club Jupiter, Kent**

Billed as "Pontins meets Palm Springs", this static caravan has been given a mid-century modernism makeover by three female friends: an interior designer, a stylist and a travel writer. There is a light-filled living room with a six-seater velvet sofa; a kitchen with a gold sink; a retro shower room and cloakroom toilet; and three opulent bedrooms - the Jungle room, the Lonely Hearts Saloon and the Space Disco room. The garden has an outdoor dining table and 70s rattan lounging chairs. The van is on the Birchington Vale holiday park, which has an indoor swimming pool, bar, restaurant and crazy golf, near Margate.

From £281 a night, sleeps six, clubjupiter.co.uk

#### Tilly, Cornwall

The owners describe staying in cute, pastel-blue Tilly as like "comfortable camping" - there is no hot running water but there is a cosy bed, dining area and basic kitchen. The vintage van is parked in the owners' sheltered, wooded driveway, and the hot shower and outdoor loo are on the decking near the house, 20 metres away. There is an outdoor cooking area, picnic table and stripy deckchairs. A bonus is the five-minute walk to Porthtowan beach, a surf school and the South West Coast Path; buses run to Newquay and St Ives in the summer. Tall people take note: tiny Tilly may not be the most comfortable option.

From £49 a night, seven night minimum stay, airbnb.co.uk

#### **Towed Town Camping, Bristol**

Towed Town is an indoor campsite in a repurposed warehouse close to Bristol city centre. There are six revamped vans to stay in, intended as more affordable alternatives to a hotel room. The vans range in era from the 1960s to the 90s, and all have double or king-size beds, kitchenettes and electric heaters, plus separate private bathrooms and (fake) grassy areas with seating. The communal area has a pool table and honesty bar; cereal, tea and coffee are provided; and bike rental is available. It is a 13-minute walk to Temple Meads station.

From £60 a night for two, booking.com

(Article source: The Guardian)

8

9



# Boost your diet: 5 ways to improve your diet that aren't about weight loss

Summer has arrived and many people are looking forward to a sun-filled holiday. For some, this prospect can lead to an unnecessary concern about appearance - especially in this age of social media, when it's the norm to share and compare pictures online.

Lots of us can feel pressure to lose weight or 'detox' before that week away.

While looking for ways to get more nutrients into our meals is never a bad thing, going on an extreme, unsustainable diet rarely works and can even do more harm than good, impacting things like your energy levels and mood.

So, instead of cutting things out, why not try to boost your diet by adding in new foods and tweaking your shopping and cooking routines? Here are five ways you can do just that.

#### Eat fermented foods

Ferments - foods that have been transformed by the activity of living microorganisms, including bacteria, yeast and moulds - are believed by scientists to be good for our health. They include voghurt, kefir and some cheeses.

Some of these microbes, when ingested as part of fermented foods, travel through your digestive tract to support the trillions of microbes already living in your gut, according to research. Studies have linked a healthy composition of gut microbes to the working of the immune system, the body's metabolic functions and many other aspects of health.



#### **Food & Drink Feature**

Not all fermented foods contain live microorganisms though, so it's important to check the label. For instance, sauerkraut and kimchi can be made with vinegar, or pasteurised, which kills the bacteria. Of course, many cheeses are pasteurised too.

If you're up for making your own ferments all you need is a vegetable (such as a cabbage), salt and water (and some herbs and spices for extra flavour, if you like). After two or three days, during which you'll need to 'burp' the jar every now and again to release gases, you'll be left with a pot of nutritious, delicious and thrifty food, such as kimchi or sauerkraut. You can also make fermented drinks, like kombucha, which is a fermented tea.

#### Make changes to your shopping basket

If part of the joy of your summer holiday is trying new foods, why not do the same at home? We tend to eat a relatively small variety of ingredients, with just 15 plants providing 90 percent of the world's calories, even though there are more than 7,000 edible plant species.

Half of the UK's vegetable intake is made up of peas, tomatoes (OK yes, this is technically a fruit), onions and carrots, according to The British Nutrition Foundation. These four plants do pack a punch when it comes to nutrients, but different vegetables provide different combinations of nutrients, so variety is important.

Eating a wide range of plant-based foods is believed to be good for your gut microbes, too. Rice, noodles and pasta are firm favourites, but pearl barley, spelt and quinoa are also easy to cook (and are grown here in the UK).

Many people in the UK don't eat the recommended two portions of fish per week. Fish not only provides protein and several vitamins and minerals, but oily fish - including salmon, mackerel, sardines and fresh tuna - contains long chain omega-3 fatty acids, which research suggests are important for brain function. It's a good idea to vary your snacks too. Nuts are a high-protein, nutrient-rich option that will keep you feeling fuller for longer.

#### **Boss batch cooking**

We all want to spend less time in the kitchen over the summer. Savvy batch cooking can be the key to eating nourishing home-cooked meals all week.

It's easy to double up the ingredients when cooking and you could even use a slow cooker to make big portions of lovely summer dishes, many of which freeze well. But be sure to label everything before putting it in the freezer, so you know what you're defrosting.

Food writer Hattie Ellis takes batch cooking to the next level by cooking just once a week, for about three hours, and then storing the meals in the fridge or freezer. "Choose your best time, download a podcast or turn on the radio, then chop, stir and taste". she writes.

#### **Get your five a day**

According to research from 2018, Less than a third of adults in England eat five potions of fruit and veg a day. The average daily intake is just over three and a half portions, so one more might be all it takes reach your goal.

One portion is roughly 80g - a handful of heavier veg, such as broccoli and tomatoes, or two handfuls of leaves such as spinach and kale. You can combine different fruit and veg to make a single portion, so it's worth including small amounts in light meals and snacks.

You might be surprised by some of the ingredients that count towards your five-a-day. Beans and legumes are included, but no matter how many you eat, they never count as more than one portion (that's because although they are a good source of fibre, they contain fewer nutrients than other fruit and veg). But this does mean that beans on toast and hummus count.

Dried fruit contributes to your five-a-day because it contains plenty of fibre, but the recommended portion size is 30g due to the density of calories and sugar. A portion (150ml) of fruit juice or smoothie also counts, but never as more than one portion per day because it is low in fibre and high in sugar.

Potatoes don't count, due to their starch content, but they do still contain nutrients, especially in the skin. However, sweet potatoes are on the five-a-day list, so mash away! A top tip is to make a veg-packed breakfast or add fruit to porridge or overnight oats for a delicious five-a-day friendly start to the day.

#### **Cook from scratch**

More than half the food bought by families in the UK is ultraprocessed, according to a report published by Cambridge University Press.

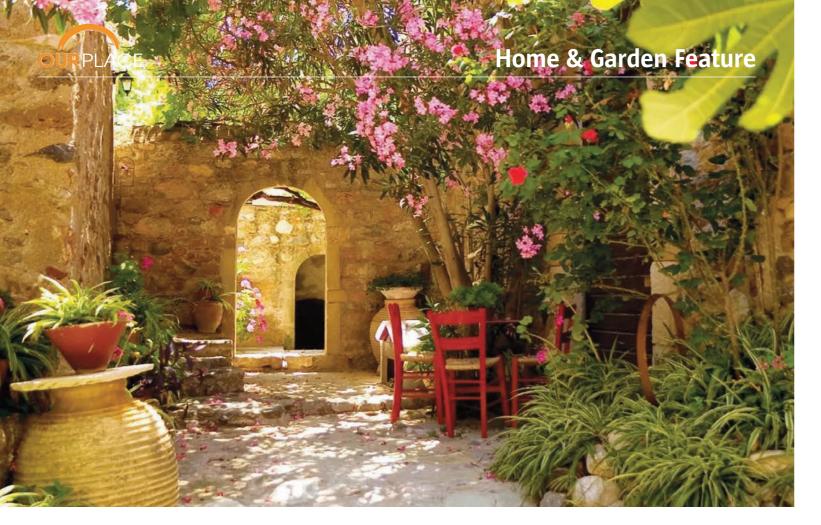
There are lots of reasons why we turn to these kinds of foods (which include most ready meals), including budget, time restraints and convenience. If costs are a concern, BBC Food has a budget recipe page packed with money-saving tips, thrifty family favourites and savvy recipes for students.

Perhaps you're new to cooking, and find the idea of making things from scratch a touch dauting. Try these easy recipes for beginners and how to cook videos. If you know what you want to cook, use the recipe search bar above to look for it. If you want simple recipes, type 'easy' into the search bar. These 5-ingredient dinners are another good place to start.

If you're short of time, there are plenty of quick recipes to choose from, and one-pot meals will save you time (and effort) when it comes to washing up. Veg prep can be avoided by buying bags of pre-chopped, frozen ingredients, like onions.

Cooking is flexible - find what works for you and don't worry about what doesn't.

(Article source: BBC)



# Escape to the Med: How to bring a touch of the Mediterranean to your garden

Drought-tolerant plants, terracotta pots and gravel will make you feel like you're on holiday.

The heatwave may still be unbearable in some parts of southern Europe - but you can enjoy a touch of the Mediterranean without sizzling in your own garden, with some thoughtful planting.

Drought-loving plants always conjure up images of the Med, from hot pink pelargoniums to vivid blue agapanthus, spiky sea holly and sizzling red crocosmia, hardy hibiscus and fragrant rosemary and lavender.

As long as they don't get too wet, Mediterranean gardens are low maintenance and offer plenty of colour and form during the summer months.

#### Try trees

Olive trees are a must in any Mediterranean-style garden.



Their elegant silhouettes and evergreen leaves make them a beautiful focal point, says Sutton Manor Nursery, a leading supplier of olive, topiary and Mediterranean trees.



#### **Home & Garden Feature**

"Pencil cypresses - often seen in Italy - are another Mediterranean favourite, and you can get hardy palm trees such as the dwarf fan palm (Chamaerops humilis)," adds Caroline Mazzey, RHS horticultural adviser.

"If you have enough space and you have somewhere to place a large planter in the winter, such as a conservatory, consider growing some citrus trees, such as lemon trees. This can help to add a truly Mediterranean appearance, as well as a beautiful scent," says landscaping and gardening expert Fiona Jenkins at MyJobQuote.co.uk.

#### Use pops of colour

Pelargoniums are drought-tolerant and will provide bright pops of colour, along with red salvias and the purples of rosemary and lavender, Mazzey suggests. "The best things are silvery-leaved plants such as lavender, rosemary, phlomis - if it's silvery it's already adapted to cutting down the amount of light it absorbs."

#### **Create shade**

Train your trees to create an umbrella of shade, or have a pergola with a climbing plant over it to make the shade - perhaps a grapevine, Mazzey advises.

#### Be bold with colour

Warmer tones are commonly used in Mediterranean gardens. Play around with lighter shades of straw or sandy beige and dark brown, the nursery advises. Other popular colours include rich yellow and muted red hues, including ochre, peach, terracotta and brick red.

Mosaic tiles are also often seen in Mediterranean countries, so you might choose metal furniture with a mosaic-style table or even some coloured plant pots and containers, especially if you don't want to paint your walls and you have a habit of moving your pots around.

#### Make use of terracotta planters

Terracotta planters are a great way to bring a Mediterranean feel to your garden, says Jenkins. "Choose pots and planters in a range of sizes and shapes to add variety. Add a range of different-coloured plants and flowers in your pots to create a vibrant display."

#### Go for gravel

Gravel is a very popular element in Mediterranean gardens and is an ideal medium for free-draining soil, favoured by Mediterranean plants. Some well-placed gravel can look great especially when teamed with terracotta pots.

"You definitely need good drainage because these plants don't like cold wet feet over winter, because the Mediterranean geology is a stony, well-drained environment which gets hot in the summer but doesn't stay wet in the winter.

The water drains away," says Mazzey. "This can be tricky if you have clay soil - in which case, pots are the way to go."

#### Be creative with water

"Water helps to create a cool and relaxing atmosphere, plus it also has reflective value, helping to brighten your space and spread the sun around your garden. Stone fountains are often seen in Mediterranean gardens," says Jenkins.

"If you have enough space, consider installing an ornate water fountain or a tiered structure. When water flows out of a fountain, it creates a beautifully relaxing sound, making your garden feel like a true oasis.

"If you're limited on space in your garden, consider adding a bird bath or an alternative smaller water feature."

#### **Consider seating**

Avoid contemporary, shiny furniture, as this doesn't quite fit in with the theme, Jenkins advises.



Instead, opt for simple furniture such as wooden benches, which will weather with age and fit in perfectly with the overall aesthetic. "Consider growing herbs such as oregano or thyme close to the seating and dining areas.

These will add a fragrant scent in the area that smells delicious. Plus, you can use them to add extra flavour to your dishes when serving food to guests," she says. If you want colourful accents, choose cushions in warm shades of orange, stone, red, yellow or even lavender.

#### **Look after your plants**

"Just because they are drought-tolerant doesn't mean you don't have to water them," Mazzey warns. "You will still need to water but that water needs to drain away. Even pelargoniums, which love the sun, will need watering."

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



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

### favourite mammal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

#### 'Julie'



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

#### **Baby Hedgehogs**

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



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

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

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

