

Weekly Wellness

with Renee



#5



Mindfulness

As the lockdown lifts and people are allowed out of their homes this allows people to enjoy activities such as a walk on the beach, a Sunday drive or a lazy afternoon fishing, albeit at a safe physical distance.

Some of us may be realising that Level 3, though some restrictions are lifted, life isn't too much different from where we were in level 4, notwithstanding the biggest lines you've ever seen at McDonalds.

You may have had an expectation that life would be closer to "normal", this may not be the case for some time. Noticing when our expectations are getting in the way can be a helpful skill.

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focussing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

It generally includes three main components: attention, intention and attitude.

There are a lot of different ways to incorporate mindfulness in your life, as we all think and react differently to situations.

Have a look at Headspace to help support you through this challenging time. They offer a collection of meditation, sleep, and movement exercises in the Headspace app called "Weathering the Storm". It's a reminder that none of us are alone in this shared experience. Give your mind and body a break. [Headspace support website](#)



Move it or lose it

No matter how young or old, what our body capabilities are, bodies were made to move.

In reality, you don't need any fancy equipment at all — even when it comes to strength training. In fact, you might already have several items at home that you can substitute for weights.

It's time to take inventory of your kitchen pantry, cupboards, closets, and garage.

Cans of soup or beans.

If you're just starting out with adding a bit of resistance to your routine, soup cans (or any type of canned goods) are an ideal option if you're new to lifting weights. Depending on its size and contents, canned goods typically weigh about 500g. With one can in each hand, you can use them to do bicep curls, hammer curls, overhead shoulder presses, and even tricep kickbacks.

Jugs of water, milk, or juice.

Looking for something slightly heavier to lift? Jugs of liquid will do the trick. And you probably already know just how heavy they can be when you're carry your groceries from your car to your front door. 2 litres of milk is just over 1kg. If you have two, you can hold one in each hand and use them to add more resistance to lower body exercises, like squats and lunges.

Bags of apples or potatoes.

Now we're talking heavy lifting! Similar to using jugs of liquid, you can really kick things up a notch with big bags of produce. The more you have in a bag, the heavier it will be. These might be more appropriate to use for bicep curls and hammer curls when you're ready to move on from the soup cans, and you can definitely use them to add extra weight to your squats and lunges if you don't have any jugs of liquid lying around.

A weighted backpack.

Ever seen someone working out with a medicine ball or a kettle bell? You can create the same effect just by throwing a few heavy things in a bag or a backpack. Try large books, cans, containers, and anything else that isn't fragile. With straight arms, you can lift the bag or backpack out straight in front of you, up over your head, or out to each side for a good upper body workout. You can even combine these moves with lower body movements like squats and lunges.

A regular old chair.

Everyone has a chair at home that they can use to take their workouts up a notch. It just needs to be sturdy enough to support your weight. With your back facing the chair and two hands placed behind you on the seat, you can lift your body weight up and down to do tricep dips. The Bulgarian split squat is another popular move to do with a chair, which is basically a traditional lunge with the back leg elevated by placing the foot on the chair.

A hand towel.

Really? A hand towel? You bet. It may not be a heavy item, but it will do wonders for your core. While seated, lean back to engage your core. Holding each end of the towel in both hands straight out in front of you to add some weight, twist from side to side to work your obliques - similar to a Russian twist. If you can lift your legs and balance, you'll get an even better core workout from it!

Get a little creative with what you've already got.



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Eating Well

Take away stores are now open and it's great to support your local Fish and Chip shop that has lost business over this time, but don't forget we have been making every meal for one month now, and have most likely saved money and learned some new skills.

This meal is tasty and great on a cold night with a glass of wine. It was originally a meal I made for the family as my son is not a huge fan of meat and then became a regular dish. My husband and I both cook and try to out do each other - he has definitely surpassed me on this one.

Tips* add 50g butter at the end, it makes the risotto glossy and tastes great, your risotto should resemble the consistency of lava, flowing but not too running, you don't want gluey or sticky risotto. Good luck!

Tomato & Basil Risotto

Ingredients

- 7 cups well seasoned vegetable stock, or chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup minced onion
- Salt to taste
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can 400-450g tomatoes, diced
- Pinch of sugar
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 ½ cups Arborio rice
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ cup dry white or rosé wine, such as Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc
- 200g additional ripe tomatoes, finely diced (about ¾ cup)
- ½ cup slivered fresh basil
- ¼ to ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese



Taking care of business


For those working in an essential service, and for those who are working and now teaching from home, it is very likely that their sleep will be negatively impacted by the longer hours, changing shifts and high stress. While humans can temporarily operate on limited sleep, it is important to understand that reaction times, performance, communication skills and concentration can deteriorate very quickly - putting yourself, your co-workers and the community at risk.

Getting enough good quality sleep is what will help to keep your immune system strong, your resilience high, maintain a positive mental health state and your ability to function safely during the day (or shift).

Keep in touch - check in on your team and colleagues to see what else is going on at home - e.g. juggling child care or looking after a sick family member. Additional pressures may limit sleep opportunities.

Get enough sleep! Don't sacrifice sleep for another Netflix episode - sleep is always going to be one of your best weapons against COVID-19!

How to Make It

1. Put your stock or broth into a saucepan and bring it to a simmer over low heat, with a ladle nearby or in the pot. Make sure that it is well seasoned. 
2. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a wide, heavy skillet or a wide, heavy saucepan. Add the onion and a generous pinch of salt, and cook gently until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the rice and garlic and cook, stirring, until the grains of rice are separate and beginning to crackle. Stir in the grated tomatoes, sugar, thyme, and salt to taste and cook, stirring often, until the tomatoes have cooked down slightly and coat the rice, 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Add the wine and stir until it has evaporated and been absorbed by the rice. Begin adding the simmering stock, a couple of ladlefuls (about 1/2 cup) at a time. The stock should just cover the rice, and should be bubbling, not too slowly but not too quickly. Cook, stirring often, until it is just about absorbed. Add another ladleful or two of the stock and continue to cook in this fashion, adding more stock and stirring when the rice is almost dry. You do not have to stir constantly, but stir often and when you do, stir vigorously. When the rice is just tender all the way through but still chewy (al dente), in 20 to 25 minutes, it is done. Taste now and adjust seasoning.
4. Add another ladleful of stock to the rice. Stir in the additional finely diced tomatoes, basil and Parmesan and remove from the heat. The mixture should be creamy (add more stock if it isn't). Serve right away in wide soup bowls or on plates, spreading the risotto in a thin layer rather than a mound.

Stay safe team & keep yourselves well...

Please reach out if you need and remember we are in this together.