OURPLACE News

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

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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

ed by **Clearlight**

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

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Welcome

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OURPLACE



Responsible Pet Owners Month

February 2024

February is Responsible Pet Owners Month and we are sharing 8 tips to help you be a responsible pet owner! Pets are an important part of our lives and even a part of our families, so it is important to make sure they are treated how they should be.

Share - Show us your pets' pearly whites! Snap some photos of Make your pet part of the family your pets' beautiful teeth - and we mean any kind of pets: dogs, Pets, especially dogs, need companionship. Nothing beats the cats, horses, bunnies, ferrets, goats, cows... fuzzy, furred or love and warmth you can give your pet. finned, you name it. After all, pets need dental care, too. Watch our Facebook page, where we'll be asking you to share those Make sure your house is pet proof pictures with us and each other. You also can tweet or Instagram Most people might not know all of the hidden dangers around your photos with the hashtag #PetDental. Read - Learn more the house. Make sure you research what household products and about pet dental health, including how to take care of your pet's foods are harmful for your pet. Put these harmful things in a teeth year-round, and why anesthesia is important. **Remember** place your pet cannot reach. - While February is National Pet Dental Health Month, dental health should be a daily ritual for pet owners all year long.

Take care of your pet

This includes regular visits to the vet and groomer, insuring your pet may also be important to your pet's health. Make sure you know where your local vet is in case of an emergency.

Spay and neuter your pet

When your pet is spayed and neutered they can live healthier, longer lives.

Always keep an ID tag on your pet

Keeping a tag on your pets collar will ensure they will always find their way back to you. You may also consider getting your pet microchipped as well to help identify they if they are lost or stolen.

Train your pet to understand

Making sure your dog is trained and well behaved is important. Dogs should at least understand basic direction like "sit" and "stay." In an emergency situation these cues could save your pet's life. Consider taking your pet to an obedience training class.

Give them regular exercise

Pets need exercise just like us! Your pet needs regular exercise to stay fit, healthy and to release their energy. If your pet has a lack of exercise, they will begin to act out. Young pets that do not get enough exercise are more likely to develop negative behavioural issues that lead many to give up their pet.

Love your pet

Your pet is your favourite thing, and you are theirs! They wait for you to come home and desire your attention. Be sure to give them all the love they deserve!

e, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5NB. Telephone: 01989 564468 Web: www.ourplace.co

National Pet Dental Health Month February 2024

Don't turn your nose to Fido's or Fluffy's bad breath! That odor might signify a serious health risk, with the potential to damage not only your pet's teeth and gums but its internal organs as well.

National Love Your Pet Day

Tuesday 20th February 2024

On February 20th, pet lovers everywhere observe National Love Your Pet Day. This holiday is a day set aside to give extra attention to and pamper your pets. This is a good day to focus on the special relationship that you have with your pets.

How to observe - Bring your pet a special treat, take an extra long walk or give them more attention on National Love Your Pet Day. Whatever you decide to do, spoil and appreciate your pets! Use #NationalLoveYourPetDay to post on social media.

WINTER CAT WARNING

At this time of year please check under your car and wheel arches for cats trying to keep warm, before you set off on your journey!

During the cold winter months cats will often seek out any warm space they can find. One particularly irresistible lure seems to be the cosy confines of a warm car engine. Unfortunately, cats that seek shelter under the bonnets of cars can then be injured or killed when that car is started. Help keep your own and your neighbourhood cats safe this winter by tapping the bonnet of your car before you start the engine.





Crack on! 'Don't do' lists and a protein hit: 20 ways to become a morning person and feel like the winner

Early risers know only too well the smug satisfaction of getting up and getting going. But what if you're more of an owl than a lark? Here's how to change your body clock and seize the day.

I can't actually remember when I first started thinking of myself as a "morning person". When I was in my 20s, the only time I saw a sunrise was if I stayed up all night - I had a series of jobs that let me stroll from bed to work in about 15 minutes. If I ever did overtime it was until one or two in the morning, trying to string together words on a combination of tea, beer and deadline adrenaline. Fast forward a couple of decades and I don't think I've slept past 7.30 in the last six months.

This wasn't exactly a lifestyle change I made by choice. First, I got a job with actual responsibilities and a commute, then a lifepartner who worked as a personal trainer, and finally a small child with zero respect for the concept of a lie-in.

But, although I'm frequently up before the birds and the binmen, I've never felt better. I've become one of those people who reads self-improvement books and grinds out kettlebell swings while most people are blearily thumbing the snooze button.

It might even be helping me stay in shape - there's some evidence from a study published last year in the journal Obesity that moderate-to-vigorous exercise earlier in the day is more beneficial for weight management than hitting the gym in your lunch break or after work.



Also, if I'm honest, I feel less guilty about my habits than I used Benjamin Franklin, apparently, woke every morning at 5am and to when I was working until the wee hours, though I'm probably asked himself. "What good shall I do this day?", while Churchill putting in about the same amount of actual graft. And I'm confounded the whole process by getting up early, working in probably not alone - we're a nation that venerates the morning bed until mid-morning, glugging an imperial pint of champagne and having an hour-long nap before dinner and then working long routine. In contrast, we often treat late sleepers with suspicion: the former, after all, seem to be up and attacking the day, while into the small hours. Of course, not everyone can construct their the latter are simply making up for lost time. But is one routine days like a wartime prime minister and there's a fair chunk of really better than the other? And if you're looking to go from late evidence that morning types are better off. sleeper to early riser, how easy is it to actually do?

Some of this could be down to the way we've constructed "Many people don't even realise that they have what's known as society, with exams, meetings and even marathons often a 'chronotype'," says Dr Amantha Imber, an organisational happening earlier rather than later. In one study from 2014, for psychologist, behavioural change specialist and author of Time instance, Dutch high-school students who were randomly Wise. "We've all got peaks and troughs in our natural energy assigned exam times in the morning or afternoon saw owls score levels throughout the day, and if we know our own we can do badly in morning sessions, but that disadvantage disappeared our hardest work in the period when our brain is most alert." for late risers taking the test in the afternoon. Another recent review of studies suggests that morning types are more There are various chronotype questionnaires on the internet to conscientious but, again, that could be down to the fact that help you estimate your own with questions like "What time would "morningness" is so frequently associated with seizing the day vou get up if you could?" and "What time do you prefer to eat?" that it's something go-getters aspire to.

But the key thing to understand is that performance is just as important as preferred waking time. If you'd rather schedule gym sessions or important exams earlier rather than later, you're probably what researchers call a lark - otherwise, you're an owl.

A 2007 survey of more than 50,000 people found that chronotype distribution follows a bell curve, with extreme morning and foods. evening types at the far ends. For most people, however, there's a certain amount of elasticity to chronotype that allows the More recently, a study published in Experimental Physiology occasional early morning or all-nighter. I'm mostly larkish - I have seems to show that our sleeping and waking cycles are my best workouts at 7.30am - but I'll take a lie-in when I can get associated with our body's metabolism, with "early chronotypes" one and I can just about get it together to work until midnight if relying more heavily on fat as an energy source during highintensity exercise. I have to.

There are several key factors that contribute to your chronotype, Larks also seem to fare better on some measures of mental says Professor Russell Foster, neuroscientist and author of Life health. In a 2021 study published in the journal Molecular Time: The New Science of the Body Clock. "One is your genetics, Psychiatry, more than 450,000 middle-aged people recorded which essentially means that our parents keep telling us when to their waking preferences with those who woke up earliest also go to bed and get up throughout our entire lives through their tending to report lower instances of depression and anxiety. contribution to our genes. Another is how old you are - from This might, of course, be correlation rather than causation - for about the age of 10, you want to go to bed later and later, with a instance, there are studies that link sunlight exposure to a peak in males around about the age of 21 and in females around decreased risk of depression - or the causal relationship might 19." Women, incidentally, seem to be more larkish on average, go the other way. according to a 2020 study of more than 53,000 individuals - but as we age, this difference tends to diminish, as we all become "Sleep comes out of trauma sometimes - if you're put in an morning people. "There's a slow move to an earlier chronotype," impossible situation, staying in bed can be a comfort," says sleep says Foster. "So by the time you are in your late 50s or early 60s, coach Sue Gray. "What I sometimes advise clients is to try to you're getting up at about the same time you did prior to puberty, think back to being a child - when we're little we just allow life to following almost precisely the changing levels of the sex happen, things go wrong but then we drop them. There aren't hormones in the body." any easy answers, but the important thing is to be kind to yourself." So don't force yourself out of bed, but do try to see the sun early, or go for a walk if you can."

So is the larkish default to be encouraged? Does it make us happier and more productive?

The answer seems to be: it depends. Anecdotal evidence doesn't mean much, as you can find champions for both schedules. Jane Austen got up ahead of the rest of her family to dress, bathe, go for the occasional stroll and (somehow) practise piano before 8.30am, while Hunter S Thompson reportedly did most of his writing after midnight.

Health & Lifestyle Feature

In health, it seems to be more clearcut in favour of larks. A 2018 review of studies reported in the journal Advances in Nutrition found that night owls may have a higher risk of suffering from heart disease and type 2 diabetes than early risers, possibly due to erratic eating patterns and overconsumption of unhealthy

But how - apart from waiting 40 years - can you shift from one type to the other? Well, I did it by brute force, first by setting my alarm to go off at 6am for years and then by getting up with a baby who had no respect for traditional scheduling.

Continued on pages 6-7...



But I might have accidentally stumbled on something, because this is Professor Foster's other key factor: the most important part of the puzzle seems to be light, with our eyes' detection of dawn playing a key role in regulating our internal body clock. "For most of us, our body clock runs on a cycle slightly longer than 24 hours," says Foster. "So without light, we'd tend to get up a little bit later every day. I've studied the blind and that's exactly what happens. What you need is to give your body clock a daily nudge in the right direction and that means getting morning light is very strongly recommended."

This can mean that larkishness or owliness is self-perpetuating. Teenagers who sleep in at the weekend, for instance, don't get the dawn light that's essential for resetting the clock, so they tend to struggle even more on Monday morning. But it also means you can nudge yourself towards morningness with a few days of setting an alarm and getting some light in. Or, er, do something more extreme.

"There's a beautiful experiment from the University of Colorado where the researchers took a group of people camping and only allowed them 'natural' sources of light - sunlight, moonlight and campfires, but no flashlights or personal electronic devices," says Dr Samer Hattar, chief of the section on light and circadian rhythms at the US National Institute of Mental Health. "It brought their sleep forward hugely - on average, their self-selected sleeping time was two and a half hours earlier than normal while camping.

Of course, there are a number of confounding factors - they were also out in greenery, getting fresh air and exercise -but that's also a finding we've seen in other experiments in a more controlled environment."

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This means it might also be helpful to avoid bright lights at night, though the impact of screens has probably been overstated. One of the most commonly cited studies suggesting that ereading devices affect sleep, for instance, asked test subjects to look at them on their brightest settings for four hours before lights out, and they only nodded off 10 minutes later. This is partly because, even looking directly at them, these devices give off far less light than even a cloudy day.

"Obviously, it's difficult if the sun isn't out in the morning, but a walk in the sunshine at lunchtime can help to entrain your body clock to a new schedule," says Hattar. "Apart from that, my best advice is to keep to a regular routine. Try to set your wake time and sleep time to be regular, keep your mealtimes regular and stick to a schedule with your other activities, and that will help regulate your system to a new temporal order - where hopefully you won't feel tired all the time."

A simple way to push things in the right direction is by getting up a little bit earlier every morning, says Imber. "Get up 10 or 15 minutes earlier, wait a few weeks for that change to settle in and then set the alarm earlier again." It can also help to turn the morning into a time you look forward to, rather than dread.

"Switching the news straight on puts your nervous system straight into fight or flight mode," says Gray. "Try listening to a comedy podcast, or a bit of your favourite standup comedian early in the morning - it'll activate your parasympathetic nervous system and create positive associations between waking up early and feeling good."



Maybe the most important thing you can do is not beat yourself Do a 'wall angel' up if early rising just isn't for you. "The biggest mistake you can To steer you away from spending your day in a hunch, stand with make is running your day on defence rather than offence," says your back to a wall, holding your hands above your head like Imber. "A lot of people just react to whatever happens throughout you're being held up. Slowly bring your elbows downward, the day and that's not optimising your productivity. We want to pause, and reverse the movement, keeping contact with the wall. proactively design our day, so that we do the hardest things when our brain is most alert, whether that's early morning, midday or Use the 'Rule of 3' evening." If you feel at your best at 11pm, don't fight it. Try this productivity tip from JD Meier's Getting Results The Agile

But if you want to join the ranks of morning people, we'd love to have you: get a bit of fresh air and morning sun when it's possible, and try not to stay up too late doom-scrolling. Personally, I've never felt better getting half of my to-do list done before most people have their second coffee - but if my six-yearold ever allows it, I wouldn't mind a lie-in soon.

Top of the morning

Start the day with positive purpose using these 20 tips to get you up and going:

Get straight out of bed with the 3-2-1 rule

Addicted to the snooze button? Break the habit by counting 3, 2, 1 and then getting up immediately. In theory, the countdown overcomes your rationalisations for not getting up.

Wake up with a roll-down

'This helps you wake up your spine and hamstrings, and sets you up for a backache-free day,' says Pilates instructor Eloise Skinner. 'Start by standing tall, your feet hip-distance apart. Tuck your chin into your chest and roll down your spine, moving one bone after another until you end in a forward fold - bend your knees to make this more comfortable. Take a few deep breaths, then roll back up. Finish by standing tall and rolling your shoulders a few times.

Skip the check-in

Waking up is a golden, distraction-free moment, advises Make Time author John Zeratsky - preserve it for as long as possible by not looking at emails.

Drink water

Even mild dehydration can lead to lowered mental acuity.

Smell the coffee

Ground yourself with the simplest mindfulness exercise: stop, close your eyes, and name one thing you can hear, feel (the floor, your clothes) and smell.

Make a 'first thing' list

Instead of 'Do taxes', for instance, the first thing might be 'Find shoebox of receipts'.

Make a 'Don't do' list

'I do this to steer clear of easier, less important jobs,' says strength and conditioning coach Joseph Lightfoot. 'It keeps me focused on what's most important.'

Way: decide the three things you want to accomplish by the end of the dav.

Eat the big frog first

No, this isn't some mad diet hack. When you're looking at your to-do list, pick the thing you're most dreading and do that before anything else. It'll build momentum.

Get a hit of protein

It'll help you feel full for the morning, making you less likely to snack. A couple of eggs will do the trick, or consider a shake.

Have some sauerkraut

It can improve your gut microbiome and is tasty with scrambled eggs.

Open a book

Twenty pages? Over-ambitious. Ten? Still a stretch, if you're busy. But opening a book - or an app - is something you can do every morning.

Look at the sun

Yes, this works. Just don't stare straight at it.

Go for a walk

If you work from home or drive, get an amble in.

A podcast-free shower

It might be the cue for a brainwave: writers and scientists report flashes of insight while engaged in other activities, especially if they're simple enough to engage what's known as the brain's 'default mode network'.

Listen to something funny

It'll help your parasympathetic nervous system kick in - and, if you're not a morning person, get you in the mood for the day. Brian Blessed's Absolute Pandemonium is a winner.

Do a five-minute workout

Do seven squats and five press-ups - use a wall or couch to make the angle easier if you can't do the regular kind - every minute on the minute for five minutes.

Box breathing

A technique used to take deep low breaths, sometimes known as four-square breathing. Breathe in for four seconds, hold for four, breathe out for four, hold for four. You're done!

Don't look at social media

It's really not going to make your day any better than it is.

(Article source: The Guardian)



A new start after 60: I learned to tango - now I'm out in clubs till 3am

Victoria Zaragoza-Martinez was retired, with little to do except hate the miserable British winter. At 71, she decided to bring some Latin warmth into her life.



The Guardian reports that Victoria Zaragoza-Martinez was 71 when she danced the tango for the first time. Growing up in Mexico, she had always had an affinity for the South American dance but never learned the proper steps.

It wasn't until 2015, soon after she had retired from being a teacher and translator, that Zaragoza-Martinez found herself at a class in Oxford being led around the room to a sprightly tango rhythm. "I just left all my troubles behind because the music took over," she says. "Once you dance, all you want to do is dance."

For the past nine years, Zaragoza-Martinez has been dancing the tango at least once a week. She has made a new group of friends that she sees at milonga dance parties and has even travelled to Argentina to tango with the locals. Despite now being 79 and the oldest in her group, Zaragoza-Martinez sees the dance as vital to her health and lifestyle. "I don't feel almost 80 when I dance," she says. "It's my life's passion."

It has been a long journey to the dancefloor for Zaragoza-Martinez. Born in Spain, she emigrated as a child with her family to Mexico and at 19 became a teacher to help support her single mother. "I used to enjoy dancing Spanish traditional dances but didn't have time to learn anything else," she says. "I always had to work, and while I'd loved tango music since I was a baby, I never knew what to do when it came on."

After meeting her British husband at a mutual friend's wedding, Zaragoza-Martinez moved to England in 1981. She spent her days teaching Spanish and the school holidays travelling, and the decades soon passed without her having an opportunity to dance again. Before she knew it, Zaragoza-Martinez was retired.

Health & Lifestyle News

"I had a lot of time on my hands and I resented the length of the miserable winter," she says. "It became my worst enemy." Respite came when her friend Maria suggested she join her weekly Ceroc dance classes.

"She had been encouraging me to go for a while," she says. "I didn't want my age to control my life, I wanted my life to control my age. So I knew I had to try something new."

At Ceroc, where attendees learn a fusion of ballroom styles, Zaragoza-Martinez found herself slipping easily into a dancefloor rhythm.

She gradually built up her skill but something was missing. "After a year, the classes had moved to a venue further away and I didn't enjoy driving there at night," she says. "At one rehearsal, I overheard two dancers talking about tango lessons nearby and a lightbulb went off in my head."

Replacing her night-time commute with a 10-minute trip to daytime sessions at the Oxford Tango Academy, Zaragoza-Martinez finally began learning to tango.

"It was such an incredible experience, and many of the people in my class were over 60," she says. "Still, it took me a year to perform at the social dances. I was worried I wouldn't be able to follow the leader or that no one would choose me to dance with."

Encouraged by her fellow beginners, Zaragoza-Martinez gradually built up her confidence and went to her first milonga, where she danced for five hours.

"When I'm at a milonga, the music envelops me and there are no aches or pains in my body," she says. "I am grateful for the warm embrace of dancers - and it's always fun to go to charity shops and dress up for the occasion."

Indeed, Zaragoza-Martinez has built up a wardrobe of salvaged tango ballgowns, some only costing £3, and despite never being able to stand heels before dancing, she can now keep her tango shoes on all night.

In 2022, she put that stamina to the test by travelling with a group of dancers to Buenos Aires and visiting the tango clubs each night until 3am. "It was amazing to go to the birthplace of tango," she says. "Dancing has really encouraged me to be adventurous and added a new light to my life."

Although her husband doesn't dance, he encourages Zaragoza-Martinez and often drops her off at the milongas she attends up to five times a month.

As she approaches 80, she has no plans to slow down. "I wish I had started learning sooner, but it was impossible," she says. "I'm now making up for lost time and forgetting my age!"

(Story source: The Guardian)

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



Ex-England manager Glenn Hoddle: Men look after their cars better than their bodies

The Tottenham Hotspur legend has teamed up on a campaign urging men to get their blood pressure checked.



Silver Surfers reports that Glenn Hoddle said he still feels like he is "playing extra time" nearly six years after surviving a cardiac arrest.

The former footballer and England and Tottenham Hotspur manager, who has teamed up on a new campaign urging all men to get their blood pressure checked, said every second is "precious" now.

"Every second is a precious second now, because I was gone, and look at your habits, what you're eating, drinking. And if there is a if it wasn't for CPR. I wouldn't be sitting here today, to be guite little pill that you have to take, that's going to regulate it - it's about honest. I owe my life to somebody who did CPR, and then I had the regulation and getting it functioning correctly. quadruple bypass," said Hoddle, who collapsed while filming for BT Sport in 2018 on his 61st birthday (a colleague performed life-saving "There's a lot you can find out guickly from having your blood CPR until help arrived). "Life is very precious, and I found that out pressure done, and it's nothing to be scared about - you want to be in a very, very dramatic way. Life has always been precious, but even forewarned, you want to nip it in the bud if there is a problem in your more so now. I feel as if in football terminology, I call it my extra body, as soon as you can," Hoddle added. time - I'm playing extra time at the moment. And long may that continue - I just hope it doesn't go to penalties!"

Following the deaths of two fans and 26 medical emergencies in (AF - a condition that can cause an irregular and abnormally fast football crowds in just over two years, as well as a number of players heartbeat) and statins, which are used to treat high cholesterol. suffering heart events on the pitch, the game has helped put a spotlight on men's health. Hoddle, 66 - who became a pundit and "But at the moment, everything is tickety-boo, thankfully," Hoddle commentator after retiring from coaching and managing - has now added, "Only when Tottenham play does (my blood pressure) go up joined up with Well Pharmacy on their new Blood Pressure United too high!" campaign, to encourage football fans to check their blood pressure.

Well Pharmacy has teamed up with Glenn Hoddle to launch Blood Middle-aged men are among the most likely group to have untreated Pressure United, Well Pharmacy's Blood Pressure United bus will high blood pressure (hypertension), according to NHS England data. be visiting football grounds across the UK, offering fans free blood And while hypertension can be managed, usually with a combination pressure tests. To find out more, see well.co.uk/blood-pressureof healthy lifestyle measures and medication when required, it is united often dubbed a 'silent killer' due to people being unaware they're affected.

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This can lead to major health problems further down the line. For example, according to the charity Blood Pressure UK, high blood pressure is a contributing factor in half of all strokes and heart attacks.

"That's the key to it all - it can creep up on you if you don't keep ahead of it. It's about prevention really," said Hoddle. "Since I had my cardiac arrest, I've got (a blood pressure monitor) at home that we look at every couple of weeks. But unless you're going to a doctor, or you have to go to A&E or into hospital, you never really have it done, do you?

"Blood pressure is a warning sign, whether it's too high or too low. it's a warning sign that can prevent so much. And there's nothing to be scared of, there's no blood being taken, it's just a blood pressure reading that can be done in a minute."

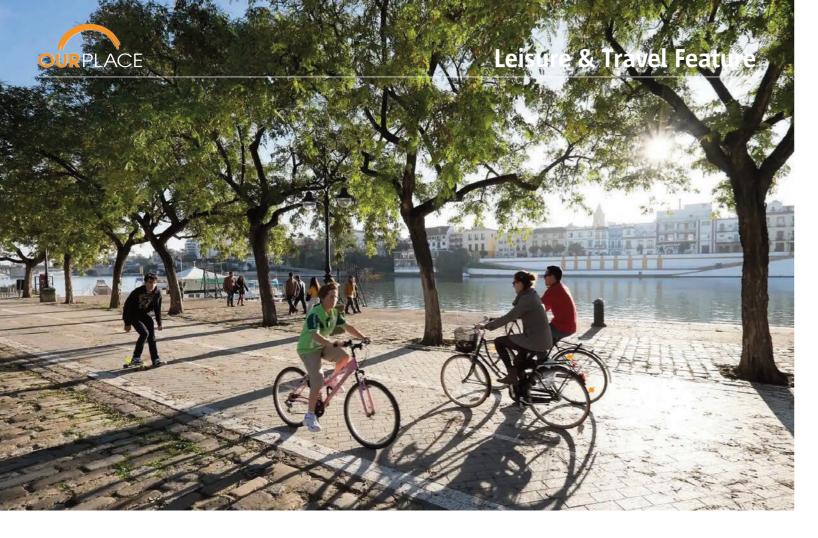
A poll of male football fans on behalf of the campaign found more than half of men aged 44 and under are 'unsure or unaware' of the consequences of untreated hypertension. And just 8% of the men surveyed said they've had their blood pressure checked at a local pharmacy - despite free tests being available for over-40s.

The campaign will see a bus visiting football grounds across the UK offering fans free blood pressure checks. Speaking ahead of the launch, Hoddle added: "The bus will be going out to football fans and particularly males - who often look after their cars better than they look after their bodies! They'll be MOT-ing their cars before their bodies."

The lifelong football fan - who became a Tottenham fan as a child and later started training with the club while still at school - is keen to reassure other men that even if you do have high blood pressure, it's better to know sooner rather than later so it can be managed.

"If everything is absolutely tickety-boo, then fine, they can go on with confidence. And if (it is high), then you look at your diet, you

As well as regularly monitoring his own blood pressure, Hoddle said he is mindful of his diet. He also takes medication for atrial fibrillation



The seduction of Seville: A local's guide to Spain's Andalucían capital city

Cobbled alleys, ancient bars, flamenco and the world's biggest gothic cathedral are just a few of the Andalucían capital's attractions.

Some of the best places in Seville are found by taking a wrong turn. Like when you stumble into a time-worn taverna peddling crisp local sherry or come across the rickety home of Sevilleborn painter Diego Velázquez. Which makes it all the more of a shame that many visitors to Spain's fourth biggest city don't venture much beyond the world's largest Gothic cathedral. Although the cobbled streets and alleyways that surround it are worthy of close inspection, this enchanting city has much more to offer a little further afield.

Vermouth with locals

Casa Vizcaíno is a classic Sevillano watering hole visited by fedora-wearing veterans and hipsters. The bar, famous for vermouth, is decorated in blue-and-white azulejo tiles, and its floor is strewn with sawdust.





Behind the bartenders stand dusty sherry bottles, stubby oak barrels and framed pictures of Jesus and Mary. Most days crowds spill out into the street. But on Thursday afternoons, following the Feria flea market, things really kick into gear. Traders and punters drink vermouth (and beer) and crunch olives. Waiters chalk up tabs on the bar top, while the odd confused guiri (tourist) looks on in bewilderment.

Calle Feria 27, Monday to Friday 10am - 11.30pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am–4pm (times vary)

The Guadalquivir riverside (pictured top left)

From 1503, when Seville gained exclusive rights to trade with the Americas, its river became a main artery, importing precious metals and exporting goods, such as olives and ceramics. Today, locals use the waterway for recreation (kayaking, paddleboarding, rowing, running, cycling) - the name comes from the Arabic for "great river". Start at the Moorish Torre del Oro, and head north along the river to one of Seville's lesser-known parks, **Jardines del Guadalquivir**. Wander its mazes, lily ponds and avenues of orange trees, before moseying back to Triana for cold beer and churros. Take your spoils across the bridge to the warm golden flagstones opposite Calle Betis to watch the sunset.

Calle Matemáticos Rey Pastor y Castro

Visit Seville's coolest bar



With walls covered in things you'd find at a car boot sale (old bikes, bric-a-brac, antique telephones), **Bicicletería** is one of Seville's coolest bars. Locals refer to it as bici (bike) and it looks like a closed-down cycle shop - until you hit the buzzer to the right of the shutter.

Leisure & Travel Feature

Explore Calle Feria



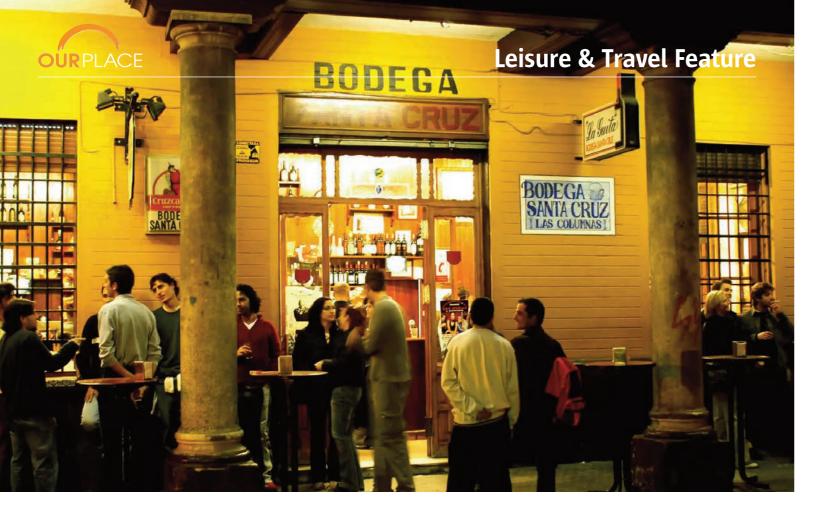
Calle Feria is my favourite street. Every Thursday a flea market takes over, with the narrow road closed to vehicles from 10am until 3pm. Stalls sell everything from antique badges and handmade photo frames to flamenco dresses. Down the street at the **Feria food market** there's local olive oil, Seville goat's cheese, artisanal chorizo (all from Negrete 1934 gourmet shop) and seafood (fresh tuna, salt cod and octopus empanadas). Plus loads of fruit and vegetables. There's plenty of on-the-go grub, too - from pizza and gyoza (Japanese dumplings) to fried chicken and plantain. A good spot for a bite is **Pitacasso**, a veggie-friendly restaurant with delicious falafel pittas, from \in 4.20.

Plaza Calderón de la Barca, Calle Feria, Monday to Saturday 8.15am–8pm

Listen to a flamenco jam



Taberna Gonzalo Molina offers a salt-of-the-earth flamenco experience. This tiny corner bar in the Macarena neighbourhood has been in the Molina family for centuries. It's known to some as el bar de los puntales ("the bar of the props") because of its roof held up by scaffolding poles.



A few years ago the owner, Manuel, received a court order demanding the bar's immediate closure - apparently not his first. Thanks to an inspired social movement led by native artists, poets and regular customers, it remains open today. The walls are covered in old portraits of flamenco singers.

On Mondays and Wednesdays the bar teems with keen local flamenco musicians who perform, almost nose-to-nose, for regulars as well as the occasional lost-looking tourist. With no set running order, singers of all ages enter the fray only if, and when, they dare, as spectators clink shot glasses filled with vino de naranja (sweet orange wine, \in 1) and clap the offbeat.

Calle Relator 59, open daily (may vary)

Picnic in the park

Scattered with orange trees, ponds and opulent tiled pavilions, **Parque de María Luisa** is worthy of a Monet painting. Once belonging to the 17th-century Palace San Telmo, the land was transformed specifically for the Ibero-American Exposition in 1929 by the man who designed the Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

It houses busy Plaza de España, which mixes elements of the Renaissance revival and Moorish revival styles of Spanish architecture; for a quiet picnic, head past the isleta de los pájaros ("island of birds") to the river. Here, the only sounds are trickling water fountains, practising musicians and the odd horse and cart.

Paseo de las Delicias, open Monday to Sunday, 8am–10pm (times may vary)



Quails and snails

Head to the Triana quarter, once home to Gypsies and sailors, for fried quail, a local speciality. **Casa Ruperto** or Los Pajaritos ("the little birds") is Seville's equivalent of a chippy. This family-run, standing-only restaurant-cum-takeaway has been serving deep-fried birds since 1970, and is loved for its down-to-earth food and no-frills decor.

The codorniz (quail, $\in 2$), on a slab of white bread, looks a little unappetising but you will wonder why you've never tried it before. Don't be put off by the stern-looking bartenders; in kindly broken English they will soon make you feel like a regular.

Avenida Santa Cecilia 2, open daily except Thursdays



Tapas by the cathedral (pictured top left)

Bodega Santa Cruz, affectionately renamed Las Columnas Seville's fine art museum, Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla, because of the pillars outside, is less than 200 metres from houses paintings by artists such as Velázquez and Murillo. Seville Cathedral. This lively tapas joint typically heaves with However, every Sunday outside the 16th-century former convent, Sevillanos drinking cañas (small glasses) of locally brewed from around 9am, a small art exhibition pops up in the leafy plaza. Cruzcampo beer. Non-locals are welcome but it's not for the faintshowcasing the work of home-grown painters and sculptors. hearted - the mischievous bartenders seem to revel in teasing The artwork on display ranges from framed watercolours of the non-Spanish speakers. Don't expect a cosy spot to sit and tuck city's Guadalquivir river to landscapes and abstract canvasses. into your grub either. Tapas here are done properly, which means eating while standing up. However, once you've polished off a pringá montadito (leftover pork stew in a crispy, toasted bap) or some berenjenas con miel (fried aubergine with honey), $\in 2.80$ each, you'll be glad you came.



Calle Rodrigo Caro 1, Sunday to Thursday 8am - midnight, Fridays and Saturdays 8am–12.30am

Grab a vegan breakfast

Head to **El Viajero Sedentario** for a vegan-friendly breakfast on the Alameda de Hércules boulevard in the historic quarter. No bigger than a generously sized kitchen pantry, with four or five well-placed tables and walls sprouting books from around the world, the ambience is somewhere between a village library and country pub. There's a courtyard with a lone orange tree for shade in the hotter months. Coffee or tea with a slab of homemade cake is \in 3.50. Or try a warm tostada (from \in 2) with various vegan-friendly toppings (tomato and olive oil is the Seville go-to).



Alameda de Hércules 77, open Tuesday to Sunday

Browse an art market



Plaza del Museo 41001. Open Sundays 9am - 3pm (it may not run in bad weather)

Getting there

Airlines including Ryanair and easyJet fly to Seville from several UK airports from £29 return. (2019)

When to go

April and May are the best months for cultural events such as Holy Week or Semana Santa (14-21 April), and the colourful fair Feria de Abril (4-11 May).

Where to stay

One Shot Palacio Conde Torrejón 09 in cool Macarena is a boutique hotel with a rooftop pool, art exhibitions and a swanky bar. Doubles from \in 81 B&B (2019)

Prices

£1 = €1.15. A caña, a small glass of beer, costs around €1.20. (2019)

Adam Turner is a freelance travel journalist living in Seville. He put these tips together with Juan Olaya Tagua, a Seville-born musician in the band Canastéreo, and general manager of La Banda Hostel

(Article source: The Guardian)



Tantalising Tapas! The history & origin of the authentic Spanish dish

Spain is famous for its food - from paella and gazpacho to Spanish tortilla and chocolate-dipped churros - but there's one dish that offers a taste of the country's culture as well.

Tapas originated in Andalucia, a Southern province of Spain. The word "tapa" translates as "cover". Tapas traditionally may have been a complementary piece of sliced ham served on top of a glass of wine, but we know them today as small portions of food commonly served as a snack before lunch or dinner. Tapas can be as simple as a bowl of olives or more hearty, such as slices of Serrano ham.

The history of Tapas

There are a lot of different stories surrounding the origin of tapas. Some people say the creation of tapas was in the 13th century by King Alfonso X of Castile. While recovering from an illness, the King could only eat and drink in small amounts. After regaining his health, he made a decree that all drinks should be served with something to eat.

One popular story is that King Alfonso XIII traveled to Cádiz and stopped at a tavern on a windy day. In order to keep the dust and sand out of the King's drink, the bartender put a slice of ham on top. The King loved this so much he ordered another drink. Some people will also say tapas were created to hide the bad smell of a cheap wine or to keep out pesky flies.

Another similar story is that lower class workmen would spend their salaries on alcohol rather than food, getting drunk and rowdy in the process. In order to keep things in hand, the King decreed every cup of alcohol must be served with a plate of food.

No matter which story you believe, we can all agree that tapas are delicious!



Famous Tapas dishes

Less than an hour from Madrid by high-speed train sits the 17thcentury Spanish capital of Valladolid, a hotbed of historic palaces, sweeping plazas and galleries, including the National Museum of Sculpture and the home of Don Quixote writer Cervantes. Each November, it's also home to an annual tapas competition bringing together chefs from around the world to compete for both national and international titles, and prompting every bar with a tempting tapas menu to up its game. The region is known for its hearty meat dishes, so you'll find top-quality Iberico ham and morucha beef from Salamanca in charcuteries like Jamonería Sarmiento, which converts into a tapas bar after dark; in the bars around Plaza San Martín and Plaza Martí y Monsó; or from the local producers in Mercado del Val, a late 19th-century iron-built market near the grand church of San Benito el Real. Or come for the festival, when creative culinary talents stretch the definition of tapas as far as it can go with fusion ingredients from all over the world.

Spanish Omelette: Spanish Omelette is made with eggs and potatoes, sometimes also with onion, cooked in a oil. **Patatas Bravas:** Typically consists of white potatoes that have been cut into irregular cubes, then fried in oil and served warm with a sauce. **Cured Ham:** Slices of the famous Spanish ham is delicious and makes the perfect appetiser before enjoying a paella or other hot tapas dishes. Calamaria: A firm favourite among the public, delicious calamari is lightly battered and is left a lovely golden brown. Often enjoyed with a dip and is perfect to enjoy with a glass of Spanish wine. **Croquettes:** Warm & mouthwatering Jamon Serrano croquettes with manchego cheese will leave your taste buds tingling.

5 places to try authentic Tapas in Spain:

Bilbao

The Gran Canarian capital's old town of Vegueta is a twisting maze of cobbled streets overlooked by brightly coloured You won't find tapas bars in Bilbao - instead, you'll find them buildings and wrought-iron balconies, centred around the grand serving pintxos (pronounced 'pinchos'), which comes from the Catedral de Santa Ana and home of Christopher Columbus, Casa word for 'spike', aka the toothpick that holds these ingredients de Colón. On a Thursday evening, people spill out from the bars together before they are placed on top of a piece of bread. along Calle Mendizabal and the old town's array of pedestrian Most famous is the 'gilda', made up of a spicy green pepper, plazas on a pincho crawl, where a drink and a single serving anchovy and an olive, said to have been invented at the Casa should set you back less than \in 3. Alternatively, dine under the Vallés bar in San Sebastian - another Basque city that's known arches of the city market Mercado del Puerto, a Modernist for its tapas - and named after the character played by Rita structure designed by French engineer Gustave Eiffel, where you Hayworth in the 1946 film. Admire the Art Deco architecture and can pick up tempting bites from different stalls - each with its stained glass of the waterfront Ribera Market, before tucking into own speciality, from sheep's cheeses to local cured meats - then a tour of its food stalls and booths, where you'll see piles of perch at its tall tables to wolf them down. Expect mainland Spain glistening gildas alongside croquetas de bacalao (cod croquettes) classics alongside the Canary Islands' signature papas arrugadas and deep-fried idiazabal (sheep's) cheese unique to the region -(wrinkled potatoes) with red and green mojo sauces. best enjoyed with a glass of the local white wine, txakoli.

Granada

La Rioja region might be best known for its eponymous wines. Set at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains in a region known but its tapas game is top-notch too, not least in capital Logroño. for its abundant produce, yet only an hour from the In the heart of its medieval old town, Calle Laurel and its Mediterranean coast, this Andalusian city brings the best of both surrounding streets bring together dozens of bars and land and sea to its renowned foodie scene. Not only do most restaurants dishing out delicious pinchos each night, so you places still uphold the tradition of a free tapa with each drink could spend an entire evening hopping from one spot to the next sadly not a given across many other Spanish cities these days and still have to come back several times to try them all. but you can also pick up on the region's Arab influences in its Each place has its signature dish featuring local specialities like cuisine. It was the last region to be ruled over the Moors until the white asparagus, sun-ripened peppers, garlic-infused late 15th century, resulting in dishes rich with spices such as mushrooms and regional favourite patatas a la riojana which cumin, coriander and nutmeg. You'll find plenty of fried sardines mixes in paprika-spiced chorizo. You'll find the spicy sausage in and anchovies, fresh Andalusian gazpacho, grilled sausage and every form, but the simplest and best is chistorra, or grilled local specialities like ham and beans. San Antón stew and - not chorizo with paprika and garlic. for the faint-hearted - the Sacromonte tortilla (omelette) which includes calf and pig's brains and testicles, so only order if you (Article source: Various) dare. Follow local residents on the many tapas routes around the city, with plenty of options around Plaza Nueva and Plaza Campillo or along the bar-filled streets of Calle Navas or Calle San Mateo.

Valladolid

Las Palmas

Logroño



Home & Garden Feature



Spring starters! 10 of the best gardens to visit to see snowdrops

It's snowdrop season, when swathes of pint-sized white flowers emerge from frost-laden woodlands, parks, meadows and gardens, brightening up the winter vista. Seeing drifts of the pretty white flowers will shake off the winter blues

If you want to ditch the winter blues, put on your walking boots and visit some gardens where you can find dazzling displays of these early-flowering beauties. Some of the best gardens include:

Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire

With one of the most brilliant snowdrop collections in the country, visitors can see some 400 varieties here, many of which are rare. You'll view many of them amid classical statues and the Winter Garden and notice that some are named after people and places with links to the abbey, including Galanthus 'Hobson's Choice' named after former owner Thomas Hobson, who bought the abbey in 1627 and converted it from a derelict priory into a country house. Pre-book The Specialist Collection Tours, Monday - Friday and every Sunday from Jan 29 to Feb 29.

Wallington, Northumberland

Over the past few years, visitors have planted more than 800,000 snowdrops on the 13,500-acre estate at Wallington to keep the vibrant displays going. The collection includes a few special varieties of snowdrop, including the Northumbrian 'Sandersii' group, which has sulphur-yellow markings instead of green, and the pretty 'Flore Pleno' with double the usual number of petals. Half term is an ideal time to join the Wallington gardeners in planting these pretty spring flowers. Then take a walk to enjoy the carpets of snowdrops in the woodlands. 'Flore Pleno' wit. Snowdrop planting Feb 17-25.



Higher Cherubeer, Devon

Visitors to this beautiful private garden, which will open for three The 19th century gardens in this beautiful estate feature a days in February, will see more than 400 snowdrop varieties, the stunning woodland walk bordered by thousands of snowdrops National Collection of Cyclamen Species and many hellebores. in late winter, turning into a kaleidoscope of colourful flowers and The 1³/₄-acre country garden also features a gravelled courtyard ferns in summer. The lovingly restored castle, on the outskirts of and paths, raised beds, alpine house, lawns, herbaceous borders the historic village of Culross, is surrounded by 52 acres of formal and woodland beds full of naturalised drifts of plants, plus a gardens, meadows and woodlands. Features include an Italianate kitchen garden with large greenhouse and orchard. Feb 2, 9 and terrace lined with yew trees and the formal Bastion Garden, a 17, National Garden Scheme. lovely backdrop to the original Georgian part of the castle, with its circular lawn and herbaceous borders. Open for snowdrops Shepherd House, Inveresk, East Lothian Feb 10/11, Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

Recognised as one of the best small gardens in Scotland, this gorgeous one-acre plot was built in the late 17th century and is owned by Sir Charles and Ann Fraser. The season starts with its beautiful displays of snowdrops, with a collection of more than 70 cultivars. It's a constantly evolving artist's garden designed by its owners. No garden designer has been consulted. There was no overall plan so the garden has evolved in stages over the years. Tue/Thu from Feb 6-29, Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

Bucklow Farm, Knutsford, Cheshire

This delightful private garden has been lovingly planted over the past 30 years with a myriad shrubs, perennial borders, rambling roses, herb garden, vegetable patch, meadow, wildlife pond/water feature and alpines. It's a sight to behold when the ground is carpeted in snowdrops - which visitors can see when the garden is open to the public for one day in February through the National Garden Scheme - followed by other spring bulbs, while stems and berries provide colour and interest in autumn and winter. Sun, Feb 25, National Garden Scheme.

Kingston Lacy, Dorset

The gorgeous gardens surrounding this home which was built to resemble a Venetian palace feature thousands of snowdrops originally planted in the early 1900s and now featuring more than 40 varieties. The best places to see them are in the Japanese Garden or along the Lime Avenue where they have naturalised under trees and bamboo. To beat the crowds, take up an earlymorning guided snowdrop walk on selected days in February. If you're feeling adventurous, you can book a Kokedama workshop to create a hanging snowdrop moss ball to take home. or take up a snowdrop pixie pendant craft session to make three to take home. Open daily in Feb.

Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire

There's plenty for all the family, as visitors can join the Snowdrop Stories trail (Feb 10-25), wandering through Canons Ashby, to This colourful garden with spectacular views across the County discover what people have believed about these delicate and Down countryside has grown from its 19th-century beginnings to be a bulb lover's paradise, thanks to the planting of 130,000 beautiful blooms through the years. There are two types of snowdrops which dominate here: Galanthus nivalis, which is a bulbs over 10 years. It incorporates both formal and informal spaces, filled with unique plants from all over the world and single type and in much larger quantities, and Galanthus nivalis f. pleniflorus 'Flore Pleno', also known as the common double celebrates late winter when drifts of pretty white snowdrops snowdrop. They can be found throughout the garden including appear. Wrap up warm because the colder the weather, the longer they will last, with some flowering into March. Open daily in Feb. the avenue, garden and churchyard.

16

Dunimarle Castle, Dunfermline



Chirk Castle, Wrexham, Wales

The gardens around this majestic medieval fortress within a 480acre estate are peppered with snowdrops wherever you go, whether they are popping up among clipped yews, herbaceous borders, shrubs or rock gardens, as well as drifting along the woodland floor. The most impressive displays are in the Pleasure Ground Wood, next to the Formal Garden. Open daily in Feb.

Rowallane Garden, County Down



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.

My et Matters



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 $\underline{\text{HALVED}}$ in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

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

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

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

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

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

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life. We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

'Julie'



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

Baby Hedgehogs

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



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

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

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



Registered Charity No: 1126812 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No: SCO47720 (Scotland)