

My Favourite Pastime

Did you know 42% of us always set an alarm before we have to get up for work, though 4% usually or always sleep through anyway and 26% always hit the snooze button to gain a few extra moments! I am one of the 4% who can sleep through an alarm, hurricane or earthquake! I used to have to put my alarm clock on the other side of the room so I physically had to get out of bed to turn it off. Now, things are easier, as a well trained husband brings me a cup of tea and gently nudges me; much more civilised.

Researchers from the University of Warwick, and University College London, have found that lack of sleep can more than double the risk of death from cardiovascular disease. However they have also found that point comes when too much sleep can also more than double the risk of death.

Sleep - or lack of it - is one of the most common 21st century health complaints. Only 1 in 10 of us say we always sleep well; 1 in 5 suffer from lack of sleep; and two thirds say we get less sleep now than we did a few years ago - around 90 minutes less, according to one leading American sleep expert.

A 15 minute nap in the afternoon can perk up a person's performance no end - especially if their length and quality of sleep at night is not perfect, so say the sleep experts (at the Sleep Research Centre at Loughborough University). It's such an appealing thought that France is investigating whether or not to enshrine the idea in employment law. But, according to research by bed linen producer Dorma, while 79% of Brits like the idea, only 8% think it has any chance of catching on in the UK - where, apparently, most people would see it as a sign of weakness.

Adults, it seems, are five times more likely to spend more time in bed during the winter than the summer. It's human nature to want to sleep in when it's cold outside. Who hasn't snuggled further under the covers for a little extra sleep on a cold morning? So, just as bears ready their dens to hibernate, people need to plan for a good winter's slumber.

A few tips from the Sleep Council on how to get good nights sleep:

- Cosy up and keep warm: Wear night clothes such as pyjamas or a large T-shirt to keep you warm. Natural fibres such as wool, cotton or silk will keep you warmer than synthetic materials.
- Have a warm bath just before you go to bed. This will gently warm and relax you to help you feel sleepy.
- Have a warming, milky drink.
- Try to take some exercise which will get the circulation going to help keep the body warm – but don't do vigorous exercise too close to bed time as you may feel too invigorated to sleep.
- Keep the bedroom warm, but not too hot, and free from draughts.
- Look for a mattress which has a "warm" side for use during the winter. A soft sleeping surface is a better insulator than a flat one. Use a fleecy underblanket to retain the heat.
- Choose a duvet with a high tog rating or use several layers of bedding rather than one single layer. Layers will trap warm air and are easily removed if you get too hot.
- A hot water bottle is an ideal way to keep warm once in bed. Make sure it has a cover on it to avoid scalding and also so that it won't feel cold in the middle of the night.
- Electric blankets are ideal. Underblankets will warm the bed up before you retire for the night, while overblankets maintain a constant temperature throughout the night.

Do the right thing and ensure that you give your body the sleep that it needs.

Alex Ollivier

Contents

Sing for Brain Health	2
Events	3
New Research Reveals More People Choose a Career With a Charity	4
Women's Running Network	4

Healthy Living Network News is the Health Promotion Service Newsletter for those involved in community health development. Editor: Alex Ollivier, Tel: (01209) 313419. Queries to Healthy Living Network News, Health Promotion Service, The Kernow Building, Wilson Way, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 3QE. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and may not necessarily reflect those of the Health Promotion Service. The editor reserves the right to refuse or edit articles submitted.

**Deadline for next newsletter
5 February 2008**

The Health Promotion Service provides services on behalf of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Health Community



Sing for Brain Health

Every one I know knows I love to sing. I think they all wish that I was better at it but I am the type of person that has a song for every occasion! I have now found out that singing is good for my brain as if I needed any further encouragement!

I'm not sure if it is a British thing but we do seem rather buttoned up about letting out a tune! Unless of course it's in pub with a karaoke machine in which case perhaps holding back would be more appropriate after all!

Prompted by a Small Grant application received into the office I have found out that singing can give you all sorts of health benefits;

- It's a gentle aerobic activity that will improve and maintain neurological pathways.
- It is effective at lifting or preventing depression through the use of elements which will surprise, reassure, support, inspire and mediate reframing a negative life viewpoint into a positive one
- It is something that GPs can recommend to patients as an exercise and thus provide a positive aspect to a diagnosis
- Reduced stress
- Lower heart rate
- Decreased blood pressure
- It boosts the immune system. One study conducted at the University of Frankfurt in Germany, found that choral members had higher levels of immunoglobulin A and cortisol (markers of enhanced immunity) after they sang Mozart's "Requiem" than before. Just listening to the music did not have this effect.

There are many studies in to how singing can improve our health. For example, one choir was asked to fill out questionnaires and reported;

- Improved lung capacity
- High energy

- Relieved asthma
- Better posture
- Enhanced feelings of relaxation, mood and confidence
- A three year study examining how singing effects the health of those over 55 (the average age of all the subjects was 80) revealed that compared to a control group, the singing group reported;
- An average of 30 fewer doctor visits
- Fewer eyesight problems
- Reduced incidence of depression
- Less need for medication
- Fewer falls and other injuries

The feedback from the participants themselves included feeling better both in daily life and while singing, easier breathing and better posture.

If that isn't enough to convince you then how about this? Singing groups are being used to great effect with Alzheimer's patients (and more recently people with Parkinson's Disease, those who have had strokes and head injuries, along with people who have special needs).

Clive Ballard, Director of Research at the Alzheimer's Society and Professor of Age-Related Diseases at King's College, London says "The part of the brain that works with speech is different than the part that processes music, which is what allows people who can no longer converse to still enjoy music. People seem to enjoy doing something jointly with other people and there is a lot of evidence that being socially engaged is good for people with dementia."

Singing tutor Liz McNaughton, who is a freelance voice coach with Singing for the Brain, said the sessions have beneficial effects on the participants' cognitive powers, physical ability and emotions, "It would seem, and there is a lot of research about this, that the music has the ability to access words. It is so powerful that people who have lost their ability to speak can access songs and words from the melody."

Useful Contacts

The following is a list of useful contacts who are available to provide funding advice, help and support to community and voluntary groups across the county.

Healthy Living Forum Leads

Penwith:

Dilys Down 01736 330045

Kerrier:

Douglas Polman 01209 614909

Restormel:

Stella Jenkin 01637 893637

Carrick:

Trudy Swann 01872 264882

Caradon:

Liz Webb 01579 348844

North Cornwall:

Jessica Pytel 01208 265624

Isles of Scilly:

Joel Williams 01720 423680

Interlink Contacts

Kerrier:

Douglas Polman 01209 614909

Penwith:

Beccy Trehair 01209 614900

Restormel and Carrick:

Alison Mitchelmore 01872 264166

Caradon and North Cornwall:

Lydia Bilson 01208 75799

District Council Contacts

Each district council has a community team who are in place to support community and voluntary groups within that district.

Penwith:

Kelly Russell 01736 336899

Kerrier:

Josyanne Thatcher
01209 614061

Carrick:

Martin Searle 01872 224428

North Cornwall:

Jessica Pytel 01208 265624

Caradon:

Alison Gibson 01579 341030

Restormel:

01726 223618

EVENTS

International Volunteer Day

5 Dec 2007

The annual celebration of the contributions of volunteers to various causes and communities around the world.

Carers' Rights Day

7 Dec 2007

Between 40 - 60% of disability benefits go unclaimed, and with many carers unaware of how to access practical help, this campaign is designed to make carers more aware of their entitlements.

Tree Dressing Day

7 - 9 Dec 2007

Decorate and celebrate a living tree in your street, garden, playground, village, hedgerow or park on Tree Dressing Day and show how much you value it.

International Animal Rights Day

10 Dec 2007

International animal rights campaign groups annual coalition of protests and candle-lit vigils calling for the recognition of a Universal Declaration of Animal Rights (UDAR).

Festival of Winter Walks

26 Dec - 2 Jan 2008

The Festival of Winter Walks is the Ramblers' Association's annual festival of walks open to everyone, with many hundreds of walks happening across England, Scotland and Wales.

Farmhouse Breakfast Week 2008

20 - 26 Jan 2008

Encouraging people to get active as part of a healthy lifestyle with the theme 'A Great Start'.

RNLI SOS day

25 Jan 2008

Get 2008 off to a cracking start by taking part in RNLI SOS day - a day

for everyone - when schools, businesses, pubs, clubs and groups have fun and show their support for the bravery and lifesaving work of the RNLI's volunteer crew members and lifeguards.

Big Garden Birdwatch 2008

26 - 27 Jan 2008

It's easy to take part in the world's biggest bird survey. Just watch the birds in your garden or local park for an hour and help us learn more about the birds in the UK's gardens.

Homelessness Sunday

27 Jan 2008

An ecumenical event encouraging churches to reflect and take action on homelessness and bad housing in the UK.

BE LOUD!

28 Jan - 3 Feb 2008

BE LOUD! (formerly known as the Loud Tie campaign) is the Beating Bowel Cancer annual awareness and fundraising campaign, urging the public to be just that!

National Storytelling Week

26 Jan - 2 Feb 2008

Campaigning to increase public awareness of the art, practice and value of oral storytelling.

Valentine Appeal

1 - 29 Feb 2008

The Valentine Appeal is the British Heart Foundation's (BHF) fundraising campaign aiming to raise £1 million to fund the BHF's vital care work.

BTO National Nest Box Week

14 - 21 Feb 2008

Campaigning to encourage people to put up nest boxes, either ones they have made themselves or bought, to improve gardens and other habitats for nesting birds.

International Mother Language Day

21 Feb 2008

Proclaimed by UNESCO in November 1999, and observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

World Thinking Day

22 Feb 2008

The day when Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world remember each other and reaffirm their commitment to international friendship and understanding.

Veggie Month

1 - 31 Mar 2008

A celebration of vegetarianism and campaigning to inform schools, retailers, restaurants, community groups and others about the benefits of a vegetarian diet.

National Bed Month

1 - 31 Mar 2008

The annual month long celebration of beds is designed to remind everyone of the importance of a good bed to a good night's sleep.

World Book Day

6 Mar 2008

Encouraging children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own.

National Doodle Day

7 Mar 2008

A day to raise funds to help people whose lives are affected by epilepsy and neurofibromatosis.

Sport Relief 2008

14 - 16 Mar 2008

The Sport Relief Weekend will be three days of entertainment, events and energy designed to challenge the entire nation.

World Poetry Day

21 Mar 2008

At a time when poetry is flourishing, World Poetry Day provides an occasion for activities and efforts carried out at different levels to support and promote poetry.

World Theatre Day

27 Mar 2008

Each year a figure outstanding in theatre is invited to share their reflections on theatre - celebrated annually by the international theatre community.

New Research Reveals More People Choose a Career With a Charity

New research has revealed that the number of people working for charities, voluntary organisations and community groups has risen at a much faster rate than the public and private sectors over the last ten years.

The research published on Wednesday 31 October 2007 by the UK Workforce Hub and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) shows:

- An increase in the charity workforce of 26% over the last decade
- In the same period, public sector employment grew by 14%
- The number of people working in the private sector only grew by 11%
- At least 611,000 people now work for charities, greater than the number of people working for banks and building societies.

Working for a charity is proving particularly popular with women (69% of employees) and graduates (33% of employees). This is significantly higher than the private sector.

The UK Workforce Hub is therefore calling on graduates or people considering a change of career to consider working for a charity. The research shows an increasingly professional, dynamic and challenging place to work.

Women's Running Network

There is an epidemic sweeping the nation's women and it's boosting their health, fitness and self esteem. It all began in 1998 when Devon ladies Pauline Beare and Peggy Wiseman began the first ladies only running group, now a nationally recognised brand the Women's Running Network has grown beyond anyone's expectation. The winning combination of the spirit of the network and the ever increasing popularity of events such as Race for Life have really inspired women of all ages, shapes and levels of fitness to 'have a go'!

"The Women's Running Network caters for women of all running abilities including the complete beginner. Even if you have never run before, the Women's Running Network can help you get started giving you sensible advice, support and company while you run." With a mission statement like that it is clear that this is an organisation designed for women by women and attention has been paid to the detail.

The Network's aims are:

- To offer running for fitness and social fun to all women;
- To establish new groups with new organisers;
- To offer training and advice to new organisers;
- To maintain a support network and communication gathering between groups

via a quarterly newsletter and regular social gatherings.

There is a very strong sense of camaraderie within the Network and the emphasis is on the social and fun side of getting fitter. There is no obligation to enter races or even to run all the way! The idea is to work at the level most appropriate to you and make improvements. The central hub of the Network is at their HQ in Exeter and this is where the formalities of club life takes place. This means that at the local level there is no club house or club night. Instead, the Women's Running Network consists of a number of locally organised groups that are co-ordinated through the network. Here in Cornwall there are currently groups in Camborne/Redruth, Truro, Newquay and Bodmin.

Any lady that attends 10 sessions in a row with the Camborne/Redruth branch receives a t-shirt to celebrate their commitment and achievement. The idea being that other members will be even more motivated and inspired to attend and get a shirt for themselves. This group has only existed for a little over three months and proudly presented Sue Wellham, their first 10-week runner with her shirt a few weeks ago.

Anyone interested in dipping a toe in the water of what the women get up to then find out more from the Women's Network;

01392 499100

www.womensrunningnetwork.co.uk