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A NOTE

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the December/January Edition.

The shortest day of the year is 21st December and whilst it might be dark and cold outside there are welcoming warming firesides inside homes, restaurants and hostels offering the chance of spending quality time with family, loved ones and friends. This time of year, most of us like to look back at the year that is ending and look forward to the year to come. Many of us begin to plan summer holidays, spring breaks and long walks in our beautiful English countryside.

December is a time of joy as we travel to be with family over the holidays to catch up, enjoy each other's company and give and receive presents. Festivities abound as Christmas markets sell toys and trinkets and let us sample and buy delicious foods, mince pies, gingerbread cookies, panettone, stollen and Buche de Noel and traditional drinks like warming mulled wine, hot apple cider and eggnog.

2025 had an early spring, and a long hot summer but it has almost ended and now we look ahead with joy and excitement to 2026. We count down the weeks to the arrival of the first snowdrops of the year, and the months to the arrival of the Daffodils and Tulips and know that spring is not far away. We plan what we will plant in our gardens and what we'll do around our homes all with the hopeful optimism that 2026 will be the best year yet.

Here are some dates for your calendar: 24th December - Christmas Eve; 25th December - Christmas Day (Bank Holiday); 26th December - Boxing Day (Bank Holiday); 31st December - New Year's Eve; 1st January - New Year's Day (Bank Holiday).

As always, we ask you to please remember to mention Stonesthrow Directories when calling our Advertisers.

Wishing all our readers and supporters a joyful Christmas and a well-deserved festive break.

Yours, Stonesthrow Publications.

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NEXT DEADLINE
FEB / MAR EDITION
20TH JANUARY



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IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL TRAINING

Whatever your exercise goals, personal training can help you achieve better health, at your own pace, safely under expert guidance.

If you find it hard to get motivated to exercise or are worried about what will work best for you, perhaps a personal trainer is the answer. Personal trainers are qualified, highly skilled and experienced in tailoring exercise to meet an individual's health goals. They can plan, guide, encourage and inspire their clients to better physical health, which in turns helps improve mental well-being.

Personal training

When choosing a personal trainer, recommendations from family, friends or colleagues are useful, as are independent references from people that might have similar health goals to you. Meet and speak with a trainer and get to know them. Be honest about what you want to achieve by training as this will help a professional plan and craft a programme tailored just for you. Personal trainers often help their clients achieve their goals quicker than if they were training independently.

Locations

Where and how you want to exercise will influence your choice of personal trainer. Many trainers work in gyms, but others are happy to visit clients at home, some like to take sessions outdoors, some specialise in resistance training, some aerobic exercises, and some like to combine different techniques. Some trainers use dance and movement, or boxing as a way for their clients to get fit and this might be something that specifically appeals to you and will influence where sessions take place.

Personal exercise plans, correct form and progress tracking

Personal exercise plans work best when they are

realistic and utilise short and long-term goals. A plan will begin with defining what a client wants to achieve, maybe it is weight loss, muscle gain, strength, flexibility, or maybe it is to achieve a target such as a running marathon, or a long-distance swim. Maybe a client wants to use personal training to recover or recuperate from an illness. There are many personal trainers that specialise in helping clients recover health and fitness.

An exercise plan will create a programme of exercise tailored specifically to a client's needs which starts slowly and builds progress gradually. A trainer can use various techniques to track progress perhaps using a log or app to monitor aerobic and strength improvements in the form of endurance, repetitions, resistance increases and levels of flexibility. And, because of the trainer's experience proper form can be monitored to help avoid injuries.

Expect to pay between £40 to £80 per hour upwards for a good personal trainer. A trainer should at least hold a Level 2 Gym Instructor qualification and a Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training and these qualifications should be endorsed by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA). If you want a specialised trainer they should hold an appropriate specialised qualification. And, before you engage the services of a personal trainer, you should check their levels of insurance, which should include Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover.

To meet your local personal trainer and discuss your fitness needs, please get in touch:

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LIFESTYLE SWAPS

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Saving money is often associated with huge sacrifices such as a ban on holidays, subsisting on beans and rice and, basically, having zero fun ever. Yet, in reality, some of the most effective savings come from small, consistent swaps in everyday habits.

Making coffee vs buying

If you're often left wondering where all your money has gone, consider your caffeine habit. A daily, basic barista-made latte is around £3.50. Multiply that by five days a week, and you're spending almost a thousand pounds a year on the dark stuff!

Compare this with brewing your own coffee at home and, even factoring in quality beans, milk, and electricity, the cost per cup is closer to 40p. That brings your yearly spend to roughly £100–£150, saving you in excess of £800. That's enough to cover several months of utility bills, or instead let it fund a cheeky weekend getaway.

Packed Lunch vs takeout

These days, grabbing lunch out can easily cost up to £10. If you do this four times a week, you're spending around £2,000 annually. Preparing lunches at home – think pasta salads, sarnies or leftovers – brings the cost down to about £2 per meal.

Walking or cycling vs. public transport

If you live in a city, commuting costs add up

quickly. A monthly travel card in London, for example, can cost over £160 - that's nearly £2,000 a year. If your commute is short enough, cycling or walking will not only cut that cost dramatically, it will also improve your health and general wellbeing.

Even if you invest in a decent bike (£400) and maintenance (£100 annually), you could still save £1,500+ per year, so get on your bike!

Branded vs own-label groceries

Supermarkets charge a premium for branded items but own-label alternatives are often just as good. Swapping branded cereal, pasta and cleaning products for supermarket versions can shave 20–30% off your grocery bill. For a household spending £80 a week, that's a saving of around £1,000 annually.

This is not just a financial swap, but a psychological one. Pay attention to your own feelings and responses when it comes to labels and try to remove the powerful association between brand and personal status.

SIM-only vs contract phone plans

Finally, many people stick with expensive phone contracts long after their handset is paid off. A typical contract might cost £50 a month, while a SIM-only plan with plenty of data can be as low as £10. You could even use that saving to purchase a refurbished or second-hand device!

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HOW TO STAY FIT

THIS FESTIVE SEASON



Whether it's mince pies, eggnog lattes or glasses of bubbly, it's very easy to overdo it around this time of year. It is for this reason that a time of joy can turn into one of remorse as the excess of calories and alcohol take their toll.

Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. With a little pre-planning and self-awareness, you can avoid those predictable pitfalls.

Question Christmas calories

As soon as those festive sarnies and coffee-shop beverages hit the high street, you might feel your resolve start to dissolve, but make sure you check the nutritional stats on that turkey gut buster or eggnog latte with extra cream, because you may be surprised.

It is certainly not unusual for such treats to contain at least half of your daily recommended calories, and often more. So while you may enjoy the odd item from the seasonal menu, it's important you don't indulge every day leading up to Christmas.

Think before you drink

After all your hard work this year, it's understandable you may want to let your hair down. However, work-related soirees can soon lead to regret as you inadvertently vomit in the staff toilets or attempt to re-enact the scene from Flashdance using your desk chair.

To ensure such malady doesn't befall you, do the

following: before going out, take time to eat. Protein is best, such as a couple of boiled eggs, nuts or even a small turkey salad to line your stomach and slow the absorption of alcohol.

Then, when at the event, aim to drink one glass of water for every glass of booze. Your ego will thank you.

Stay active

Slopping around in your PJs for an entire week may be tempting, but it isn't sensible. As work winds down, take time to indulge in self-care such as attending a fitness class, or go for a run or cardio in the form of gift shopping.

Then, on Christmas Day, insist on a family walk after lunch and balance all indulgence with a little activity.

Resist stress

Stress is inherently bad for you, and this season can be incredibly stressful. Be careful not to overcommit yourself to others and leave some alone time in your schedule for a bath or long walk.

Be aware of the pressures you may put upon yourself on creating the perfect Christmas Day and instead focus on family, gratitude and love.

As soon as your local yoga, Pilates or meditation centre re-opens, hit the mats and re-centre yourself. Before you know it, you'll be fighting fit for the year ahead!

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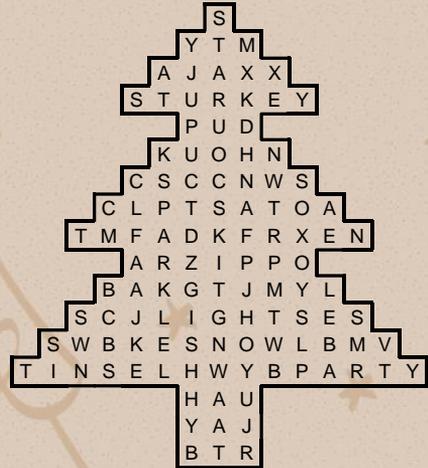


KIDS PAGE

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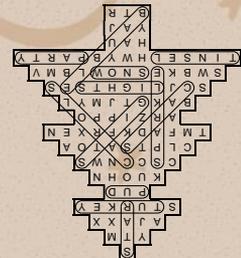
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FIRS (Friends in Retirement) is a charity where groups of people enjoy a range of activities. Yearly membership is £3 and each activity costs anything from £1.20 to £5. Contact us: www.friendsinretirement.co.uk; email firs.solihull@yahoo.co.uk; call: 07535 669 018

Donate your old glasses

Working with our sister Lions club in Chichester, your old pairs of used glasses are collected, sorted and distributed each month to eye clinics as far as Papa New Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Nepal. Don't worry if your spectacles are broken as they will be recycled for their scrap metal and the funds used to support eye-related projects both in the UK and overseas. Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club are being supported by these opticians in B93: Alan Tyler Opticians - Dorridge, Bannister Eyecare - Knowle, Vision Express - Knowle. Just drop your used glasses into them and we'll do the rest! Thank you!

Knowle Renew Café

Date: every Wednesday / Time: 2pm - 4pm /

Venue: Guild House, Knowle

All welcome, no booking required. A shared wellbeing space where you can enjoy a calm cuppa; spend time with a coffee (activities available or bring your own); have a chat with others; join an optional prayer & meditation session. For more information please visit: www.kpc.org.uk

Dorridge Striders and Strollers

Date: Thursdays fortnightly / Venue: Dorridge Village Hall

We meet for a sociable local walk. New members welcome. Contact Margaret on 01564 773856.

Knowle & Dorridge Round Table

Date: every other Tuesday

Knowle and Dorridge Round Table 812 was founded in 1963. We are an organisation run by and for Tablers as a hobby. We bring smiles to the local and wider community by helping and raising as much money as we can whilst having as much fun as we can. We're not just about fund raising. We meet every other Tuesday and indulge in various activities like sports, tours and lots of 'ings' such as gliding, hiking, biking, riding, shooting, kayaking, fishing, rallying, karting, off-roading, making, climbing, bowling, cooking or just enjoying the odd pint (or two). Please email to get in touch: kanddrtr@gmail.com

Rapport Social Group

Rapport is a, non profit making, social group for unattached adults age 50+ on their own and would like to meet new friends. We have a varied monthly programme of hosted events, including coffee mornings, lunches and evening meals, cinema, theatre and National Trust visits, day trips, walks and pub nights. For more information contact Jenny Brown on 07725 094123

Free Digital Training for older Solihull residents

Various times and Age UK Solihull are offering free digital training for older Solihull residents who would like to improve their digital skills. Group courses and one-to-one support is available, for both beginners and those who already have basic digital skills. The training can help with online shopping, video calling, searching for information, accessing online learning, downloading and using apps, and more. For more information, contact Ashlee on 07397 718 455 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions

Knowle Probus Club

Date: 3rd Tuesday of the month / Venue: The Solihull Masonic Centre, Warwick Road, Knowle
The Knowle Probus club is a luncheon Club for retired and semi-retired Professional or Businessmen living in or around Knowle. We meet for an excellent three course lunch followed by interesting and informative talks. If you would like to know more go to www.knowleprobus.org.uk or Phone Paul on 07713 94228.

Age UK Solihull Weekly Thursday Friends Lunch Club for Over 65s

Date: every Thursday / Time: 12pm - 2.30pm /

Venue: Red Lion Pub, High Street, Knowle

Run by Age UK Solihull staff and their volunteers. Come along for a hot meal, tea/coffee, social activities and great company. Cost is £8 (£6 for hot lunch and refreshments, £2 for raffle, bingo/entertainment). For more information please call 0121 704 7846 (Mon-Thu) or

email befriending@ageuksolihull.org.uk.

Dorridge Probus Club

Date: first Thursday of the month / Time: 12 noon / Venue: Copt Heath Golf Club, Warwick Road, Knowle
We meet for a friendly chat followed by lunch and a talk focussing on members interests and requests. Probus is a friendly, social meeting point for retired and semi retired men. For more details see our website www.probusclub.net/dorridge.

Drinking cans collection

Venue: Ale rooms, Knowle

Please support Ryan's work by dropping off your empty aluminium cans in the blue bin situated right outside the Ale Rooms, Knowle High Street. Ryan from "We Can" collects aluminium drinking cans, crushes them and trades them for money to help buy food to address food poverty locally.

Ladies Circle

Date: Wednesdays / Time: 11am / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane, Dorridge B93 8NY
Ladies living locally meet for a coffee & a chat. Every fourth week there will be singing, speakers or games.

Welcome Wednesdays

Date: last Wednesday of every month / Time: 2 - 3.30pm / Venue: Eascote Park Care Home and Retirement Village, Knowle Road, Barston B92 0JA
This is a chance meet new people, enjoy a hot drink and a slice of cake, and help raise funds for Age UK Solihull. Everyone is welcome, including carers, older people, and anyone who wants to break up the week and enjoy some company. We ask for a suggested donation of £3 per person to attend, which includes a hot drink and cake. Please let us know if you are planning on coming by calling us on 0121 704 7842 (leave a message) or email to: events@ageuksolihull.org.uk.

Knit & Natter

Date: 3rd Monday of the month / Time: 2- 4pm / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BN
Bring your own project. Just turn up no charge. Contact Dennise on 07899 914 228

Knowle and Dorridge Dementia Cafe

Date: every Tuesday / Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane
The café aims to provide a supportive and friendly environment for individuals living with dementia and their carers. It is designed to be a warm, welcoming space where attendees from the surrounding areas, they can enjoy a variety of activities, socialise, meet people in similar circumstances and find helpful information and resources. Sessions, including refreshments, are £3 per person and will be guided by experienced care professionals and dedicated volunteers.

South Solihull u3a

Date: 2nd Monday of each month / Time: 1:45 pm for 2:00 pm start / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BQ
We are a very friendly group of retired or

semi-retired people aiming to learn new skills and make new friends along the way. In addition to the monthly meeting when we usually have an invited speaker, we also have a wide range of over 20 activity groups meeting throughout each month. For further information please visit: www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk and contact our Membership Secretary, Richard: memberspssu3a@yahoo.com for an invitation to a 'taster meeting'. We look forward to meeting you!

Noël Saturday Artisan Market

Date: 6th, 7th December / Time: 10am - 5pm / Venue: Station Road, Knowle
Join us for a Christmas market to find some beautifully crafted gifts at our artisan market. Step into the magic of Christmas at the first-ever Noël Market – a festive artisan celebration bringing together the best of local creativity, seasonal treats, and holiday cheer. Wander through twinkling stalls brimming with: Handcrafted gifts from talented local makers; Artisan makers selling one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts.

Visit Knowle Christmas Bash

Date: 13th December / Time: from 7.30am / Venue: Greswolde Arms Hotel, Solihull, B93 0LL
Whether you're a small business, sole trader, local team (or just someone who loves a good Christmas party), you're invited to join us for a night of fun, food, and festive cheer. What to Expect: a hot & cold festive buffet, DJ & dancing 'til late, a warm, relaxed atmosphere with plenty of Christmas sparkle, great company – meet neighbours, local traders, and new friends. Perfect for: small teams looking for an easy end-of-year celebration, sole traders ready to party, local residents wanting to get into the Christmas spirit, anyone who loves a proper festive knees-up!

Knowle & Dorridge Lions Festive Walk

Date: 27th December / Time: from 9.30am / Venue: Dorridge Village Hall
The annual event will start at Dorridge Village Hall and there will be a choice of a three- or six-mile sign-posted route. All will pass through the surrounding countryside using country lanes and public footpaths. Young walkers will be able to join the Lions Safari Hunt on the three-mile walk, with a prize awarded for a correct entry. Dogs are welcome if kept on a lead and we request that all mess is disposed of carefully. There are one or two stiles where dogs may need to be lifted. There will be limited parking at the Dorridge Village Hall, Ye Olde Knowle Bowling Club and Dorridge Cricket Club but we would ask people to walk to the event where possible. Please download the form here: www.knowleanddorridgelions.com/FestiveWalk

While we do our best to ensure the accuracy of our listings, events may be postponed or cancelled without notice. Please confirm with the organiser before making any plans for attending events. For your news, events and group meetings to be featured free of charge on our What's On Page please email Ksenia: info@stonestrowpublications.co.uk

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HOROSCOPES

DECEMBER 2025

ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Mars, your planetary ruler, is making a brilliant aspect to your sign up until the 15th and with the Sun in fiery Sagittarius, some very positive opportunities will be up for grabs. Your intuition is heightened and you should start to feel that big changes are beginning to emerge. It's essential that you sweep out the old in order to create space for these exciting new prospects. The powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 20th ensures that your optimism is at its strongest.

TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Finances, investments and resources are in the spotlight this month as the radiant Sagittarian Sun, accompanied by dynamic and powerful Mars light up this area of your chart. Beneficial Jupiter in intuitive Cancer suggest that you can take your chances when the opportunities arise. Neptune and Saturn in Pisces, both indicate that new friendship groups could be about to emerge and offer some innovative ideas that will broaden your horizons.

GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Partnerships and relationships are highlighted during December as the Sagittarian Sun, energetic Mars and love planet Venus all emphasise this area of your chart. Communication should be good and that special someone could have a surprise in store for you. Expansive Jupiter in Cancer urges you to connect with your intuition and go with your gut feelings, this way 2026 will be a positive and successful year, offering some wonderful opportunities.

CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Health and wellbeing are high on your agenda this month as the Sagittarian sector of your chart is in the spotlight. Mars and Venus both offer encouragement as you become more open to completely new ways of keeping yourself fit and healthy. Work and group endeavours are also looking rather positive, as new adventures and socialising become more important. The Winter Solstice on the 21st could offer a relationship challenge, possibly indicating the direction of your life for 2026.

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

Events in December hinge around powerful contacts from the Sun, dynamic Mars and Venus all in optimistic Sagittarius. These powerful aspects highlight the love and romance sector of your chart and some long lasting decisions around a relationship may have to be made. Interesting opportunities present themselves around the Sagittarian new moon on the 20th, important breakthroughs are imminent, it's better to trust your own judgement and ignore well-meant advice.

VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

December highlights all things to do with your home and family, the Sagittarian Sun, Mars and Venus highlight the need for spending some quality time in these areas of your life. The new moon Sagittarius on the 20th stirs up your curiosity and your desire to experience something different and exciting, could a move to pastures new be on the cards for 2026? The love planet Venus arrives in Capricorn on the 25th, suggesting some serious reviews concerning a relationship may well be due.

LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

Venus, your planetary ruler, has just arrived in intuitive and open minded Sagittarius. The Sun and Mercury also shine brightly in this sign, favouring anything to do with communication and business matters. Expansive Jupiter is at the highpoint of your chart offering you some creative and innovative ways to boost your earning potential. Be sure to tune into the new moon in Sagittarius on the 20th, it's perfect for enhancing your new plans.

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Your financial sector is strongly illuminated by the Sun, Venus and dynamic Mars, one of your rulers. An unexpected opportunity to get a great deal closer to your current goal could transform your chances of success in 2026. Whatever projects need finishing should command your full attention now as you can then focus on a period of expansion, particularly in your creative endeavours. The powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 20th offers a brand new perspective.

SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

December is your birthday month, the radiant Sun has returned to your sign and is accompanied by energetic Mars and vibrant Venus. The new moon arriving in Sagittarius on the 20th indicates that December, and well into 2026 could turn out to be an extremely positive time for you. It's important that you take stock on how successful you have been over the past year. Staying true to your beliefs and values is vital for success.

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

Transformational Pluto is in your financial sector indicating that some new plans will soon be underway. The emphasis on the intuitive sign of Sagittarius also bodes well for future business success. Use this time to realise how many options you now have by not letting your recent doubts about the future undermine your confidence or make you overly cautious. Dynamic Mars arrives in your sign on the 15th suggesting a time of positive action.

AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

Abundant Jupiter in Cancer illuminates the work area of your chart, suggesting that exciting new opportunities will come your way this month. The radiant Sun, dynamic Mars and love planet Venus are all in the fiery sign of Sagittarius, stirring up the more adventurous sector of your chart. As you feel pulled in two different directions it's important to stay centred and find a good balance. Tune into the powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 20th, by using your intuition and inner guidance, you can't go wrong.

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

Your ruler, Neptune, is still hovering around the last degree of your sign, this probably makes you feel rather uneasy about what the New Year will bring. What matters now is standing back, staying centred and seeing the bigger picture as you make your plans for an exciting 2026. Expansive Jupiter is illuminating your love and romance sector, this bodes very well for an exciting festive period full of fun and laughter. The New moon of the 20th brings some welcome surprises.

Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach.

Take a refreshing new look at the year ahead by booking an astrological reading now. Consultations are available on Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone. Mobile: 07813 483549 | www.restyleyourlife.co.uk | christine_chalklin@hotmail.com

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SEASONAL COLDS

MYTH BUSTERS

From an apple a day to overloading on vitamin C, these are just some of the tidbits of advice one might be given on announcing they think they feel a cold creeping over the horizon. However, the human body is far from straightforward and, unsurprisingly, there are many factors that can boost or burden your immune system.

Myth: Vitamin C prevents colds

While vitamin C is important for immune function, research shows it doesn't prevent colds, though it may slightly shorten their duration if taken regularly.

Truth: A rich and varied diet is the key

A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains provides essential vitamins and minerals that support immune cell function. It's also important to mix it up with your fruits and veggies, which is why an apple a day is simply not going to cut it!

Myth: Exercise weakens your immunity

While excessive working out to exhaustion on a regular basis may leave your body vulnerable – particularly as chronic over exertion can leave you with consistently high levels of the stress hormone cortisol – moderate exercise is generally better for you than no exercise.

Truth: Exercise strengthens immunity

Moderate, regular activity (like brisk walking or cycling) improves circulation and helps immune cells move efficiently through the body. In other words, get off the sofa!

Myth: Echinacea is a proven immune booster

Evidence is mixed. Some studies suggest it may reduce cold symptoms, but it's not a guaranteed way to strengthen immunity.

Truth: Sleep is critical

When it comes to your immune system, there is no supplement which can replace rest. Adults who consistently get fewer than seven hours of sleep are more likely to catch colds compared to those who sleep eight or more. Sleep helps the body produce infection-fighting cytokines, so prioritise it.

Myth: Hand sanitiser boosts immunity

Overuse can actually harm beneficial skin bacteria. Proper handwashing with soap and water is more effective for overall health, and provided you do it at important times (e.g. after using the bathroom, before cooking and after touching pets etc.) you will be fine. In fact, obsessive handwashing and worrying can actually have the opposite effect on your health.

Truth: Some bacteria is really, really good for you

Good gut health is so important and probiotics with a diet high in fibre can support a healthy microbiome, which plays a key role in immune regulation. It can also help reduce bloating, fatigue and provides a first-defence against harmful bacteria. So, chow down on yogurt and fermented foods, while going easy on the less helpful caffeine and alcohol.



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HELP FIGHT LONELINESS

THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a wonderful time of year for some – seeing loved ones, buying presents, and overindulging in mince pies – but for many older people it can also be an unwelcome reminder of loneliness.

Arrange a visit

Being bombarded with images of family reunions and joyful occasions can be hard for people who may not have family living close or don't have a wide social circle, so everyone should pause during the festivities and consider the wellbeing of older people who live nearby. Arranging a Christmas visit to spend some time with elderly neighbours, friends, or family during the festive season is a wonderful way to bring some cheer to someone who'll appreciate it, but there are ground rules to consider before doing so.

Don't turn up unannounced

This could be discomfiting for the person if they're not expecting visitors, especially as the nights draw in. Ensure they actually want a visit – It's fair to say that some people are pretty happy in their own company, and it shouldn't be presumed that just because a person lives alone, they are lonely. A kind gesture could then be misconstrued as interfering or 'bothering', leading to embarrassment and potential bad feeling all round.

Take the time to call

Everyone is busy in the run-up to the festive season and routines can get stretched to breaking point with so much to organise. Even so, making time to get in touch with loved ones or friends who are further away can be as easy as picking up the phone in a quiet moment. Taking a few moments out of a busy day to check in with loved ones can also provide a chance to focus on something other than hectic plans.

Help with their shopping

Older relatives will usually enjoy buying family members something nice for Christmas, especially their grandchildren, but they may appreciate some assistance with sourcing suitable gifts. It's a myth that elderly people don't use the internet or know how to order items online; however, not everyone will, and they may be grateful for your input. Most people also like to have some extra groceries or drinks in over the festive season to ensure that visitors always get a chance to share a toast. Therefore, taking them to a supermarket or farm shop to stock up is another way that we can help loved ones prepare for the festivities.

Help with Christmas decorations

If your loved one isn't interested in Christmas, it might be that they don't have the energy to put decorations up or make extra preparations, so find it easier to say they would rather avoid it. Gently investigating if they would like some subtle decorations around their home may provoke an unexpected reaction, especially if it becomes an activity they can share with children in the family.

Offer to drive them to an event

Many places put up attractive Christmas displays in the weeks approaching the festive season, whether it's a garden centre, farm park, or department store. Taking a loved one to see displays and doing some early Christmas shopping at the same time can be a pleasant day out for everyone and help to stimulate some seasonal enthusiasm too. Getting involved in an event that other people of a similar age may be attending could also be a way for your loved one to meet others in their situation, meaning they get to enlarge their social circle too.

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CHRISTMAS CHARITY QUIZ

– Join us for our final quiz of 2025 in support of Knowle Donkey Sanctuary - Thursday 11th December from 6.30pm.

KNIT AND NATTER

– A warm welcome awaits every Wednesday from 11.30am to 1pm in the Piano Bar.

COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING

– Come a join us every Friday from 11am to 12.30pm in the Piano Bar.

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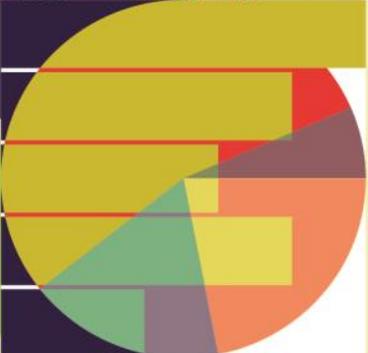
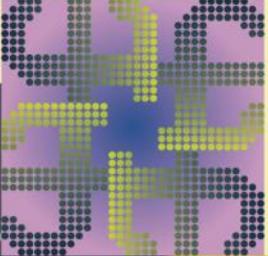
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