

For information, advice and support about your wellbeing please contact:

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Mental Health Awareness Week

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Awareness Week will take place from 18-24 May 2020. The theme is kindness.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>



Reading through one of the sections on this website actually brought me to tears; both the happy and the sad kind of tears, and the knowledge if we are brave enough, there's an opportunity to bring about some really positive changes across our school settings. If you have some time to read anything I urge you to read this (without welling up!).

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/why-kindness-theme>

We've dedicated the school staff wellbeing newsletter – Issue 3 to Mental Health Awareness Week too. These newsletters can be accessed from the tab below and shared with school staff:

[Promoting health and wellbeing in school settings](#)

All issues of the Head Teacher Wellbeing newsletter are also saved here, along with supporting documents from the Education Psychology Service.

Raising the issue of.....something sensitive!

There's a great training programme offered by South Glos Public Health called 'Raising the Issue of Weight', you or a member of staff may have been on it. *"Like many sensitive subjects, it is often the way in which the issue is talked about rather than the issue itself that causes problems for both practitioner/teacher and family. The stigma attached to obesity makes it harder to talk openly and constructively about it."* The training challenges us to think about this issue as we would a safeguarding one. It provides us with ways to develop a script and have that difficult conversation and raise the issue of weight.

Why mention this? During lockdown I've noticed more 'conversations' being had about changing food and alcohol consumption! Many of these are posed in a rather jocular (verging on the satirical) way, *"I'm coming out of this global pandemic either a master chef or an alcoholic," one meme on social media quipped'.*

That quote is taken from an article which raises the issue of alcohol use during lockdown. It's realistic, sensitive and provides some science behind its claims! I hope you find it interesting!
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200507-why-you-might-be-drinking-too-much-during-lockdown>

As with anything that once had balance and may now be tipping over, sometimes just finding a way to raise it is enough. And, there is plenty of help at hand in South Glos if additional support is required:

South Gloucestershire council support:

<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/>

Community support groups:

<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/get-help-and-support-in-your-area/>

The Science-ish Bit... Looking after our physical health

Mental health benefits of exercise

Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that improve your mood.

If you exercise regularly, it can reduce your stress and symptoms of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, and help with recovery from mental health issues. It can also improve your sleep, which is important in many different ways.

Exercise and the mind

Exercise pumps blood to the brain, which can help you to think more clearly.

It increases the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory.

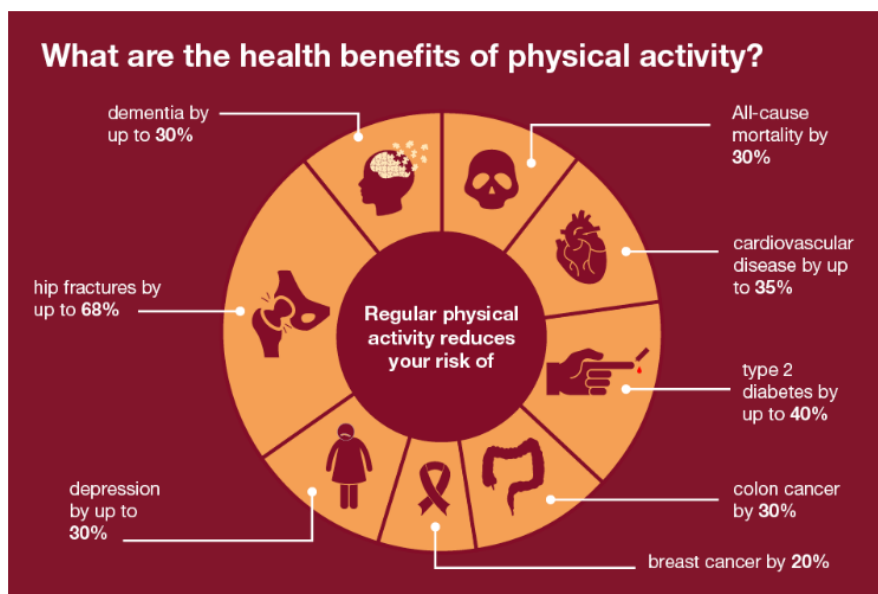
It also increases the connections between the nerve cells in the brain. This improves your memory and helps protect your brain against injury and disease.

Looking after our bodies during the 'lockdown' working day may be hard. Some of us may have found life a little more sedentary, with fewer prompts during the day to get up and move around.

Tools to increase mobility and adopt an 'agile working' (great term!) approach!

- There are many helpful apps and videos online or you can start with some [simple Stretching Exercises](#).
- Becoming chair-shaped! Fitback Physiotherapy offers [Super 7 exercises in 7 minutes](#) to strengthen your back
- More about [Agile Working](#). This information sheet has great ideas for laptop users.
- And.....don't forget to add some fresh air: If working inside for long periods, weather permitting, keep a window open, or open a window periodically to change the air in the room. Changing the air gets a mention in this blog! [Five things Norwegian Schools Do Differently](#)

And even more about why being active is a good thing!!



[Physical Activity: applying All our Health, PHE-Oct 2019](#)

Around 1 in 3 (34%) of men and 1 in 2 (42%) of women are not active enough for good health.

Men are more likely to report being active at the recommended level than women.

Physical activity varies with age and life stage.

And people with disabilities or long-term conditions are twice as likely not to be active enough for good health.

However, one in four people would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines recommend each week adults do:

- at least 150 minutes moderate intensity activity, 75 minutes' vigorous activity, or a mixture of both
- strengthening activities on two days
- reducing extended periods of sitting

Exercise hack - What is NEAT? Well, moving is NEAT!

Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT) is the energy expended for everything we do that is not sleeping, eating or sports-like exercise. It ranges from the energy expended walking, typing, gardening, the washing up, and even fidgeting. Even trivial physical activities increase metabolic rate substantially and it is the cumulative impact of these small activities that have a big impact.