

AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

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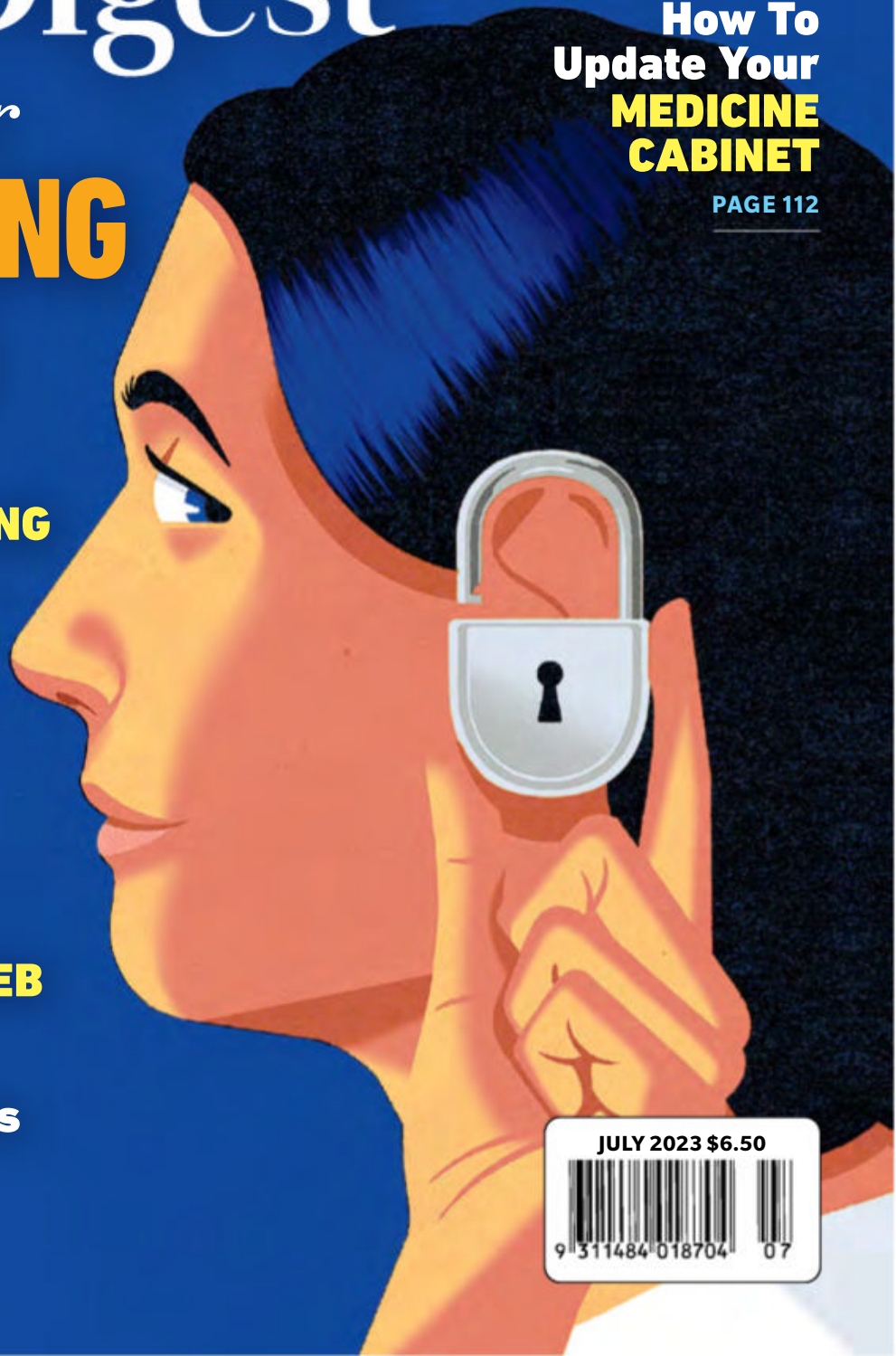
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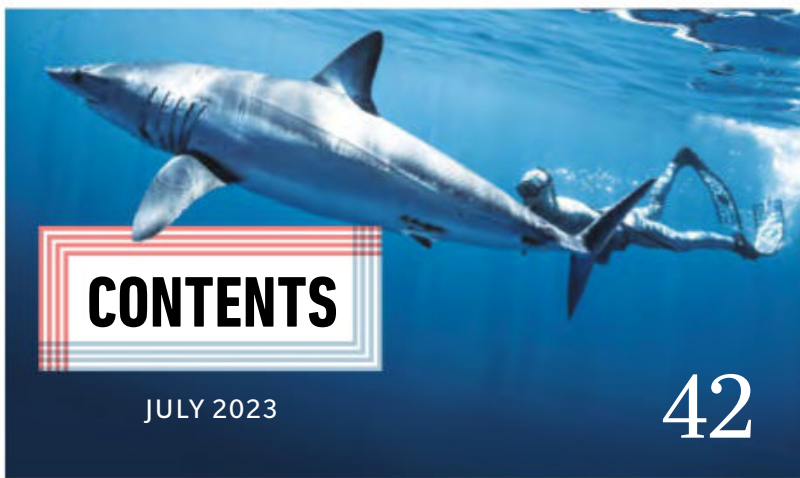
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LETTERS

Reader's Comments And Opinions

Vegetarian Gladiators

The story on Kangaroos ('When Kangaroos Attack', May) is fascinating, incisive and reveals their confrontationist behavioural patterns. Though kangaroos are placid grazing animals, they can be aggressive. Red kangaroos could earn martial arts belts with their bone-shattering kicks, said to deliver 350 kilograms of force. Kangaroos are also stronger than humans, having a punch force of about



125 kilograms. Kangaroos are 'vegetarian gladiators' and can grapple forcefully with their forearms.

RIFAQUAT ALI

Meeting Pope Francis

The interview with the Pope is unique – it is an insight into the 'private' thinking of the Pope (May). I was present at the great papal audience in Rome and was thus allowed to shake the pope's hand personally. He squeezed it firmly and I felt his courage pass over to me. I don't need miracle stories; I rejoice

in the moment when he looked at me. I was annoyed afterwards that I was speechless at that moment. But should I burden him with my thoughts? It is enough: we have met each other.

MATTHIAS DOLL

The Power Of Pets

'The Surprising Benefits of Pets' (April) balanced the benefits with ►

Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 7 for how to join the discussion.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Good And The Evil

THE DARK WEB, the internet's 'evil twin', is portrayed as a place to be feared and avoided. In reality, the dark web is a tiny portion of the internet and you need special software to gain access. None of us is going to accidentally slide into it while enjoying a peaceful evening of online surfing. In 'Enter The Dark Web' (page 78) author Ashley Kalagian Blunt details her venture into this unknown region of the web after her wallet was stolen. Her experience is a compelling story.

This month, Rod Stewart shares a story or two about life on the rock 'n' roll road (page 28), and we meet marine biologist Dr Riley Elliott whose fight to defend sharks is a lifelong commitment ('Dr Elliott's Very Polite Predators', page 42).

We also take a close look at the research guiding hearing loss reversal (page 56) and learn why talking with strangers can be good for our wellbeing (page 66).

These and many more fascinating reads in the July 2023 issue.

Happy reading,



LOUISE WATERSON
Editor-in-Chief



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READER'S DIGEST

- the risks and challenges, such as pets can bring us into contact with dangerous bacteria and that caring for them can be expensive and time-consuming. The article captured the special bond that exists between pets and their owners. **HIMANSHU GOEL**

Sense Of Scents

When COVID-19 was over, I visited relatives. I brought some high-end perfumes for my aunt who had recently recovered from the virus but she wasn't able to smell them ('Why It's Important To Protect Our Sense Of Smell', May). This was terrifying for her and we realised that we take our sense of smell for granted.

I will keep my nose busy, training my sense of smell to get stronger by giving it a workout. **SANA SHOAI**

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo

Bert, have you been using that cheep deodorant, again?

RUTH KENNEDY-MILLER

This tweet doesn't have any followers.

ELIZABETH STEVENSON

Welcome to your first Air'obics Class.

MERRAN TOONE

I won't budge regarding my position.

CHRIS PARKER

Something I twittered?

TANIA MURRAY

Congratulations to this month's winner, Elizabeth Stevenson.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, email editor@readersdigest.com.au or see details on page 7.

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Managing Editor Zoë Meunier
Chief Subeditor Melanie Egan
Art Director Hugh Hanson
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DIGITAL

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Sheron White
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Email sheron.white@readersdigest.com.au

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MY STORY

Trial By Fire

With a little First Nations knowledge, our tinderbox transformed into paradise

BY Frances Rankin



We bought a bush block near Braidwood, New South Wales, in the 1970s after good rain. It hadn't been touched for years and we loved it. It was a huge tangle of fallen trees and thick undergrowth. Tea trees and long grass hung over the creek that ran through the property. We thought it was pristine bush and for our five children it was heaven. They built cubby houses, climbed trees and built dams in the creek. However, as the 1982 drought began to bite, we became increasingly worried. The place was a powder keg waiting for a spark. A thick layer of dried leaves crackled underfoot and the creek became a

series of small pools. The long strips of bark hanging from the ribbon gums rattled in the westerly wind.

I talked to a dear friend, Johnny, an Aboriginal man who used to help me in the garden and knew more about the bush than we would ever know. He told me there was nothing to do now except hope that there was no fire. He told me that the whole place needed to be burnt to reduce fuel loads in a practice called cool burning, where the fire burns at a much lower heat intensity than a wildfire. He would tell me when it was the right time.

Just when the situation became critical it began to rain and we heaved a sigh of relief. We had

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



escaped this time, but the fear remained.

The following winter, after some good rain, he told us to clear and burn along the fences and around the yards and house. It took us weeks. We mowed and raked and burned the numerous little heaps. Some of our more adventurous friends came out to lend a hand. I suspect it was the barbecues afterwards that were

Frances, a retired teacher and her husband, Roger, live in Canberra. She cherishes her memories of her time in Braidwood and her friends in the Aboriginal community that have passed. The driving passions of her life have been faith, family, the Reconciliation movement and Greening Australia.

the attraction. We had a great time cooking sausages and toasting marshmallows. The visiting kids all claimed it was the best fun ever.

Finally, the wide verge along the road at the front of the property was dutifully scraped clear and burned. Even though fire regulations were more relaxed at that time, we were told very firmly that we had no right to burn public land. Fortunately, it was already done.

In mid-winter 1984, after another heavy rain fall, Johnny told me the time had come. I laughed. There were puddles of water everywhere that froze at night. I really did not think it could possibly burn, but I did what I was told. He explained the plan in precise detail.

About four in the afternoon, we laid a trail of fire across the eastern end of the property. For half an hour it sat there sullenly and did nothing. Then an easterly wind picked up and the fire took off. We were terrified. The bark on the ribbon gums went up like Roman candles and the whole place became ablaze. As the sun set, the wind died down and so did the fire.

Johnny's timing was impeccable.

As the midnight frost set in, only a few wisps of smoke remained. In the morning we looked around at the blackened landscape and wondered what on earth we had done. For the rest of the winter, it looked utterly miserable.

It wasn't until mid-spring that we understood. The ribbon gums, with their clean shiny trunks, were crowned with clouds of fragrant blossoms and the grass was lush and green. The shady little dells were filled with ground orchids and Bulbine lilies of all shapes and colours. You couldn't walk without stepping on them. The deep pools in the creek were crystal clear and fringed by ferns and wild violets. The shaggy mess of tea tree was now a manicured hedge full of the twitters of tiny finches. We had never seen the bush so beautiful. My children still remember the beauty of that spring. As an added bonus, we could now walk safely everywhere and not fall over or accidentally step on a snake. That beauty lasted until the next drought.

Summer 1985 was vicious. However our preparations paid off. A big fire went through the district but when it reached our fence, it did not enter our property. In hindsight it would have been easier to do what our neighbours suggested, ie bulldoze the place, instead of the painstaking cool burn, but we would have missed the most beautiful experience of our lives – and the country would have missed being top-dressed with pot ash. The

delicate soil would have been blown to the four winds.

Many years later, in 2003, we watched in horror as a huge wave of fire roared over the mountains behind Canberra and devoured whole suburbs. My husband's brother lost everything. Even 20 years later the land has not really recovered from the furnace that, in places, burnt the seeds right out of the soil.

I cried for my old friend, Johnny, now long gone, and I heard his

SHADY DELLS WERE FILLED WITH GROUND ORCHIDS AND COLOURFUL LILIES

gentle voice warning that we were not obeying the old ways. He had told me many years before the Canberra fire what would happen, but how can you convince educated people that the wisdom of an old

man with no qualifications is the right path?

The beautiful bush capital of which we were so proud was a death trap. I wondered why it had taken 200 years of disasters for us to begin to ask our First Nations friends how to care for this ancient and unique country and learn to be at peace with it.

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SMART ANIMALS

Some animals look out for others – and some for themselves



A Great Dane And Little Chicks

PETER BROWN

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, we had a Great Dane named Amber, as well as five bantam hens and – at times – baby chicks. Amber was fascinated with the chicks and would head out each morning to check on them. One summer morning she came back inside quite quickly and my wife asked her, “What have you been doing?”

Amber opened her mouth and sitting on her tongue was one of the chicks covered in slobber. It must have got out from their backyard

enclosure. My wife carefully took the chick out of Amber’s mouth, dried it off and then took it back to the enclosure. Amber was told what a good dog she was and every day she would go to check if all was well.

Often Amber would lay down outside the enclosure with her nose against wire fence. The chicks would sit on the inside, tiny beaks to nose. This went on for years, our old friend was such a gentle giant.

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 7 for details on how to contribute.

Dog's Breakfast

EMILY TOOHER

Our dog Bree is a Staffy cross, she behaves more like a cat than a dog and is not driven by food. She will very happily gobble up her dinner, regardless of what is being offered, but does not hang around us waiting for scraps to fall her way. That is, of course, unless I am making toast for my breakfast. As soon as she catches a whiff of bread toasting she makes her way to the kitchen and sits very straight and tall at my feet as though to say "Look at what a good girl I am". I started rewarding her by breaking off a little bit of crust and feeding it to her before applying my chosen spread.

This became our 'thing' - if I was having toast she'd join me for breakfast. She seemed satisfied and I didn't think a little crust would spoil her. Unfortunately, the day came when, distracted, I fed her a piece of toast with a generous spread of butter and raspberry jam. Clearly, she thought it was delicious as she now turns her nose up at dry crusts and will only eat toast topped with a tasty spread!

Merry-Go-Round Cockatoo

JAN KELLAHAN

My husband, Ross, and I wake most mornings to the wonderful sound of birdsong from the various birds that live in our area. Rosellas, crows,



sulphur-crested cockatoos and doves make up some of our regular bird population.

One cold winter's day last year, we heard the squawking of a group of cockatoos. As we watched, one of them landed on a whirlybird exhaust fan on our neighbour's roof. We watched fascinated, from our dining table, as it rode round and round clearly enjoying the warmth of the rising air coming from the house beneath.

After several minutes on this merry-go-round it took off, no doubt feeling warmer for his visit. We too felt warmer just from watching the show.

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Take the Kitty Cat Quiz!

Score one point for each correct answer.



1 A cat-lover is known as a:

- A: Ailurophile
- B: Astrophile
- C: Cynophile



2 Cats licking and cleaning each other is called:

- A: Multigrooming
- B: Allogrooming
- C: Duogrooming



3 Purring is not unique to cats. Which other animals also purr?

- A: Guinea pigs and rabbits
- B: Raccoons and badgers
- C: All of the above



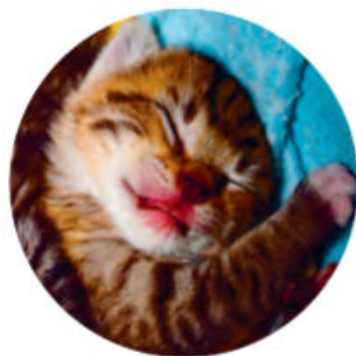
4 A microchip is as big as:

- A: A small button
- B: A five-cent piece
- C: A grain of rice



5 As well as grooming, the rough surface of a cat's tongue helps to:

- A: Cool down and regulate their body temperature
- B: Clean meat from bones
- C: Both of the above



6 All cats are born with what colour eyes?

- A: Blue
- B: Brown
- C: Amber

0-2 Need Purr-actise | 3-4 Furbulous | 5-6 Ameowzing!

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Answers: 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-C, 5-C, 6-A

PETS CORNER



What Do Cats **DREAM ABOUT?**

BY *Madeline Wahl*

You've probably seen your cat curled up taking a nap in patches of sunlight at all hours of the day. Cats spend a lot of their time sleeping - on average 12 to 15 hours - and it's not because they're lazy. We know that dogs dream, but do cats dream, too? And what kinds of things would cats dream about, anyway?

DO CATS DREAM? "Research has shown that all mammals dream. During sleep, the mammalian brain needs to organise and arrange images from the day," says Dr Katy Nelson, a veterinarian. "Scientists have concluded through studying rats' brains that the level of brain activity while doing puzzles or navigating mazes is similar to the

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

activity level measured during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep – the deepest level of sleep – proving that they do dream.”

WHY DO ANIMALS SLEEP?

Understanding the process of sleep helps to explain dreaming. Sleep is a state of reduced consciousness characterised by reduced sensory and voluntary muscular activity, says Dr Nelson. “Sleep aids growth and the repair of body systems. During sleep, the brain seems to process information learned during the day, as well.”

DO CATS DREAM SIMILARLY TO HUMANS? You’ve probably woken up on numerous occasions remembering your dream and wondering what it meant. Does that mean cats have similar experiences? “During non-REM sleep, the brain takes images seen throughout the day and rearranges them in dreams to better process and understand what was seen. A similar scenario is how film editors take different video clips and arrange them to create a storyline,” says Dr Nelson.

“When humans and pets actually ‘watch’ the edited footage is during REM sleep when the body’s serotonin system slows down.”

While serotonin’s primary job is to control large muscle groups, which is why we ‘go limp’ during REM sleep, we can still have

eyelids fluttering, feet moving or facial twitching, because those are considered fine motor movements, she says.

WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

During REM, the sleeper’s eyes move rapidly and the brain’s activity is similar to an awake state, says Dr Nelson. This is when dreaming occurs. “Young animals spend more time in REM than older animals possibly due to the large amount of new information that they encounter each day and the need to process it all.”

WHAT DO CATS DREAM ABOUT?

“Well, since we’re unable to ask them what they dream about, we have to deduce that, similar to us, they dream about their day,” she says. “If they went outside and saw a bird and another kitty friend, those images are likely what is playing through their mind during sleep.”

DO CATS HAVE NIGHTMARES?

Nightmares are suspected to be the way that our minds determine the best course of action in case that dream experience occurs during waking hours, says Dr Nelson. “Our cats aren’t likely to dream of monsters or missing a final exam like we do, but who knows... maybe they dream of oversized mice or seeing the bottom of their food bowl.”

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MOST RECENT REVIEWS

"The TV Voice Pro Soundbar makes the dialogue "pop out" I no longer use the captions, even for watching movies, it's fantastic." – JULIETTE, SA

"The quality of the new soundbar is extremely good. I can now take out my hearing aids and listen to any program with my natural hearing, without having to increase the volume and I can hear everything that is being said. Excellent product." – DANNY, SA

"We had a top of the range commercial soundbar and were missing a lot. The TV Voice Pro changed that immediately. Very simple to set up. Thank you, we are delighted to recommend this product." – RON, VIC

"Now I can hear what they are saying on the TV ... and I was able to set it up myself whereas I usually need help from my grandchildren for anything electronic." – PAM, NSW

"My hearing is challenged due to exposure to loud tractor noise in a farming context when I was a teenager. I have quite good hearing aids but still struggle when there is background sound during a conversation. The Voice pro has made a very big difference by apparently reducing the relative volume of background sound. It is well worth the investment." – MIKE, QLD

"This TV dialogue specific soundbar is a revelation for my industrial deafness problem. Can now hear clearly what is being said, even with background music. Great product." – ROBERT, NSW

"I love my new soundbar now I can hear every word that is said on TV. Movies are great to watch now." – SANDRA, SA

"I can recommend the soundbar to anyone with hearing difficulties. We always had to have the TV so loud for my husband, now we can all enjoy the audio in comfort." – CHRISTINE, NSW

Frustrated television listeners are now putting their hearing aids to the side for TV viewing, with the release of Australia's first TV hearing-aid soundbar speaker by TV Voice Pro. The soundbar automatically clarifies hard-to-hear TV speech and dialogue, with no need for the use of a traditional hearing aid, or even the need for a hearing test.

Hearing specialist Don Hudson says up to 70% of hearing aid wearers, including those with sets of hearing aids worth thousands of dollars, still report significant difficulty hearing TV dialogue, and are regularly missing out on much of their favourite TV programs, or attempting to solve the problem by increasing the TV volume to loud levels, to the detriment of others in the home.

Unlike traditional hearing aids, the *TV Voice Pro Soundbar* accesses the TV audio directly, and automatically reconfigures the TV audio to a speech enhanced sound quality, suitable for those with mild to severe hearing loss. The *TV*

Voice Pro Soundbar then works in a reverse manner to regular TV speakers and soundbars. Don Hudson says,

"While regular TV speakers and soundbars emphasise TV surround sound effects, which often mask out the TV dialogue for the listener, the *TV Voice Pro Soundbar* instead prioritises dialogue for all TV audio and solves this issue."

Users of the *TV Voice Pro Soundbar* can select from three speech clarifying sound settings via the soundbar remote control, and have further access to clarify TV dialogue to suit their hearing needs if they wish, by simply increasing or decreasing the treble or bass. The soundbar will automatically remember the user's preference for TV sound clarity.

The *TV Voice Pro Soundbar* has been designed as a sleek 80cm-long audio speaker which can sit below your TV on any hard surface, or be mounted. What's truly exceptional is that customers can even order the new *TV Voice Pro*



"I can now take the text off the screen and hear the words which are being spoken." – ALAN, QLD

"We noticed a huge difference from the minute we plugged it in. The clarity of the dialogue is amazing." – LEE, NSW

"I have virtually no hearing in my left ear and poor in my right ear. Subtitles were an absolute must. Even with hearing aids. The TV Voice Pro has changed all that and I can now effectively hear clearly most programs with my normal hearing aids." – JOHN, SA

"We have tried, Wi-Fi, Blue Tooth, Extra Speakers, Headphones Etc, Etc, and still couldn't hear what the people were saying on the TV. BUT WE CAN NOW!" – MICHAEL, QLD

"Excellent clarity of speech with reduced background noise and music. It looks good under my TV." – MONICA, NSW

"I am 85 years old with mild hearing loss. I have been having difficulty hearing the dialogue on both TV programs and movies where the background music often drowns it out. I was amazed when I installed my soundbar and adjusted it to my circumstances how clearly I could hear the dialogue. It has certainly made my TV viewing much more enjoyable. I was so impressed that I immediately ordered another for my bedroom TV. I would also like to add that the service was very efficient with the Soundbar arriving just a few days after ordering and the lady who took the order was very helpful and knowledgeable regarding all my questions about the product." – ROD, NSW

"The soundbar is as good as advertised. The clarity is amazing and has made a huge difference to the TV sound for my husband." – MELINDA, QLD

"A breeze to connect. Instant sound clarity and I have been able to reduce the volume level way down. Very happy with the results." – RUSS, ACT

Soundbar as a package with the already well-known TV Voice Pro wireless earphones. Hearing specialist Don Hudson says,

"A really unique benefit is that the new TV Voice Pro Soundbar can operate in unison with any of the TV Voice Pro wireless earphone options. This offers TV listeners the best of both worlds, allowing them to either listen to TV in private with lightweight earphones that clarify TV dialogue, or instead with the soundbar turned on when others are in the room. We have designed the products so that they can be used in unison on the same TV, or alternatively, many of our customers choose to use the TV Voice Pro Soundbar in their main living room for TV listening, and the TV Voice Pro wireless earphones on a separate TV in the household, such as in the bedroom. This guarantees they will hear TV speech and dialogue clearly no matter which TV they are using."

The TV Voice Pro Soundbar and the TV Voice Pro wireless earphones are simple to use and can be connected to any TV in under 2 minutes.

The soundbar can be purchased on its own for \$549, or as a package with a set of TV Voice Pro wireless earphones for \$879. All TV Voice Pro products are guaranteed to connect to any TV, new or old.

TV Voice Pro products come with a 30-day money back guarantee and free express delivery anywhere in Australia. To order call 1300 300 446 or order online at www.TvVoicePro.com.au





Tired Of Feeling Tired?

Sometimes we sleep well but still feel groggy. Some of the possible causes might surprise you

BY Susannah Hickling



IRON DEFICIENCY

A lack of this important mineral can leave you devoid of energy. You might get other symptoms too, such as shortness of breath and palpitations. Iron deficiency can be the result of bleeding in the stomach or intestines due to taking anti-inflammatories, such as ibuprofen or aspirin, from piles or stomach ulcers. A blood test can reveal if iron deficiency anaemia is behind your fatigue. Not treating it can put you more at risk of heart problems and infections.

MENTAL HEALTH

Stress, anxiety, depression and traumatic events like bereavement or broken relationships can make people feel physically drained. See your doctor if the problem persists.

HYPOTHYROIDISM

Exhaustion is the main symptom of an underactive thyroid gland. If a thyroid function test shows this to be your problem, you'll need to take daily levothyroxine tablets to replace the hormone thyroxine that

you're missing. Heart disease is a possible complication of untreated hypothyroidism.

SLEEPING TOO MUCH

It's counterintuitive, but spending too long in bed can make you tired. In fact, any deviation from your usual sleep routine can affect you. More than nine hours' kip is too much, while fewer than six can also be harmful to health. Find out what works best for you and stick to it. Also try to go to bed and get up at the same times every day.

BEING OVER- OR UNDERWEIGHT

Your body has to work harder to carry out normal tasks if you're overweight or obese. On the other hand, when you're underweight, you might have poor muscle strength, which means you'll tire much faster.

SLEEP APNOEA

If you're getting lots of sleep but still feel wiped out the next day, you could have sleep apnoea, a condition which causes you to stop breathing momentarily. It can make you snore and gasp for breath, but you might be unaware you have it. A partner should be

able to tell you and sometimes a sore throat in the morning is a tell-tale clue. Sleep apnoea puts you at higher risk of heart attack, stroke and dementia, so it's important to see your doctor if you suspect it.

LONG COVID

If you've felt run down for a while after having a run-in with coronavirus, you might have long COVID. Speak to your doctor about a possible referral to a post-COVID clinic.

**TRY STICKING
TO A ROUTINE.
MORE THAN NINE
HOURS SLEEP
AND FEWER
THAN SIX HOURS
CAN BE HARMFUL
TO HEALTH**

DIABETES

Feeling very tired all the time is a symptom of diabetes. Being thirsty and urinating more frequently are other clues. If you have these symptoms, talk to your doctor about being tested.

CLOCKS GOING FORWARD

That transition when the clocks go back in autumn and then leap forwards in spring can throw our body clocks out, making us feel jetlagged. Research has even shown an association between the change to summer time and heart attacks and increases in road accidents.

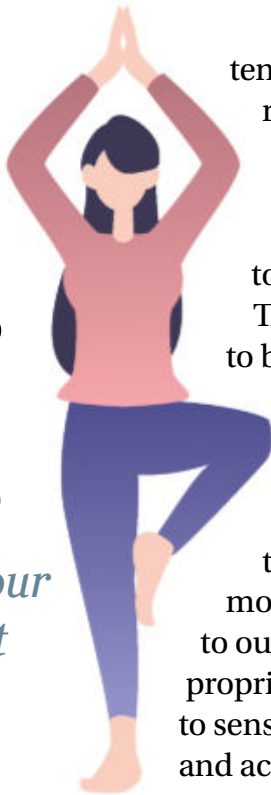
If you're badly affected, consider building up to the change by going to bed an hour earlier for a few days before.



Redress The Balance

Being steady on your feet is important as you age

BY Susannah Hickling



ten years. Falls could be one reason why, but that's unlikely to be the whole story.

Individuals who were in worse health were more likely to fail the ten-second test.

There are three components to balance. The first is the visual system, which shows us whether we're tilting. Then the vestibular system in the inner ear sends information to our brain about the motion of our head in relation to our surroundings. Thirdly, proprioception is our body's ability to sense its location, movement and actions.

People with ear problems that cause dizziness, or with joint problems or muscle weakness are more likely to have balance issues. If you suffer from dizziness, see your GP to find out the reason. But there's a lot you can do yourself to improve physical strength.

If you exercise, you're ahead of the game. One study found that a group that did 32 weeks of resistance training improved their ability to stand on one foot by 25 per cent and another group that did 32 weeks of aerobic exercise increased theirs by 31 per cent.

Otherwise, improve your balance by walking, cycling or climbing stairs or by doing yoga, pilates or tai chi. Or simply practise balancing on one leg – hold onto a chair to begin with, if necessary.

Feeling a bit less stable than before? Maybe you find yourself holding on to handrails more when going down steps? As we get older, our balance gets worse. But how much does it matter?

A lot, it turns out. If your balance isn't great, you're more likely to fall. That can have disastrous consequences as we age, when bones are often less dense. Research has also shown that balance is crucial for life expectancy. A study of 1702 people aged 51 to 75 published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* last year found that participants who couldn't stand on one leg for ten seconds were nearly twice as likely to die in the next

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WORLD OF MEDICINE

SLEEP INFLUENCES GENEROSITY

Whether or not someone chooses to help others partly depends on how well-rested they are, concludes a report from the University of California, Berkeley. It describes a recent study that analysed brain images from 24 volunteers after eight hours of sleep and after staying up all night. Brain areas involved with trying to understand what others might be feeling or needing were less active when the subjects were tired.

In another study from the same report, participants felt more willing to perform kind actions after a decent night's sleep. A third study looked at charitable donations throughout the United States and noted that they temporarily dropped by ten per cent each spring in places that observed daylight saving time, where people lose an hour of sleep on the night the clocks move ahead.

These results suggest that insufficient sleep makes us less compassionate. In developed countries, more than half of adults don't get enough

sleep, but we should value adequate sleep, argue the co-authors, who say it benefits everyone around us.

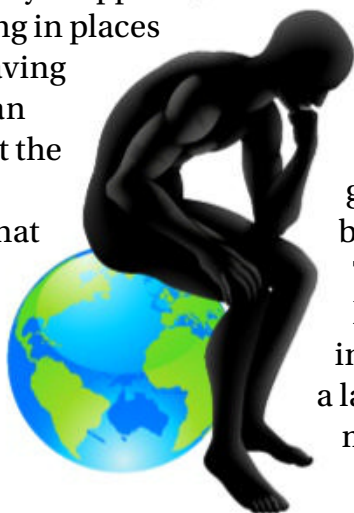
WHY THINKING HARD IS EXHAUSTING

If you've ever felt tapped out after concentrating for hours, that's because the effort is making a molecule called glutamate build up in your prefrontal cortex. When glutamate levels are too high, they can disrupt brain function, causing fatigue and 'lazy' decision making that prioritises easy indulgences over long-term gains.

Scientists at the Paris Brain Institute recently figured this out by enrolling volunteers to work for more than six hours on either a

cognitively demanding task or a relatively easy one. The group with the more taxing assignment accumulated more glutamate, as revealed by brain spectroscopy.

They were also more likely to choose a smaller, immediate cash reward over a larger one that would come months later.





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Rod Stewart

**“WHY I DON’T FEEL
AWKWARD SINGING
ABOUT SEX”**

*The singer, 78, who recently toured
Australia and New Zealand, hasn’t lost
his cheeky sense of humour*

BY *Jonathan Dean*

Rod Stewart is at home in his Essex mansion, beaming in a cardigan and a Celtic Football Club necklace. His spiky hair is as you would expect and takes just moments to perfect. Apply product, dry upside down, add wax. I spot some model trains and ask if they are part of his famous replica of a 1940s US city.

“Oh, that’s over yonder,” he says in full rasp, pointing to another part of his home. I call it a train set, and he interrupts. “I get offended if you call it a train set. It’s a scale model railroad, if you please.” But it started as a train set? “Yes,” he says, smiling. He began collecting as a boy in the 1950s. “I wanted a station,” he says. “But Dad bought me a guitar.” And here we are.

With a full calendar of tours in 2023, including concerts in Australia and New Zealand earlier this year, Rod plays all the hits you would want to hear from his years with Faces and his epic solo career.

Are there any old songs that make him feel... “Awkward?” Exactly. “No. I went through a brief period of thinking I’m not going to sing ‘Hot Legs’, because it is a sex song, but what do I finish with? ‘Hot Legs’. And people love it. There is nothing I feel uncomfortable singing.”

I believe him – although few 78 year olds would dare to sing about cavorting with a schoolgirl and, maybe, her mother. His latest album even has the line “The sex was immense”. But this is who Stewart is: an entertainer who is as open and authentic as his voice is distinctive.

His charm is a superpower that means, unlike some of his peers, if you google “Rod Stewart cancelled” it is simply a list of gigs postponed due to COVID.

Have his tours calmed down since the days when he lost count of how many women he had slept with? “They’re not as wild as they were,” he says. “In the old days, it was all

**STEWART
IS AS OPEN
AND AUTHENTIC
AS HIS VOICE IS
DISTINCTIVE**

sleeping around and drinking, but you can’t carry on like that. I haven’t joined the pipe-and-slippers club yet, but I have to look after my voice.”

How does he keep fit enough to perform? “I work out three times a week. I do underwater swimming to improve my breath control. You know who told me about that? Frank Sinatra.”

There is not a generation that does not love Stewart. I am in my 40s and his music soundtracked my childhood car trips. His first single came out when my mum was 11. I ask if his audiences have got any younger. “We just did three months in the US and it was younger than I’ve ever seen,”



**Above: Rod Stewart performs at Ruoff Music Centre in Indiana, US.
Below: Queen Elizabeth II greets Penny Lancaster and Rod Stewart
during a reception in 2013**





Above left: Rod in 1964. Above right: An avid soccer fan, Stewart during a Scottish Premiership match at Celtic Park in Glasgow, Scotland

he says. “Unless the promoter pushed all the young girls down the front to keep me happy.” And, given his wealth, he must really want to tour – surely he has no need to? “Well, I’ve got eight children.”

The man is a blast. Irreverence from a bygone age mixed with a shot of empathy. For someone worth £300 million (A\$559 million), he knows how hard it is for other people now. “Nobody’s got the money,” he says with a sigh. “Usually my tours are sold out, but one in Aberdeen has nearly 1000 tickets for sale. I shouldn’t admit it, but I’ve no ego.”

Often, Stewart comes across as a family man – he talks sweetly about his kids being into The Temptations

– with a lot of time on his hands, who wants to put that time to good use. First there were the potholes. In March last year, he spent a couple of hours filling holes in the road near his house in Harlow that made it hard for his Ferrari to pass. He also saw an ambulance stuck. “So I bought the sand,” he says. “Did it myself.” It got the press he wanted – the road is now retarmacked.

Then he rented a home for a family of seven refugee Ukrainians and gave two of them jobs. A lot of his charity work goes under the radar, but sometimes he wants to lead by example. “I’m a knight,” he explains. Sir Rod arose in 2016. “They give you a knighthood because of what

PHOTOS: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Above left: With Penny Lancaster at the Sun's Who Cares Wins Awards, 2021.

Above right: Playing in a charity soccer match – England vs Scotland – in 1999

you have done, but I don't just want to rest. I thought if I make this public, other people might do the same thing. Mick Jagger maybe," he adds with a mischievous smile.

Stewart remains a man visibly excited by life, even though times can be hard. His brother Don died last September, aged 94, a few days before the Queen, who the singer met many times ("she liked 'Sailing'"). After appearing on a reality show, his wife Penny Lancaster, 52, joined the City of London Police as a volunteer special constable and was on duty during the monarch's funeral. "She burst into tears," Stewart says. "She was within touching distance of the coffin."

Stewart is never more animated than when enthusing about his wife's new job – he worries when she is out on the beat and she texts him when she is running late. "Darling, go to bed," she says.

Stewart's inevitable biopic will be a riot. "I keep getting offers," he complains. "But I'll be the last to do it – even Robbie Williams has one now." Will he let all the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll hang out? "Yeah, I have no skeletons in the closet, as far as I know. I just wish someone would make one before I kick the bucket." What will he call it? They tend to name it after a song – so how about 'Some Guys Have All the Luck'?

"That would be lovely."



ARE WE FACING A

LABELLING

EPIDEMIC?

Last year the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5)* topped the UK's *Sunday Times* bestsellers list. Why would a professional manual, the most definitive resource for the diagnosis and classification of mental disorders in the profession, become a bestseller among the general population?

BY Victoria Stokes



YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD IT IN CONVERSATION WHEN A RELATIVE JOKES ABOUT BEING 'A BIT OCD'. PERHAPS YOU'VE SPOTTED IT IN A PARENTING FACEBOOK GROUP WHEN CONCERNED PARENTS RUSH TO TELL A WORRIED MUM THAT HER SON'S BEHAVIOURS SOUND LIKE ADHD.

Maybe you've noticed it in the comments section of viral social media posts about autism, anxiety or bipolar, with numerous people chiming in claiming to tick all of the boxes.

These days, labelling is everywhere. It can be helpful for people who have never quite been able to put a finger on why they feel the way they do. But haphazardly using these terms to describe yourself or others, with little understanding of what these conditions actually are or how people experience them, is problematic – and it seems to be on the rise wherever you look.

Charlotte Armitage, a registered integrative psychotherapist and psychologist, says it's something she's seeing more and more of. "I think that social media has a lot to answer for, as there are many videos online with people describing traits of certain disorders," she notes.

"It's easy for someone to watch these videos and identify with the traits without truly recognising or appreciating the context in which these traits would require a diagnosis.

"It leads to people overidentifying with what is posted online and then attributing those traits seen to themselves."

If you've done your research and genuinely feel that you have some form of neurodivergence or mental health concern, then finally having a name for your behaviours can be a great thing. Seeing content that reflects your experiences online can be a comfort as well.

But the risk is that many people will seek labels for any behaviour, pattern or emotion that's outside of the perma-happy bubble that society has set as the norm.

"There seems to be a desire to pathologise the human experience,

Are We Facing A Labelling Epidemic?

Psychotherapist and psychologist Charlotte Armitage says she is seeing more and more self-diagnoses



seeing adverse emotions as something that requires intervention or diagnosis, when in reality, it's normal to feel a whole array of positive and negative emotions," Armitage says.

"The saying that 'a little bit of knowledge is dangerous' springs to mind," she adds. "It might be that someone has had a certain experience of their own but then judges all behaviour through that lens."

Often, labelling others says more about you than it does about them. "Some people may enjoy the power of being able to identify and label traits, but this serves more to fulfil the needs of the person communicating

their opinion rather than to support the individual who is seeking help," Armitage explains.

Labelling poses even more of a problem when it comes to kids. "Children are still developing and evolving, and many childhood behavioural traits may seem like traits of a disorder when there are other potential explanations for that behaviour," Armitage says.

Ideally, a diagnosis, be it for an adult or a child, should be carried out by a qualified mental health professional. "A clinician will ensure that the diagnosis is correct and communicate that diagnosis



in a way that is appropriate and helpful for the individual,” she says. When that doesn’t happen, it can lead to the individual feeling flawed and act as a hindrance to recovery.

SELF-DIAGNOSIS

While labelling others – especially children – is a habit best avoided, sometimes self-diagnosing can be a useful – and often necessary – tool.

Jennifer Cairns, 50, who is autistic and self-diagnosed with ADHD, says having a name for her behaviours has had a “profound” effect.

“Like most people who are neurodivergent – especially women – I spent most of my life wondering

what the heck was wrong with me, why I wasn’t like others, why I struggled so much to fit in, and why everything felt so hard,” she says.

Even after being told she was autistic in her mid-40s, Jennifer says not everything made sense. “I couldn’t make sense of some behaviours and sticking points with the autistic side,” she recalls. Jennifer then realised she had ADHD.

Since self-diagnosing, Jennifer says that she is better able to understand herself, and having a label

has allowed her to thrive. “I’ve worked really hard over the past couple of years to accept myself with all of my neurodiversity and disabilities, and to figure out how to best build a business that suits me,” she explains.

“Having this understanding has helped me with acceptance, but also with ensuring that others understand my needs as well. I’ve learned to use aspects of my neurodiversity in the best ways possible and I ensure I fill the gaps where I need more help or strategies in place.”

While Jennifer believes that understanding ourselves (labels or not) is the first step to being happier, she says there’s a risk that people can label themselves and others without

really considering what it means to be neurodiverse.

“There isn’t a ‘little bit’ of ADHD or any other neurodiversity. Someone is neurodiverse or they’re not,” she points out. “This is where I can see harm coming from a lack of understanding of what it truly means and people using the labels as they think they’re in fashion now.”

Phrases that make light of neurodivergence or mental health conditions can be reductive. “It minimises the struggles we go through and dilutes the realities of what being neurodiverse means,” she says.

Cathy Wassell, CEO of registered charity Autistic Girls Network, shares similar sentiments. She points out that being recognised as neurodivergent is not about naming behaviours; it’s something you can’t take away from someone. Or as she puts it, “It’s not a handbag you can pick up and put down.”

While labelling people’s behaviours is little more than flippant psychoanalysing for some, for others, it’s the only option. Getting an official diagnosis can prove difficult, time-consuming and costly. Jennifer says she’s currently on a waiting list for a diagnosis, but that it’s so long she’s not thinking about it.

The long wait may go some way towards explaining why many take to Facebook groups and other online forums seeking advice – and why the advice is often inaccurate and vague.

“The support here [in the UK] for adults is minimal at best so the only advantage [of an official diagnosis] is having that actual piece of paper. I may not even follow up and complete the process,” Jennifer admits.

Instead, Jennifer will be seeking a better understanding of herself and what it means to have autism and ADHD. For her, that means continuing to learn what works for her and what doesn’t.

FINDING SUPPORT

If you’ve noticed certain patterns and behaviours, and you suspect you or your child are neurodivergent or have an undiagnosed mental health condition, you might be wondering where to access the correct support.

Your first port of call should, of course, be your doctor, who can recommend a mental health professional best suited to treat you.

Of course, not everyone wants a diagnosis from a doctor. You might be perfectly content having reached an understanding yourself. At this point, Wassell says many people go through a period where they re-evaluate things that have happened in their lives.

“There might be some grief, regret or anger that it took so long to find out. You may want to tell family and friends and you may want to ask for reasonable adjustments at work, but that’s all going to be very individual to each person,” she explains.

SOMETIMES A LABEL JUST GIVES YOU A NAME FOR THOSE BEHAVIOURS THAT ONCE FELT UNUSUAL OR OUT-OF-SYNC WITH THE REST OF SOCIETY



Whether you choose to self-diagnose or not, it's important to remember you are more than a label.

“We aren't labels, even though we use them. A label doesn't define (good or bad) who you are. The most important thing to remember is that you aren't broken, less or incapable.”

Sometimes a label just gives you a name for those behaviours that once felt unusual or out-of-sync with the

rest of society. Sometimes, having a name for something means those behaviours don't seem so unusual or strange after all.

As Wassell notes, a diagnosis can alert you to the fact that you are not alone, and that there are, in fact, many people who experience life in the same way you do. How you go about getting that diagnosis is really up to you. **R**



School Boy Saves The Day

A 12-year-old boy saved his school mates from near tragedy in the US recently when the driver of their school bus suddenly passed out. Seeing the vehicle veering towards oncoming traffic, Dillon Reeves grabbed the steering wheel and hit the brakes. AP



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READER'S DIGEST



Dr Elliott's Very Polite **PREDAT**

PHOTO: COURTESY RILEY ELLIOTT

ORS

New Zealand shark scientist Dr Riley Elliott is happiest when diving below the waves observing sharks, or lobbying for better understanding about the ocean's most maligned occupants

BY *Diane Godley*

News helicopters flew low over Drs Riley Elliott and Ocean Ramsey in an effort to film the crazy rescue the pair were attempting in the waters just south of Perth, Western Australia. It was April 2014 and the two marine biologists were frantically swimming alongside a dying shark in an effort to revive it. What made the dramatic rescue even more unusual was the fact that it was taking place during a shark cull.

There had been seven lethal great white shark attacks over the previous three years off Western Australian beaches. The public wanted something done and permission had been given for a three-month shark-cull trial targeting sharks longer than three metres.

The larger animals were to be hooked using massive hooks on baited drumlines then killed, while smaller sharks were to be released 'alive'. According to *The Guardian* at the time, drumlines captured 172 sharks, 50 were larger than three metres and shot. None were great whites. Some 20 sharks were found dead on the baited hooks - 14 of them under three metres - before crews could reach them, while another 90 were released 'alive'.

Drs Elliott and Ramsey had found one of the released sharks suffocating on the ocean floor. The 2.4 metre tiger shark was also bleeding from hook wounds. The pair of conservationists swam the shark to the surface, one either side of it, and continued to swim with it for an hour and a half trying to revive the animal.

Both marine biologists knew that the released sharks didn't stand much of a chance of survival after sitting on a hook for up to 12 hours. Exhausted and traumatised, once released the animals simply sank to the bottom of the ocean floor. "We realised the negligence of this, as well as the entire shark cull, and wanted to do something to stop it," says Dr Elliott.

Like many marine species, sharks need to keep moving through the water to allow them to breathe, explains Dr Elliott. If they don't, they suffocate. When game fishermen release a catch, they hold it in the current to let the water flow over its gills. They don't just let it go because it doesn't have the energy to swim.

"So, we took a baby tiger shark off the bottom and we swam with it, one of us on either side." During the resuscitation effort, a shark-cull fisheries vessel travelled alongside the pair, yelling through a loudspeaker that what they were doing was against the law. But the scientists were not intimidated: they had already consulted with lawyers before they ventured into the water. What this crazy act of



Drs Riley Elliott and Ocean Ramsey spent over an hour swimming alongside this tiger shark in an effort to revive it

saving a shark did, however, was attract worldwide media interest.

GROWING UP SURFING in Raglan and the Coromandel Peninsula, on New Zealand's north island, Dr Riley Elliott was drawn to the ocean from an early age. Initially studying dolphins, the marine scientist completed an honours degree in Zoology and a masters in Marine Science at the University of Otago. But it was an incident during a dive in the South Island's Fiordland region to study the local dolphin community that changed the focus of his research.

Through his mask he could see something 40 metres below rushing

up towards him – it was a shark. Back then, his knowledge of sharks was limited to what he'd learnt from watching the movie *Jaws*. He totally freaked out.

"I ejected my buoyancy control device and shot to the surface," he recalls. Bracing for an attack, he opened his eyes to see a benign 30-centimetre school shark – considered harmless to humans due to its small size and preference for small prey.

"I felt so ashamed – I was a budding marine biologist and I didn't have the slightest idea what a shark was."

He took that shame back to the university before later heading to South Africa to study great white sharks. After spending time with the world's



Dr Elliott has free dived with every shark species

largest predatory fish, he found them to be cautious, calculating and vulnerable. By his own admission, his fears quickly turned to fascination.

Since then, Dr Elliott has free dived with sharks of every species without a cage – including great whites, tiger sharks, bull sharks and mako sharks – and his knowledge and understanding of the species has grown. By understanding the science, humans and

sharks can find a way to co-exist or even evolve to a stage where we can overcome our adverse reaction to sharks, he says. “We should fear sharks. But I hope we can react to that fear rationally. Sharks have been around longer than dinosaurs and trees. They are incredibly important to our marine ecosystems, yet their populations have declined by 70 per cent in the past 50 years, and a lot of that is down to fear and misinformation.”

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, shark fins for shark fin soup and traditional cures were increasingly in demand, particularly in China and its territories. As shark fins are one of the most expensive seafood products, a largely unregulated shark-fin industry became widespread and seriously threatens shark populations worldwide.

Shark finning entails sharks being caught, fins sliced off at sea, and the body dumped back in the ocean. Unable to swim effectively without their fins, they sink to the bottom where they die from suffocation or are eaten by predators.

To his horror, Dr Elliott discovered that New Zealand was one of the top five countries in the world to allow shark finning, “and it was going on

because it was not in the public eye." He decided to do something about that.

In 2010, Dr Elliott started the first in-depth study of blue sharks in the South Pacific, which revealed it was the most-finned of all shark species. Lacking government funding for his shark research, Dr Elliott turned to crowdfunding to raise \$200,000 for the satellite tagging system he needed for the field research. People who contributed funds could name a tag that identified a particular shark and were able to follow that shark's tag via a website.

His research found that the blue shark migrated from New Zealand to the equator and back and this journey made it vulnerable to long-line fishing. Schools of blue shark

were running the gauntlet of millions of long-line hooks and if captured, their fins were sliced off and their bodies thrown back into the sea to die. "Many of the sharks we tagged would simply disappear," says Dr Elliott. "They were being caught and finned for shark fin soup. It was devastating."

His research emotionally engaged the public and resulted in 88,000 signatories to support the ban of shark finning in New Zealand. Since 2014, when the ban on shark finning in New Zealand waters became law, an

estimated 150,000 sharks a year have been saved from slaughter.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, and communicating science through modern media is how Dr Elliott engages with the public to make change, such as the ban on shark finning in New Zealand and elsewhere, and to stop the 2014 shark culling programme in Western Australia. "We know scientifically from Hawaii [where shark culling took place between 1959 and 1976] that it doesn't reduce the risk to people. All it does is

needlessly kill sharks as well as hundreds of other species whose home is the ocean," says Dr Elliott.

"If we are going to understand sharks, we need to learn where their habitats are, where they behave in certain ways. From that

we can make informed decisions. Sharks survive by catching what they eat. At the end of the day, they are probably the most polite predator on Earth."

According to the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), each year around ten people die from shark attacks – globally. To put this in perspective, upwards of 150 people die every year from falling coconuts.

Every summer, millions of us 'flap' around in the ocean above sharks' heads, yet there are only around ten

**"AT THE END
OF THE DAY,
SHARKS ARE
PROBABLY THE
MOST POLITE
PREDATOR
ON EARTH"**

READER'S DIGEST

people fatally killed by sharks a year, says Dr Elliott. "It is the least statistical risk in the natural world. Because of *Jaws*, we inflate it well beyond drownings or car crashes and other everyday risks." In fact, according to AIMS, more people are killed each year by elephants, crocodiles, bees and wars, than by sharks.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, we would often spend school holidays at an unpatrolled beach and were told if we saw a single fin to get out of the water, but if there were many fins not to worry, because they would be dolphins. I was curious to find out whether this was a myth when I interviewed Dr Elliott, especially after a young jet skier jumped into the Swan River, Perth, in February this year to swim among dolphins and was fatally attacked by a shark.

"At the end of the day, dolphins are predators much like sharks," he tells me. "They often eat the same prey. So just because there are dolphins doesn't mean there won't be sharks."

The Perth attack was what Dr Elliott describes as a 'bad dog scenario'. In murky water, bull sharks hunt blind, using electroreceptors and vibration. The combination of murky water, feeding activity, and then a flash of

flesh, led the shark to react. "To avoid a shark attack, we must not interrupt foraging predators in feeding mode," says Dr Elliott. "In these kinds of conditions, you are basically setting yourself up for an adverse interaction."

WHEN DRS ELLIOTT AND RAMSEY finally let go of the baby tiger shark after swimming with it for an hour and a half, it dramatically sank to the bottom like a stone. The pair's disappointment was palpable. But when its fin touched the sand it gave a little kick and woke up, before giving another kick and swimming off unaided. Their efforts had paid off.

"All around the world, the public saw an innocent baby animal being rescued," says Dr Elliott. Although the aim of the shark cull was to rid the

beaches of large great whites, it resulted in over 100 small tiger sharks being killed. No tiger shark attacks had been recorded in the area. "It was a ridiculous political knee-jerk reaction." The Western Australian government of the day eventually backed down from its plan to string drumlines along 70 Perth and south coast beaches.

Today, SMART (Shark Management Alert in Real Time) drumlines - which consist of an anchor, two buoys and a satellite-linked GPS communications

"TO AVOID A SHARK ATTACK, WE MUST NOT INTERRUPT FORAGING PREDATORS IN FEEDING MODE"



Dr Elliott diving with a blue shark, once the world's most finned shark species

unit attached to a baited hook – are set every morning off many Australian beaches, approximately 500m from the shore and collected at the end of each day. The use of drumlines is currently the subject of debate with their effectiveness being researched.

According to the Western Australian government website Sharksmart.com.au, “The scientific non-lethal SMART drumline trial was designed as a catch, tag, relocate and release programme of target species, unlike the lethal 2014 trial that was designed to kill target shark species caught on the line.”

However, according to Dr Elliott, who today is an independent researcher as well as a presenter and

producer of *Shark Week* on Discovery Channel – the world's longest running TV series – the SMART drumlines only draw sharks into the coastline that would otherwise just swim by. **R**

Editor's Note: Dr Elliott uses Shark Week to help fund his scientific research and assist the media in educating the public about conserving the natural world.

Elliott also runs The Great White app, a shark tracking app that lets divers explore sharks tagged by the Sustainable Oceans Society (SOS), a not-for-profit founded by Elliott and marine biology university friends.

All proceeds from shark-related work is reinvested in SOS.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Seeing The Funny Side



"My dog ate my homework but you'll be pleased to know that he gave it five stars online."

More Haste, Less Speed

I was running late for my flight and trying to get through security when the agent asked me to remove my jacket. I whispered to my friend, "That was covering up my coffee stain."

The older woman behind me in line made me feel better about my sloppiness when she said, "Don't worry about the coffee stain, dear. Your shirt's on inside out and backwards."

SUBMITTED BY SUSAN SHAFER

Pecking Order

Just before our chemistry exam, my two friends bet on who would do better. The one with the worse grade would owe the other one 14 chicken sandwiches.

"There's no way I'll lose this bet," said my first friend. "This test is heavy in maths, and I always do well in maths problems."

My other friend countered, "Fine. Double or nothing - 24 sandwiches!" Guess who won the bet.

SUBMITTED BY SAMUEL THOMAS

Taking The Wheel

While my wife may not be a car fanatic, when it comes to the vehicle she drives, she does insist that it fulfil certain criteria. One day, she announced, "I know exactly what kind of car I want next."

"Oh, yeah?" I asked. "What kind?"
"Green."

SUBMITTED BY DALE DILDY

Not That Majestic

Before my two young nephews could push their way past me at a very large family gathering, I said, "What's the magic phrase?"

They said, "Please?"

"No," I teased, "it's Please, Queen Linda, Ruler of Everything and Everyone."

They paused a moment, then one said to the other, "Let's just find another bathroom."

SUBMITTED BY LINDA MOWRY

Truly Messy

Whenever I'm worried that I messed up with my wife, I remember the time my brother gave an anniversary card to his current wife on the date of his first marriage.

@FOZZIE4PREZ

It All Adds Up

Shop assistant: That will be \$82.07.

Me: I'd like to use my eight trillion rewards points towards this.

Shop assistant: That will be \$82.03.

@DAVIDADT1



THE GREAT TWEET OFF: CRIME DOESN'T PAY EDITION

Breaking the law is not an option for the folks of Twitter.

Arrested a 28-year-old man today for stealing a *Twilight Saga* DVD box set. Store owner suggested making him watch it as a punishment.

@SOLIHULL_POLICE

My 8 year old got my 5 year old to confess to a crime she had previously denied (cutting holes in her pants) with a leading question when 5yo least suspected it: **8yo:** When you cut your pants, did you do it like this? *gestures* **5yo:** No, I did it like this! Perfection.

@FREELANCELAWMOM

Candlestick holders are so expensive, like I really understand why robbers are always putting them in their bags first.

@DELIA_CAI

Not a scam: If you've committed a burglary in the Leicester area in the last week, come to our police station and claim a FREE iPad.

@LEICESTER_POLICE

I'm such a wet wipe.
A bloke was just trying to break into my car when I walked back to it and I said, "Excuse me, sorry, I think that's my car."

@DATCATDER







SEE THE WORLD...

Turn the page »

A large-scale mosaic of coffee cups on a blue surface, with a hand placing a cup in the foreground. The cups are arranged in a grid pattern, and the coffee inside them varies in color, creating a portrait. A hand is visible in the foreground, placing a white cup filled with dark coffee into the mosaic. The background shows many more cups, some with coffee and some without, arranged in a grid pattern. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor setting.

...DIFFERENTLY

Coffee Combo

The task of building a mosaic of ancient Egyptian Pharaoh King Tutankhamun's mask took a group of dedicated youths almost 12 hours. The mosaic was pieced together in December 2019 using 7260 paper cups of coffee in the yard of the Grand Egyptian Museum, near the Great Pyramids of Giza. The different shades of the mask were achieved by adding varying amounts of milk to each cup of coffee. A whopping 60 square metres, the mosaic set a new Guinness World Record for the largest coffee-cup mosaic portrait, a title previously held by a portrait of Elvis Presley.

PHOTOS: AHMED GOMAA/XINHUA/
GETTY IMAGES





Can Hearing Loss Be Reversed?

THE
ANSWER
MAY BE
YES

BY *Vanessa Milne*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Pete Ryan*

“HI, VANESSA! NICE TO SEE YOU!”

It feels good to hear those words when I see people I know. But I take it for granted that I have even heard that greeting – and, in fact, all other sounds. I never think about how I’m hearing things, how my brain is translating sounds into meaning.

Yet the process is fascinating. The journey of a sound from outside the ear and into the brain, which takes only milliseconds, is mind-bendingly elaborate. First, the sound waves



enter each ear and vibrate the paper-thin eardrum. That vibration moves two small bones that sit behind it, which begin to dance in sync with the sound waves' vibrations.

Then a third bone sitting against the cochlea starts to vibrate, and things get really interesting. The cochlea is a pea-sized, bony structure shaped like a snail shell and filled with fluid. It's lined with tens of thousands of hair cells topped with bundles of miniature tubes called stere-

ocilia. That vibrating third bone beats against the cochlea, like knocking on a door. The cochlea's fluid sways, and the hair cells wave like sea anemones. That movement causes the hair cells to release chemical neurotransmitters, triggering a series of electrical messages that are carried through the auditory nerves into the auditory cortex of the brain, which translates the electrical code into meaning.

The delicate stereocilia and hair cells have a limited lifespan. We start to lose our hearing because, as they're used again and again through a lifetime of exposure to sounds at regular volume – or a shorter-term exposure to loud sounds – they can become damaged and stop doing their job. Called presbycusis, this

age-related, or sensorineural, hearing loss is the most common.

If I had mild to moderate presbycusis, certain consonants would be more difficult to discern, so “Hi, Vanessa. Nice to see you!” would sound like “...i Vane...a. Nice ..o ..ee you!”

A WIDESPREAD AND GROWING PROBLEM

According to the World Health Organization, about 1.5 billion people have hearing loss, and that number

could rise to 2.5 billion – or one in four – by 2050. People with profound hearing loss can now turn to cochlear implants. That's when an electronic cochlea – a combination of a transmitter and a processor – is placed behind the ear, and a receiver is surgically inserted under

the skin there.

Aside from age-related hearing loss, there are a couple of other, less common, types. One that can actually be reversible – if it's treated early enough – is sudden sensorineural hearing loss. It can happen instantly or over the course of just a few days. There are a variety of possible causes, including infections, head trauma and autoimmune disorders. It often affects only one ear.

The condition is typically treated

The true impact of hearing loss is becoming clear: it's a major health issue



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Joanne Hau, Optometrist
Meriam Beshay, Audiologist
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READER'S DIGEST

with corticosteroids, drugs that fight inflammation, reduce swelling and help your body fight off diseases. The medication is either injected directly into your ear or given orally as pills. This treatment can reduce or even reverse the hearing loss, but only if it's administered quickly.

"I know many people who have had sudden hearing loss in one ear and thought it was nothing," says Susan Scollie, a professor of audiology. It's fortunate, she says, that there is a treatment, "but if you wait too long, the hearing loss can be permanent."

For more moderate hearing loss that happens over a longer period of time, the standard treatment is hearing aids, and though they help a lot, many people who use them report that decoding speech in places with lots of background noise is still a challenge.

MORE THAN JUST AN INCONVENIENCE

But is it such a big deal if we can't hear certain sounds? Yes, as it turns out. The true impact of hearing loss has been the subject of lots of new research and is becoming increasingly clear: it's not just an annoyance, but a major health issue.

"For a long time, hearing loss was seen as an inevitable part of ageing, and relatively inconsequential," says Frank Lin, director of the Cochlear Center for Hearing and Public Health at the

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "But over the past decade, that's really been turned on its head."

Researchers have now connected hearing loss with other health problems. Studies have found that it can more than double the likelihood of having a fall, for example, and can lead to anxiety and problems sleeping.

People with hearing loss are also at risk of mental illness: a 2020 Australian review published in *Gerontologist* looked at 35 studies covering almost 150,000 people and found that hearing loss was associated with a higher risk of depression in older adults. They suspect that people who lose their hearing don't go out and socialise as much – perhaps because they have a hard time following conversations where there is background



noise – contributing to increased feelings of loneliness.

We have long known that living in isolation may be the reason hearing loss has been linked with loneliness and depression; research has shown that isolation contributes to mental illness and also increases the risk of dementia. There is also a strong link between hearing loss and dementia. A 2020 report published in *The Lancet* identified 12 modifiable risk factors for dementia, and ranked hearing loss as the most significant one for middle-aged people. It recommended that people with hearing loss use hearing aids to mitigate its negative cognitive effects.

The reason for the link could be that people who socialise less have fewer cognitively challenging conversations. Those with mild hearing loss are twice as likely to develop dementia; moderate hearing loss means it's three times as likely; and people with profound hearing loss are five times more likely. While hearing aids can't reverse these things or give us the same quality of hearing we once had, they might help prevent the mental-health effects.

Lin is currently running a large trial to see if using hearing aids reduces the risk of dementia, and whether or not they can help decrease the incidence of falls. The results, due mid-2023, will tell us for the first time whether interventions to prevent hearing loss have reduced the risk of these other issues.

GENE THERAPY TO RESTORE HEARING?

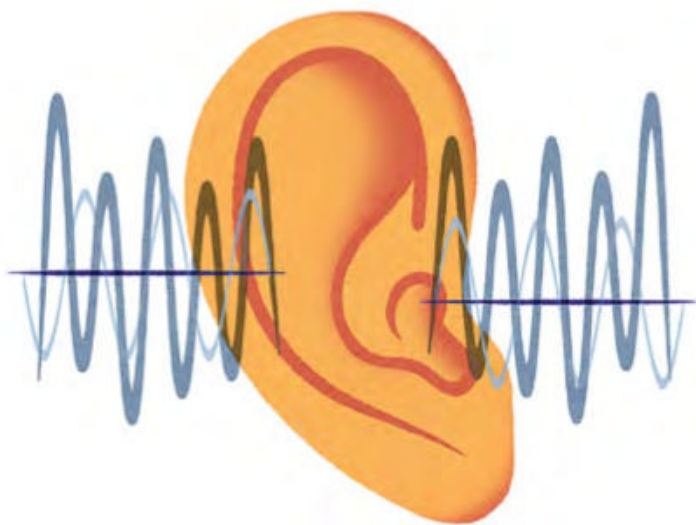
Other solutions are in the works. Researchers are looking at ways to help people regrow the cochlea's hair cells and stereocilia cells to restore hearing. Some have taken inspiration from the animal kingdom: when birds and reptiles suffer from hearing loss, they regrow those cells and can hear again within a few weeks, just as our bodies regularly grow new skin cells.

New hair cells in the cochlea would mean that, instead of just turning up the volume of all noise, as hearing aids do, we'd be able to hear naturally, and easily pick out speech from background noise.

So how might this be done? By harnessing our own genes. About half of age-related hearing loss has a genetic component, says otolaryngologist Richard Smith. His group offers gene testing to people with hearing loss to try to pinpoint the reason behind it, which he says provides more insights into how their hearing loss will progress.

Smith is confident that in the future, genetic testing will become more common around hearing loss, and new solutions will be available for those issues, offering a personalised approach that's different for each patient.

"There's a tremendous sense of excitement on the research side as we move forward with different types of gene therapy for hearing loss," he



says. “I hope that people recognise that in the not-too-distant future we may have options besides hearing aids and cochlear implants.”

US-based Decibel Therapeutics is one company that is working to make that future a reality. It’s trying to come up with gene-based solutions for hearing loss in adults.

“The idea is that you might be able to use gene-therapy technology to regrow the hair cells that have been lost,” says Jonathon Whitton, audiologist, neuroscientist and senior vice-president of clinical research and development at Decibel Therapeutics.

The company is researching half a dozen gene-therapy products, three of which target hair-cell regeneration. The others tackle single-gene causes of hearing loss and protecting hearing

in people about to undergo a type of chemotherapy that often leads to hearing loss. Two of the treatments have moved on to the clinical-trial phase, and others that show promise will follow within the next few years.

Whitton says the advent of regenerative medicine has given scientists, health-care practitioners and patients “an emerging spirit of optimism.”

THE NEW HEARING AIDS

As potential innovations work their way through the clinical pipeline, there are better mechanical options than ever before: next-generation hearing aids.

In the not-too-distant future, there may be options besides hearing aids



Digital hearing aids have come a long way since their introduction in the mid-1990s. “We have gone from the first generation of digital hearing aids to fourth- or fifth-generation ones, and there have been a lot of improvements,” says Professor Scollie.

“Many of the improvements have been small, but they add up to a better-quality product. The single hearing aid that people receive today is the technological equivalent of seven or eight hearing aids all in one.”

An important one is the ability for hearing aids to automatically switch

modes depending on the environment: for example, changing how they would work when you're in a quiet car listening to music versus in a crowded restaurant listening to a conversation.

They also have noise-reduction capabilities, and microphones that change direction automatically. "It's really the technological equivalent of several hearing aids at once, moving back and forth seamlessly," says Professor Scollie.

The newest features also include Bluetooth, which can be connected wirelessly to a phone to have a conversation or stream music.

It's easier to hear when the voice on the other end of the phone comes through both ears, says Professor Scollie, and it's just more convenient to be able to use hearing aids as high-quality headphones, as well. It's also possible to log in to an app to adjust the settings of your hearing aid.

A few hearing aids even do step counting, says Professor Scollie, and she expects biometric sensors to be the next big development. This means that hearing aids would measure heartbeat and body temperature like a smartwatch does.

"Measuring some of those things in the ear is actually a more appropriate location than the wrist," she explains.

MORE AFFORDABLE HEARING AIDS

New regulations in the United States in 2022 have made over-the-counter hearing aids a reality. Closer to home, consumers in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore can also buy off the shelf hearing aids without a prescription.

This means that instead of going to an audiologist for a hearing-aid prescription, similar to the way we get a prescription for glasses, consumers can now buy these less-expensive versions without a prescription.

The development comes with some caveats: what if a person's sudden hearing loss is caused by an illness, for example, that needs to be treated promptly if it's to be reversed? Others worry that people who buy over-the-counter hearing aids won't get the personal fitting, adjustments and follow-up service they might need.



But on the positive side, these over-the-counter products could also act as a gateway for people who might not otherwise buy hearing aids. One study estimated that more than 80 per cent of people with hearing loss don't wear hearing aids.

Hearing loss runs in my family: my grandparents needed hearing aids and my father uses them. One day I may need them, too. His are much more advanced than my grandmother's were, complete with Bluetooth and the ability to

Cheaper hearing aids can be a gateway for people who may not otherwise buy them



'tune' to different situations, like crowds.

But they're still not perfect in noisy environments. I ask Decibel's Whitton whether he thinks it's possible that, by the time 40 year olds like me are in their 50s or 60s, we might be able to use medication, not technology, to treat

hearing loss? "Yes," he says, pointing out that there is growing interest from researchers trying to solve this problem. "All these companies are being built around the idea that we can get there." **R**



Ssstowaway In Cockpit

A South African pilot had to turn back the private charter plane he was flying recently when he felt a slithering stowaway in the cockpit. Rudolf Erasmus said he felt a little cold sensation under his shirt near his hips, and when he looked down, was surprised to see a highly venomous Cape cobra under his seat.

"As I turned to my left and looked down, I could see the head of the snake receding back underneath my seat," he said. "At which point there was a moment of stunned silence, to be brutally honest."

Erasmus decided to turn the light aircraft around and make an emergency landing at the closest airport. He then informed the passengers what was going on.

However, once the plane landed, there was no sight of the snake. It seems to have boarded and disembarked of its own volition.

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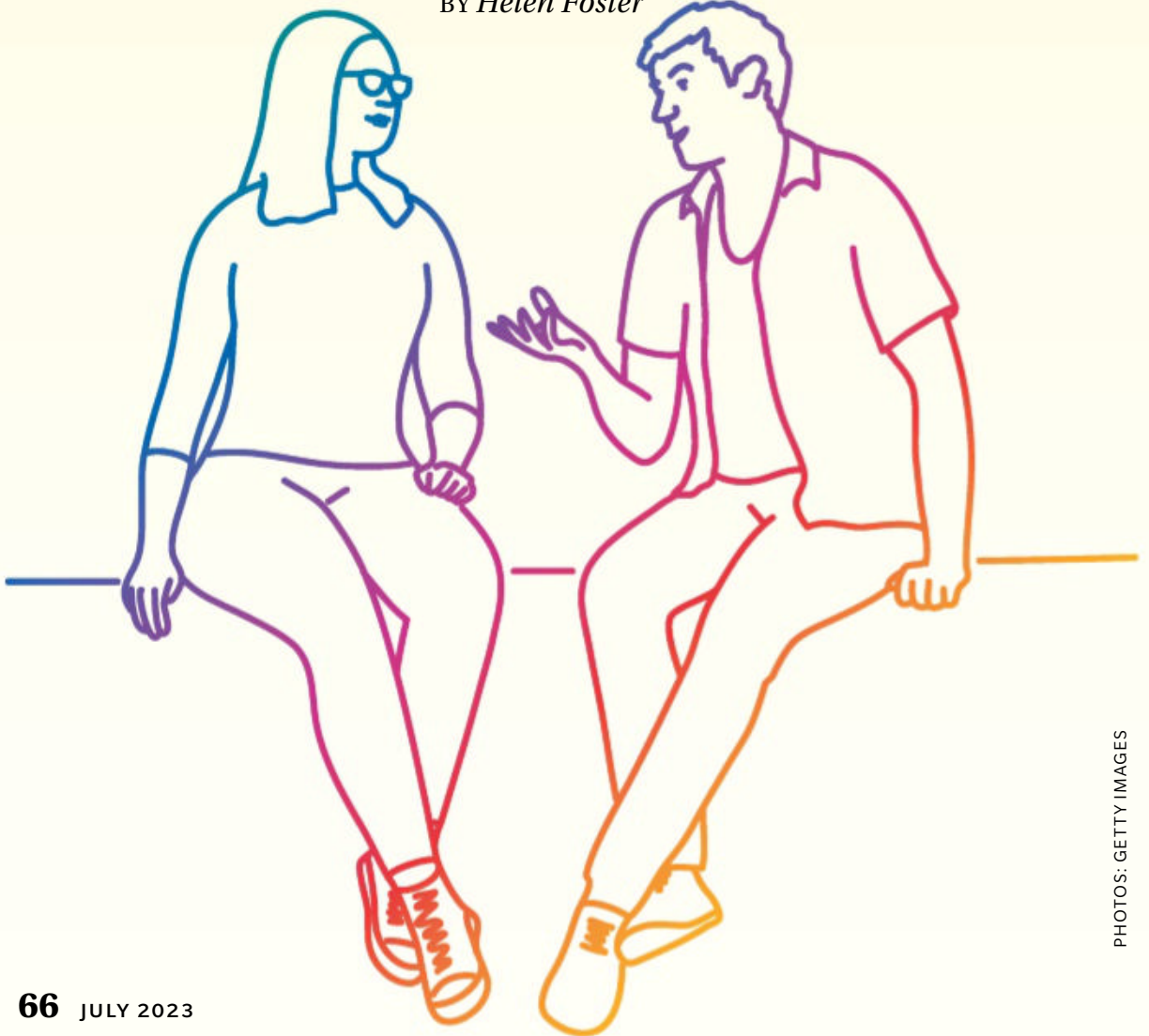
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The Power Of Talking To A **STRANGER**

BY *Helen Foster*



*As children we're told not to talk to strangers.
But now you're an adult, it's time to forget that,
because having a chat with someone you don't
know could change your whole day*

It could be said that everything we know about the power of chatting to a stranger started with a hot dog lady.

Dr Gillian Sandstrom was a young doctorate student studying in Canada, when she'd regularly visit a hot dog stand on the university campus. Over time, she and the woman who worked on the hot dog stand struck up a connection. "I started nodding and smiling at the lady and, when she responded, even just that small connection made me feel seen, safe and part of the campus community at a time when I was pretty stressed," says Sandstrom, now a lecturer in psychology and head of the Sussex Centre for Research on Kindness at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. The positive impact of her own experience led her to study the effect of simple social interactions, like a quick chat with the barista making your coffee. She found that people were roughly 17 per cent happier on the days when they struck up a chat over the hiss of the cappuccino machine, or said hi to a neighbour in the hallway. "My work and that of others clearly shows

that talking to strangers puts you in a more positive mood," she says. "It also makes you trusting of other people which, I think, makes the world feel a little friendlier and safer."

The reason for this is simple. People need people. We need to feel connected, even for just a few seconds – and the more people we do this with, the merrier. In fact, according to a study from Harvard Business School, people who interact within more different relationship levels – ranging from friends, family/partners, colleagues and strangers – throughout the day are happier than those with a less broad mix of interactions.

And, while you might not associate any extra spring in your step down to a chat you had with your barista this morning, other benefits from interacting with strangers are more tangible. Canvassing stories for this article we heard about job offers, savings on hotels and new friendships that all came from interactions with strangers. "For me the big benefit is that it makes me more open minded," says Alex Kingsmill, a Melbourne-based counsellor and regular random chat instigator. "People have

READER'S DIGEST

expressed their views on aliens, politics, the afterlife and parenting – they talk about everything. And while I don't always agree, just hearing those views keeps me open to the possibility that my own beliefs aren't the only ones, or even the right ones."

The problem is many of us find the idea of striking up a conversation with strangers tricky – perhaps even a bit scary. "Humans have a core primal fear of rejection and so, even though logically you know nothing too bad could happen from just striking up a conversation with a stranger, a part of you is scared of getting hurt doing it," says Brisbane-based psychologist Lana Hall from The Slow Life Project. "Plus, the 'don't talk to strangers' advice you're given in childhood makes you almost feel like you're doing something wrong by chatting to someone you don't know – but don't let messages from the past hold you back."

The good news is the rejections we fear most, rarely happen. In Dr Sandstrom's work, she found that only ten per cent of approaches weren't reciprocated, and when scientists at the University of Chicago asked people to start random conversations on their morning commute, they found the average conversation lasted a lengthy 14.2 minutes. Even better, when the team checked in with the converser who

had been spoken to, they found they had enjoyed the impromptu chat as much as the instigator. No wonder Dr Sandstrom found 41 per cent of people doing one of her experiments actually ending up swapping contact details with at least one person they had chatted with.

She also discovered that the more often you approach people the easier it becomes. "Repetition was key to success," says Dr Sandstrom. "The more people talked to strangers the less worried they felt about being rejected – and more confident they became in their ability to start and maintain a conversation." And this change in attitude didn't take long either – just a week of regularly starting chats with people was enough.

As for where to find people to chat to, it's been calculated that we meet 11-16 casual acquaintances a day that we could talk to if we chose, or you can seek out encounters. As part of her research Dr Sandstrom sets up a Stranger Scavenger Hunt. She gives volunteers a list of different characteristics – like someone wearing a hat, drinking coffee or carrying a blue bag – and asks her volunteers to find and chat to at least one person on the list every day for a week.

Why not create your own version of that list and try and achieve at least one interaction a day?

Sometimes though you might feel particularly drawn to chat to someone, and those are encounters you



*People need people.
We need to feel
connected, even for
just a few seconds*

really need to pursue, says counselor and chiropractor Dr Sarah Jane, founder of Spinal Energetics in Melbourne. In fact she met her PR Pippa Jageurs working behind the counter in a shop she had never stepped into before, and which Pippa didn't normally work in. Working in the wellness space, Pippa knew straight away who Sarah was, and that she'd recently been advertising for a PR.

"Some people might say that's coincidence but I don't think there's such a thing as coincidence," says Dr Jane. "Opportunities to speak to people we need to connect with are put in front of us all the time, we just don't always recognise them."

So if you feel drawn to chat with a stranger, perhaps it's actually the universe trying to tell you something.

Another concern about making that first contact is knowing what to say, but even just a quick chat about

the weather with your Uber driver is enough to raise mood. "A lot of people worry that chatting about the weather is boring or obvious but it's almost a code for 'are you open to chatting', then once you've made a connection you can start to ask more open-ended questions and get to know each other a bit more," says psychologist Lana Hill.

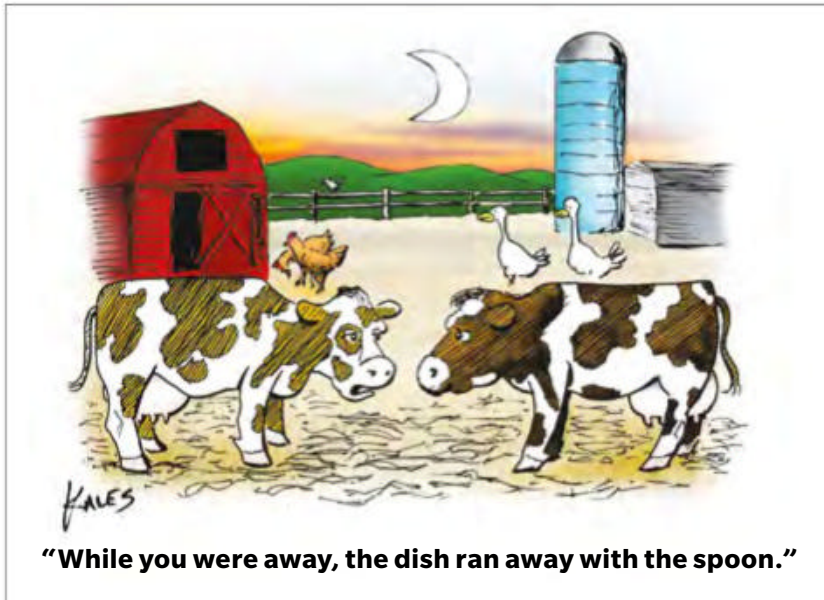
Lastly, it's helpful to know the signs that someone might be willing to chat - these include meeting your eye when you look at them or returning a smile. And, if someone responds with extra information if you do ask them a question, you're lucky. "That's a common sign of extroverts who love to chat," says Lana Hill. And, if you're *really* lucky you could find yourself sitting next to Laura Maya, a 42-year-old author, now living in Tonga. She first started chatting to people when travelling alone in her 20s.

"Now, my husband calls me Lucifer because he says I'm like the character in the TV show who can get total strangers talking about their dreams and fears within minutes of meeting them," she says. "Everyone has a story and a different way of seeing the world and you never know who is going to teach you something by saying the one thing you need to hear right now - or even set your life on a whole new path."

Now how could you let a little shyness stand in the way of that? **R**

LAUGHTER

The Best Medicine



Buckle Up

After years of putting money into a savings account, a wife tells her husband the good news: "We've finally got enough money to buy what we started saving for in 1979."

Her husband smiles with giddy excitement. "You mean a brand-new car?" he asks.

"No," says the wife. "A 1979 model."

[Asktrim.com](#)

Picturing It

A lawyer representing a wealthy art collector called his client and said to him, "Saul, I have some good news

and I have some bad news."

Saul replied, "I've had a bad day; let's hear the good news first."

The lawyer said, "Well, I met with your wife today, and she informed me that she invested \$5000 in two pictures that she thinks will bring a minimum of \$15-20 million. I think she could be right."

Saul replied enthusiastically, "My wife is a brilliant businesswoman! You've just made my day. Now I know I can handle the bad news. What is it?"

The lawyer replied, "The pictures are of you with your secretary."

[thevarnishedculture.com](#)

CARTOON: PAUL KALES

Examples Of Why English Is Such A Crazy Language

A waiter Why do they call those food servers waiters, when it's the customers who do the waiting?

The movie kept me literally glued to my seat The chances of our rear ends being literally epoxied to a seat are about as small as the chances of our literally rolling in the aisles while watching a funny movie or literally drowning in tears while watching a sad one. We actually mean the movie kept me figuratively glued to my seat – but who needs figuratively, anyway?

A non-stop flight Never get on one of these. You'll never get down.

A near miss A near miss is, in reality, a collision. A close call is actually a near hit.

My idea fell between the cracks

If something fell between the cracks, didn't it land smack on the planks or the footpath concrete? Shouldn't that be my idea fell into the cracks (or between the boards)?

I want to have my cake and eat it too

Shouldn't this timeworn cliché be 'I want to eat my cake and have it too?' Isn't the logical sequence that one hopes to eat the cake and then still possess it?

It's neither here nor there Then where is it?

Put on your shoes and socks This is an exceedingly difficult manoeuvre. Most of us put on our socks first, then our shoes. <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/>



SPECS APPEAL

*Smiles to see you
clear through the day.*

*I just discovered my glasses
have smudges on them.
I've been giving people dirty
looks all day.*

*My girlfriend says she
can't see too well without
her glasses.*

*So I asked her what
numbers she could see.*

*Respect people who
wear glasses
They paid money to see you.*

Looking Good poem

*My face in the mirror
isn't wrinkled or drawn.*

*My house isn't dirty.
The cobwebs are gone.*

*My garden looks lovely and
so does my lawn.*

*I think I might never put
my glasses back on.*

Sources: laffgaff.com; upjoke.com/

Not every wave is suitable for surfing, and not every surfer masters the sport as perfectly as this athlete surfing a barrel off Tahiti (where the original form of surfing originated). Polynesian settlers eventually brought wave riding to Hawaii, where it became a popular sport. In the early 1700s however, the best waves there were reserved for Hawaiian royalty. And if there was no swell, the island priest was sent for to pray over the water.





PHOTO FEATURE

***RIDING
THE
PERFECT***
Wave

*Whether formed by nature or man,
waves come in many varieties*

BY *Doris Kochanek*

PHOTO: © UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES


These soccer fans show their enthusiasm by creating a stadium wave. Participants have to jump up, raise their arms and sit down in rough synchronisation with their neighbours. It is sometimes called *La Ola* – Spanish for wave – or the Mexican wave, but these names are misleading. The first human waves were seen at baseball games in the United States in the early 1980s and spread around the world.

Last year heat waves in many areas of Western Australia broke records, although the northern town of Pilbara, which reportedly reached 50.7 degrees Celsius on January 13, 2022, only equalled a record set by the South Australia town of Oodnadatta on January 2, 1960. A mirage, as seen here in the Outback, makes the extreme conditions visible. They occur when light is deflected between hot air directly above the tarmac and slightly cooler air above the layer of hot air.



PHOTO: (JET) GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Sound waves move at 1235.5 km/h in dry air at a temperature of 20 degrees Celsius. They are not perceptible to the human eye. If a moving object – such as this fighter jet – exceeds the speed of sound, a pressure wave is generated. Breaking through the so-called sound barrier generates a shock wave that can be heard as a loud bang. A small cloud may also form if the air is saturated with water vapour.




NASA compares the high-energy outflows that tear across space from *quasars* to tsunamis. The word quasar is short for 'quasi-stellar', meaning they are star-like objects. The super-massive black hole at a quasar's centre is fuelled by collapsing matter. Researchers owe the discovery of these interstellar tsunamis to the Hubble Space Telescope.



PHOTOS: (QUASAR)NASA, ESA AND J. OLMSTED (STSC); (HAIR) © GETTY IMAGES

Riding The Perfect Wave



A perm, also known as a permanent wave, offers those of us with naturally straight hair the chance to enjoy luscious, durable curls. Patented just over 100 years ago and improved in the decades since, perms use chemical reactions in keratin, the main component of human hair, to change its shape. 



E N T E R
T H E
D A R K
W E B

HOW A SIMPLE OUTING ENDED
WITH MY IDENTITY ENTERING
THE DARK WEB

BY *Ashley Kalagian Blunt*

A trip to the post office led me to the dark web. My driver's licence slipped out of my pocket while I lugged an oversized package back to my apartment. I searched, failed to find it, and assumed my most pressing issue was having it replaced.

The following morning, when I logged into the backend of my author website, I realised the problem was much bigger.

A flood of unusual traffic had visited the site overnight, from Russia, China and Ukraine. I didn't fully understand what was going on, but I knew it was bad. And it had to do with the dark web.

At the time, I knew nothing about the dark web except what everyone knows: it's a haven of illegal activity, a place to buy weapons, drugs, fake IDs and possibly human kidneys. I'd just started drafting a psychological thriller and my interest as a crime writer was piqued. What exactly was the dark web? And just how frightening was it?

Journalist Eileen Ormsby describes the dark web as "the internet's evil twin". Really though, it's one small part of the behemoth that is the internet. The internet breaks down into three types of website. The clear web, also called the surface web, refers to all the sites that a search engine like Google links to. Clear websites are

open access and comprise five to ten per cent of the total internet; exact figures are uncertain. The deep web, the largest part of the internet, is made up of password-protected websites, such as your email and bank accounts – sites you definitely wouldn't want people to be able to access via Google.

The dark web is a tiny corner of the internet, possibly as small as 0.01 per cent. Its small size is in part due to the special software required to access it. This demands slightly more technical know-how than the average internet user has. At least, more than I had, and I've been using the internet since I was 12.

I did a lot of reading before venturing onto the dark web myself. This is how I came to understand what most likely happened with my driver's licence. Someone in my friendly, inner-west Sydney neighbourhood would have opportunistically found my licence on the street, and either put it on the dark web themselves or shared it with a savvy contact. My name, date of birth,

address and licence number ended up on a spreadsheet of identity details for sale. These details are more valuable the more complete they are, so people working for whatever criminal network ended up with my information – people in Russia, China and Ukraine – started searching my name online, trying to find my phone number, email and whatever else they could get. This is why they were visiting my website, to see what I might have been foolish enough to publicly post.

After the Optus and Medibank data breaches in 2022, more of us are now aware that our identities are likely for sale on the dark web. A complete set of ‘personally identifiable information’ can sell for as little as \$20. This data often includes passwords. Learning this, I suddenly understood the advice I’d been hearing for decades: you really do need to change your passwords regularly, and never use the same one twice, because there’s a very good chance your passwords are for sale in dark web marketplaces.

A friend told me over dinner that people in Russia and Argentina were listening to his paid Spotify account. He believed they’d hacked in to push certain songs, including a rap version of ‘Baby Shark’. I had a different

theory. Rather than hackers targeting his individual account, there’d been a data breach, perhaps of Spotify itself, and now my friend’s email and password were for sale on the dark web. These other listeners likely paid some minimal amount – a dollar, maybe – to access his premium account.

We laughed about this. The stakes were low. All he had to do was change his Spotify password, and presto, no more surprise ‘Baby Shark’ on his commute. Then he added that he only had one password. He used the same one for all his logins.

“For everything?” I was shocked. He was my age, late 30s. “Even your bank accounts?”

He said yes and I glanced at his wife in alarm. He only had one password and it was definitely compromised.

“Maybe when you’re on the dark web, you can find it,” he joked.

It’s challenging when the average person now has more than a hundred passwords, but trust me, it’s worth the time to change them. It’s safer to use a password manager than not. This, along with keeping your software up to date, and using multifactor authentication, are the best strategies we have as individuals to lower our risk of being victimised by cybercriminals.

**I GLANCED AT HIS
WIFE IN ALARM.
HE ONLY HAD ONE
PASSWORD AND
IT WAS
DEFINITELY
COMPROMISED**

READER'S DIGEST

When I figured out the technical requirements to get on the dark web, the experience was anticlimactic. Because it uses special software to encrypt user information, the dark web is slow by today's internet standards. Many dark web sites look like you've time travelled back to the internet of the '90s, with white font on black background and few graphics.

Some sites look more familiar. You can visit Facebook on the dark web, if you're willing to sacrifice download speed for extra security. You can also visit news sites like BBC.com and ProPublica. This allows access in countries where the internet is censored. It's important to note, not all dark web users are there for criminal purposes. In fact, it was invented by the US Navy to provide improved security to American government agents.

The sites I visited as a dark web novice were either innocuous or likely scams. Sure, I could click 'add to cart' beside the offer to 'destroy someone's life' for \$1700, but chances are it's money for nothing. The same with the guns and drugs I saw for sale. There's no Dark Google; most of the sites aren't indexed, which means you can't search them. Someone needs to share the exact web address with you. As a dark

web tourist, I only saw what other users wanted me to see.

Despite these barriers to entry, dark web spending is on the rise, with as much as US\$1.5 billion spent there in 2020. According to one source, activity on the dark web increased by 300 per cent from 2017 to 2020.

My debut thriller, *Dark Mode*, opens with a Sydney garden-shop owner who has good reasons for keeping her life offline, but the murder of a woman who looks just like her forces her to confront her secret past.

I chose to weave the dark web into the plot because of its criminal reputation. But just as much illegal activity is happening on the rest of the internet, including ransomware attacks, identity theft and payment redirection fraud. (Seriously, change your passwords.)

To me, the scariest part of this experience wasn't going onto the dark web itself. It's knowing someone in my neighbourhood was so quick to commit an opportunistic crime against me by posting my details to the darkest part of the internet. **R**



Dark Mode by Ashley Kalagian Blunt is published by Ultimo Press, RRP \$34.99, and can be found at all good bookstores.

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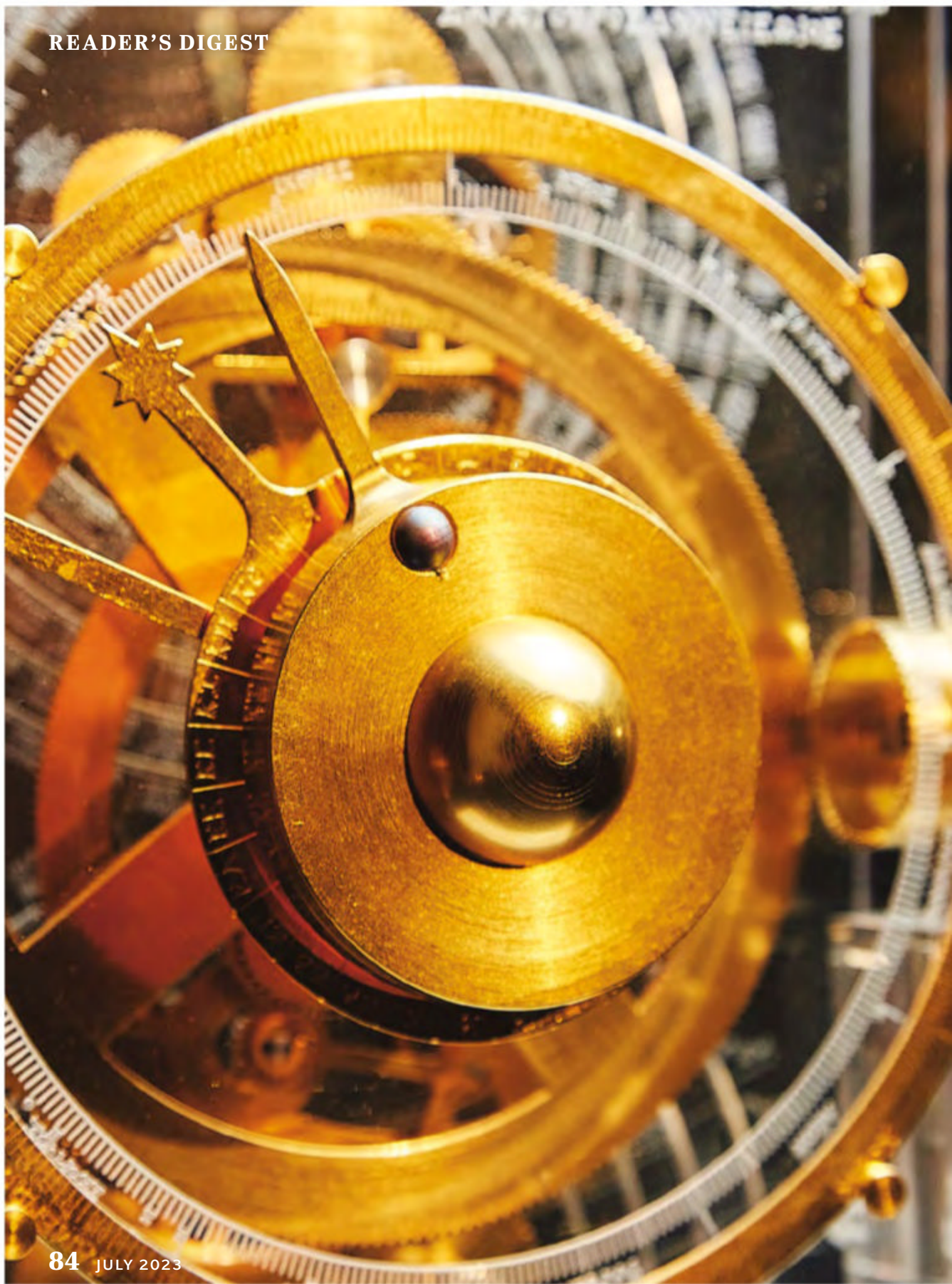
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The Time MACHINE

WAY AHEAD
OF ITS TIME

*Made over 2000 years ago,
the Antikythera mechanism makes a
modern clock look like a child's toy*

BY Markus Ward

Spring 1900: A group of sponge divers slow their boat off the coast of a small Greek island, Antikythera, while they wait for favourable winds to take them on to North Africa. In the downtime, Elias Stadiatis decides to dive where they are moored. After descending about 45 metres, the seafloor comes into his view. What he sees there startles him back to the surface, where his bewildered colleagues listen in disbelief as he describes a scene of rotting corpses. Thinking Stadiatis is either drunk or suffering from the 'bends', Captain Dimitrios Kondos puts on his diving gear and goes down to have a look for himself. He quickly resurfaces with a human arm made in bronze, from what turned out to be a pile of statues from, presumably, an ancient shipwreck.

READER'S DIGEST

Kondos eventually reported the site to authorities. Over the next year, the sponge divers and the Greek Navy recovered a trove of ancient ship equipment, a lyre, glass work, and breathing ancient Greek statues, among these the *Antikythera Youth*, the remains of which are prominently displayed in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. What turned out to be equally spectacular but largely went unnoticed was a bronze lump and the remains of a wooden box that seemed to belong with it.

It was not until a year later that Spyridon Stais, a politician and cousin to the curator of the National Archaeological Museum, rediscovered these fragments in the museum's storage and noticed something sensational: there was at least one metal gear

wheel hiding in the corroded metal – the next comparable device being a Byzantine geared sundial made five to seven centuries later.

Several archaeologists, including the famed late French explorer Jacques Cousteau, have since re-excavated the site off Antikythera, recovering even more artefacts. Historians think that the lost ship was transporting a cargo of already centuries-old curiosities. Careful study of the finds and the device itself enable the Antikythera mechanism to be dated from the third to mid-first century BCE.

BY THE 1950S, after the lump had deteriorated into 82 fragments, Derek de Solla Price, a British physicist, historian of science and information scientist, did further research.

THE ANTIKYTHERA MECHANISM RECONSTRUCTED

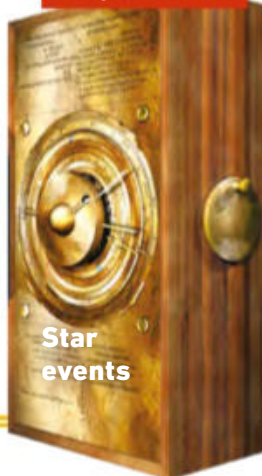
A small crank on the side of the device turns the dozens of gears and sets the heavens into motion. A primitive mechanical clock in comparison needs only three gears

FRONT COVER



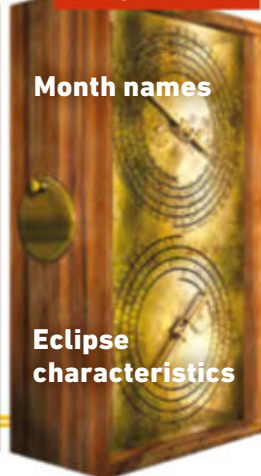
Planet
cycles

FRONT PLATE



Star
events

BACK PLATE



Eclipse
characteristics

BACK COVER



Cosmos
description

Calendar
structure

Moon-sun
cycles

Together with physicist Charalampos Karakalos, he first used X-rays to peek into the mechanism. "From all we know of science and technology in the Hellenistic Age we should have felt that such a device could not exist," de Solla Price is quoted as saying about the mechanism. In 2005,

a multi-discipline team led by Professor Mike Edmunds of Cardiff University and Tony Freeth, today of University College London, used computer-tomography to further discover exactly what the ancient device was designed to do.

The replicas that have since been built reveal that the original device had at least 69 hand-cranked gears that follow the moon and the sun through the zodiac. They even accommodate for the moon's elliptical orbit, not only predicting lunar phases but also the time and degree of eclipses - all decades before they occur. There was even an extra dial that foretold where and when the next Olympic-type games were scheduled. Some researchers speculate that the device also revealed the positions of the five planets that were known to exist in ancient times - Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.


Who initially built the device is



Visible is the largest gear in the mechanism, about 13 centimetres in diameter

unclear, but some experts have theorised that it could have been Archimedes (ca. 287 to 212 BCE). Freeth, however, thinks this is unlikely.

What is clear, however, is that the discovery of the Antikythera mechanism rewrote history. The mechanism proves that the ancient Greeks had far superior technical knowledge to what was previously thought. De Solla Price likened it to opening the grave of Tutankhamun and finding "decayed but recognisable parts of an internal combustion engine".

It would be another 15 centuries before another device of similar complexity was created to measure the heavens. Cousteau, who also excavated the Antikythera site, described its most important artefact this way: "The Greeks, a hundred years before Christ, held the key to the industrial revolution and modern computer technology." 

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Humour On The Job



In One Ear...

I'm a paramedic. I once responded to a man complaining of an insect crawling into his right ear. But more bothersome was the burning sensation in his left ear. That's when we noticed his wife holding a bottle of insect spray.

Turns out, she had sprayed insecticide into his left ear thinking it would 'flush' the insect out of his right ear. I had to explain to her that our ear canals are separated by our brain.

Reddit.com

Sealed With A Kiss

A relative of mine, a minister, once performed a wedding ceremony in a car. The pair were too old and frail to get out, so he got on his knees in the front seat and turned to them in the back.

After declaring them husband and wife, he told the groom, "At this time, it's customary to kiss the bride."

The by-now-very-weary groom responded, "Go ahead."

SUBMITTED BY PEGGY LEWIS

Ask An Expert

After getting my degree in environmental law, I was assigned to be the chief of environmental law, overseeing a number of Air Force bases. One of the first calls I got came from a subordinate officer. He posed a complex legal question and I was completely flummoxed.

"Hmm, great question," I said. "I'll find out who the Air Force expert is in that area and get back to you."

After a slight pause, the officer replied, "Well, sir, that would be you."

SUBMITTED BY DAVID HOARD

Tact A Requirement

I think we can all agree that hairdressers are the unsung heroes for looking at the pictures of celebrity hair we want and not laughing in our faces.

@IHideFromMyKids

During my Year Six language class, the topic of rhetorical appeals came up. I mentioned that the idea comes from the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle.

Later, as I went over their notes, I was pleased to see that at least one student had paid attention.

He'd written that rhetorical appeals were the creation of one Mr Eric Stottle.

SUBMITTED BY LISA QUINN

ALL WORK WITH A BIT OF PLAY

Quotes to make the daily grind more enjoyable.

"The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one."

OSCAR WILDE

"The only thing that ever sat its way to success was a hen."

SARAH BROWN

"The closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he fills out a job application form."

STANLEY J. RANDALL

"Son, if you really want something in this life, you have to work for it. Now quiet! They're about to announce the lottery numbers."

HOMER SIMPSON

"My boss told me to start every presentation with a joke. The first slide was my pay cheque."

ANONYMOUS

Source: Parade.com



13 THINGS

A Bouquet Of Facts About Flowers

BY Samantha Rideout



1 According to the ‘language of flowers’ also known as *floriography*, each month can be symbolised by a flower. July has the lily of the valley and the hawthorn, which can also mean a return to happiness.

The trend of using flowers to express emotions, which popularised the idea that red roses mean love, is credited to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, an 18th-century English poet and the wife of a British ambassador to Türkiye. Interest in the concept of floriography grew across Europe and eventually led to a French book, published in 1819, called *Le Langage Des Fleurs* by Charlotte de Latour.

2 The messages that flowers were used to convey weren’t always about love and happiness: margolds meant contempt, according to some manuals, and yellow roses could mean jealousy. Today, florists market yellow roses as a symbol of friendship.

ILLUSTRATION: SERGE BLOCH

3 Flowers can also have religious significance. For example, the *Lilium longiflorum* (Easter lily) is mentioned in the Bible as a symbol of purity and rebirth. The lotus flower signifies enlightenment for Buddhists because it grows in the mud but remains clean, thanks to its naturally water-repellent leaves.

4 Blooms are big business: the industry's leading auction company, Royal FloraHolland, sells more than 20 million flowers and plants each day. The Netherlands has dominated exports for decades, but the market is growing in Kenya, Ethiopia, Ecuador and Colombia. There's even a dedicated cargo area for flowers at the international airport in Nairobi, Kenya. Altogether, the global flower industry earns more than US\$30 billion (A\$44 billion).

5 Keep a bouquet looking healthy for longer by placing it in clean water with the stems cut at an angle. To keep bacteria at bay, pluck off all leaves below the water line.

And do add flower food to your vase; many bouquets come with a packet. They typically contain sugars to supplement the blooms' nutrition, citric acid to reach an optimal pH level and bleach to fight bacteria. To make your own, mix 30 millilitres of lemon or lime juice, 15 millilitres of sugar and seven millilitres of bleach into a litre of water.

6 You can preserve cut flowers by drying them. Simply tie a string around their stems and hang them upside down somewhere dark and dry, like in a cupboard or a closet. You could also press them between the pages of a heavy book or iron them between two sheets of wax paper. Air drying tends to work well for smaller flowers, while pressing is easiest with flat ones. With big, round blooms, burying them in silica gel crystals might get the best results.

7 Flowers look and smell lovely because they need to attract the birds and the bees – literally. The creatures carry pollen from a stamen (a male flower part) to the eggs in a pistil (a female flower part), allowing seeds to develop. Some flowers have only pistils, some have only stamens and some have both. Does this mean some plants pollinate themselves? The answer is yes.

8 Certain flowers rely on the wind to carry their pollen around, which is unfortunate for people with allergies. Between 10-30 per cent of people globally have allergic rhinitis, also known as hay fever, caused by ragweed and other pollen allergens.

9 Thanks to the alluring aroma of flowers, it's no surprise that we've bottled their scents. During the 19th century, perfumes were often derived from the fragrance of a single

READER'S DIGEST

flower, but as the industry evolved, the scent profiles became more complex, made up of several natural and synthetic chemicals. Chanel No. 5, which Coco Chanel famously insisted should make the wearer “smell like a woman, not a rose”, has the concentrated oil of around 12 roses and a thousand jasmine flowers in every 30ml bottle.

10 All over the world, there are flower festivals for aficionados to enjoy, from Canberra's colourful Floriade in September to the *hanami* or Cherry Blossom season across Japan in late March to April. Another popular event is the Bloemencorso ('flower parade') Bollenstreek, which takes place in the Netherlands. More than a million people celebrate it each spring. The main event is a 42-kilometre parade of flower-sculpture floats covered in hyacinths, daffodils and, of course, tulips.

11 Flowers are a favourite subject for many artists. Iconic examples include Monet's *Water Lilies*, Andy Warhol's *Flowers*, featuring hibiscus with an almost

psychedelic look – and street artist Banksy's *Flower Thrower* on a wall in a small town near Jerusalem. It depicts what looks like a rioter about to throw not a weapon but a bouquet. Let's not forget Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, which made headlines after activists threw tomato soup at it to protest against the use of fossil fuels.

12 In 2012, American astronaut Don Pettit planted a few seeds in plastic bags and grew them in space. As a result, a yellow zucchini blossom and a lopsided, yet cheery, sunflower became the first flowers to bloom on the International Space Station.

13 Flowers play a role in many important life moments, and using flowers to honour the dead is not new. In Mount Carmel, Israel, archaeologists discovered skeletons dating back some 13,000 years that had been lovingly placed on a bed of blooms. The deceased had been buried on a layer of mud that had preserved impressions of sages and figworts. **R**



End Of The Road

A UK pensioner's luck has 'finally run out' after his car was stopped and it was discovered he'd been driving without a licence for 50 years. The 69-year-old Derbyshire driver had never passed his test or possessed a driving licence, meaning he had been driving illegally for five decades. METRO



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BODY & MIND

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*Eight easy, science-backed exercises to
improve your mobility and overall health*



BY *Mark Witten*

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Daniel Ehrenworth*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Remie Geoffroi*

1 For Better Balance, Try Tandem Walking

HOW: Tandem walking is similar to the 'walk and turn' sobriety test used by police officers. Place the heel of one foot directly in front of and touching the toes of the back foot. Begin walking heel to toe in a straight line, as if you are on a tightrope, and continue for 20 steps. Keep your eyes forwards - no looking down at your feet. To increase difficulty, try tandem walking backwards.

WHY: People's sense of balance typically worsens with age, leading to falls, which can cause head trauma, hip fractures and other disabling injuries.

"Regularly practising balance exercises, such as tandem walking or the tree pose in yoga - when done safely - improves concentration, coordination and balance," says Erik Groessl, a professor of public health. "That's important for maintaining mobility and preventing falls, not only for older adults but for everyone."

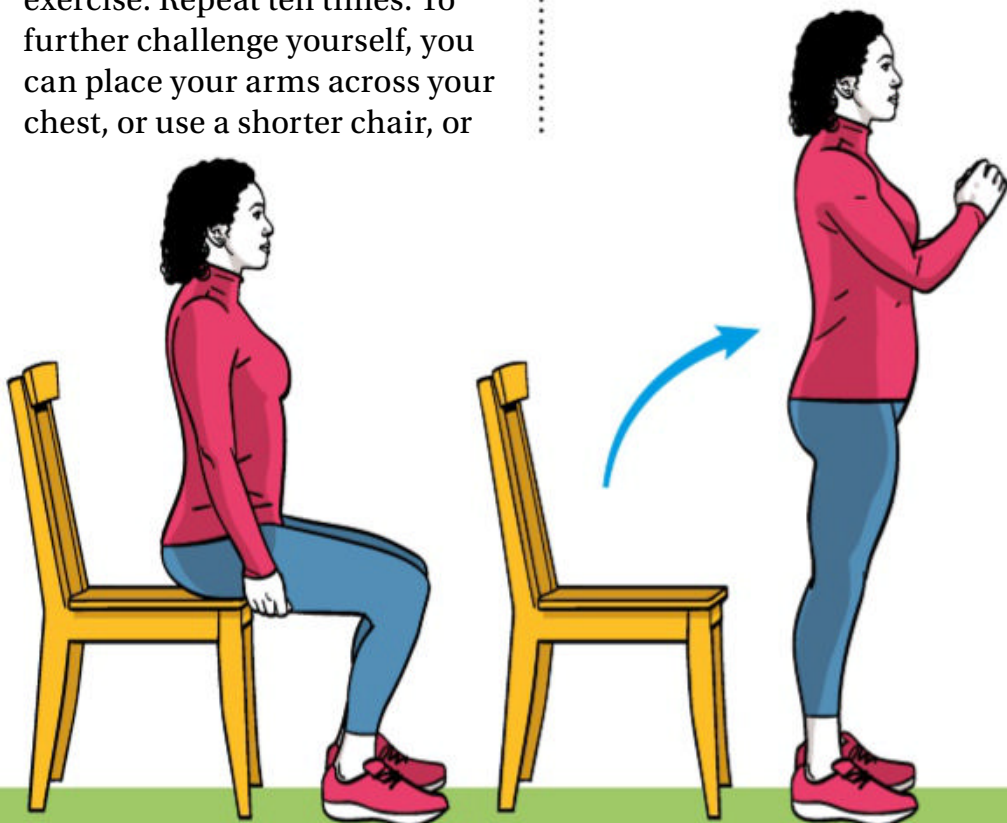


2 For Bone Health, Try The Sit-To-Stand Manoeuvre

HOW: Sit up tall in a sturdy chair (that won't slide) with your feet shoulder width apart; move forwards to the front of the chair. Place your feet so that your heels are slightly behind your knees. Hinge forwards from the hips, keeping the spine long, and place your hands on your thighs. Stand up, putting equal weight through both legs. Sit down by hinging at the hips and lowering yourself with control. Keep your chest up throughout the exercise. Repeat ten times. To further challenge yourself, you can place your arms across your chest, or use a shorter chair, or

hold light weights in your hands while doing the exercise.

WHY: Resistance exercises like this one strengthen the muscles and bones. "When you are contracting your muscles, you're pulling on the bone, which stimulates bone growth. That's why resistance exercises are particularly good for bone health and for preventing or managing osteoporosis," explains Lindsay Duncan, a kinesiology professor.

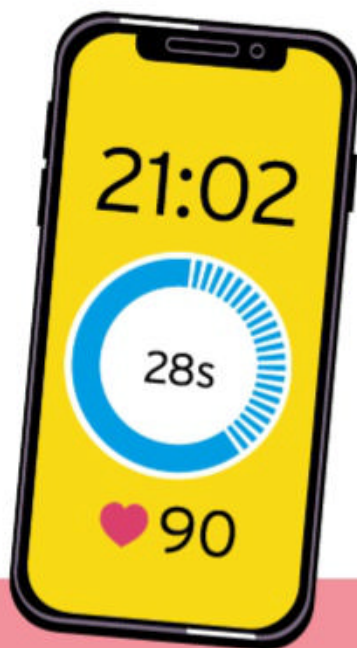


3 For Brain Health, Try Interval Walking

HOW: Walk for five minutes at a moderate pace. Increase the intensity to a brisk walk for two minutes. Alternate longer periods of leisurely walking with shorter periods of brisk walking for a total of 30 minutes. How much you pick up the pace in the shorter intervals and for how long is up to you. Interval walking allows you to incorporate higher-intensity aerobic exercise into your workout at your own pace. You could start gradually – for example, by having just one or two short segments of brisk walking within a 30-minute period. Then you could work

your way up to including more or longer segments of fast-paced walking, or even jogging.

WHY: A Canadian study found that sedentary older adults who went for interval walks significantly improved their memory. Also, in animal models, aerobic exercise has been shown to create new branches of blood vessels. “This allows neurons to survive under adverse environments,” explains Teresa Liu-Ambrose, a professor in physical therapy. Brain growth can lead to improved memory, executive function and decision-making, among other things. Her research has shown that aerobic exercise reduces cognitive decline in older women and men who have suffered mini-strokes.





4 For Preserving Muscle Mass, Try Kneeling Push-Ups

HOW: Start with your hands and knees on the floor, arms about shoulder width apart and extended. Your knees should be around hip width apart. Keep your back as straight as possible and your head in line with your spine. Inhale as you slowly lower your elbows to bring your chest towards the floor, keeping your core muscles contracted. Exhale as you push up from the floor to your starting position. Begin with a set of three or five repetitions and increase from there. Over time, work your way up to two sets of ten repetitions.

WHY: Around the age of 35, muscle mass begins to decrease

at a rate of one to two per cent a year; muscle loss accelerates to three per cent a year after age 60.

A 2022 Danish study found that older men who were physically active and regularly did resistance exercise were protected against age-related muscle decline. These participants had more muscle stem cells, which are important for muscle regeneration and growth, and performed better on muscle-function tests than both younger and older sedentary adults. This study showed what others have also found: that doing 20 to 30 minutes of resistance training two to three consecutive days a week can increase muscle mass in adults of all ages. After three months, participants had lean-weight gains of about 1.4 kilograms.

5 For Reversing Metabolic Syndrome, Try Stair Climbing

HOW: Start slow and easy on the staircase, walking one step at a time to the top. Walk down slowly and pause at the bottom to recover before climbing again. Maintain good posture and wear running shoes with good cushioning and support. Control your breathing by counting to three each time you inhale and exhale, breathing through your nose and filling your belly, rather than doing shallow chest breathing. Gradually increase the intensity and duration of stair-climbing sessions as your fitness improves over time. Talk to your doctor before starting if you have heart disease, respiratory disease or joint problems.

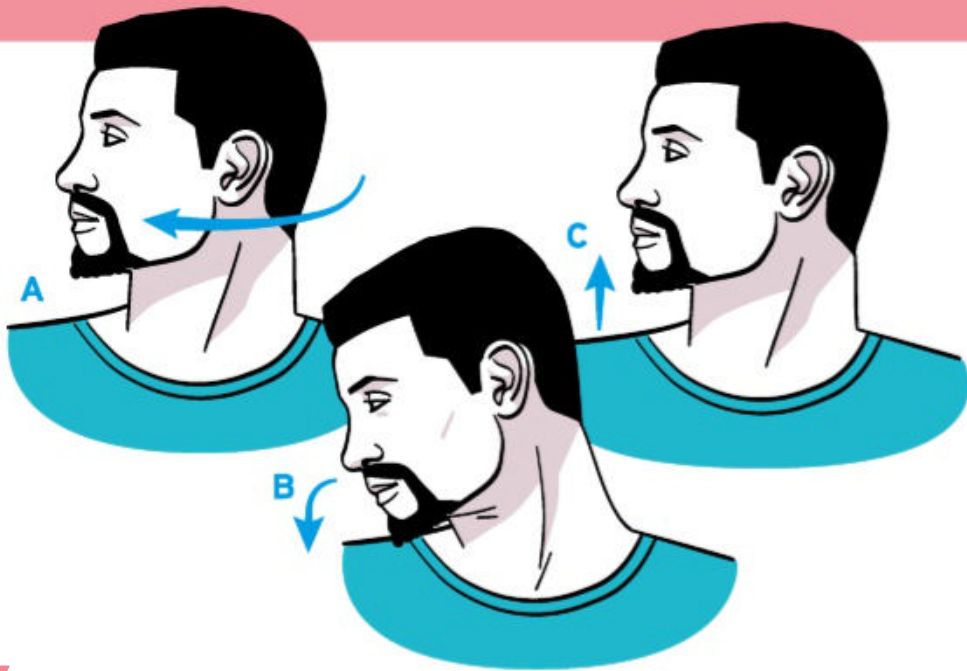
WHY: This is an efficient, low-impact cardio workout that engages more muscles than walking on a flat surface. A 2021 British study found that stair climbing is associated with improvements in blood lipids (cholesterol and triglycerides), abdominal weight, blood pressure and blood sugar – the four main risk factors for metabolic

syndrome, which raises the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Stair climbing also strengthens leg muscles and joints and improves balance.

One reason why stair climbing is effective in lowering blood sugar is because it targets large muscles, including your quads, hamstrings, calves and glutes. “Muscles require energy when we exercise, and one source of energy is sugar from the bloodstream,” explains Jenna Gillen, a kinesiology expert.

Exercising larger muscle groups uses up more of that sugar. Gillen’s study, published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, showed that short exercise ‘snacks’ of under three minutes every half-hour increased insulin sensitivity in healthy people who were inactive. High insulin sensitivity allows the body’s cells to use glucose more effectively.





6 For Flexibility, Try Neck Rotations

HOW: When doing neck rotations, keep your shoulders and hips facing forwards. Start by slowly rotating your neck to the right and gazing over your shoulder. To deepen the movement, gently press your chin towards your shoulder. Hold for up to 30 seconds and, alternating with rotations to the left, repeat the moves a few times.

WHY: Neck tilts and rotations are important exercises in many warm-ups and, like all stretching exercises, aim to increase your flexibility and range of motion. Some exercise forms are more effective than others. A 2016 study in *The Journal of Pain* found that tai chi was as effective

as neck exercises for treating chronic neck pain.

“Tai chi is brilliant at helping you establish proper alignment, and it relaxes your body so you can stretch better,” says Dr Patricia Huston, whose research focuses on the role of exercise in a healthy lifestyle. “For neck rotations, you want to float the head and bring your shoulders down so you’re extending from the neck, which brings your body into alignment. You turn your head from side to side and it relaxes the muscles in the neck, easing the tension people carry in their neck and shoulders while sitting at a computer.”

7 For Low-Back Pain, Try The Cat-Cow Pose

HOW: Begin the cat portion of this exercise by placing your hands and knees on the floor. Knees are under hips, hands under shoulders, and the spine is long and neutral. Engage your abs and inhale into the belly. On the exhale, round your spine, tailbone reaching down. Reach the top of your head down and let the back of your neck be long. On the inhale, move into the cow portion by sinking your belly towards the floor, reaching your tailbone up and chest forwards as you gaze forwards or slightly upwards, without putting extra pressure on your neck. Flow from the cat to the cow pose for at least ten rounds, inhaling for the cow and exhaling for the cat.

WHY: While no single move will

bring relief this one may help some people.

Yoga lengthens muscles such as the abdominals, obliques, hip extensors and hip flexors, and the movements help supply blood to the spinal discs. A 2017 study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that low-back-pain sufferers in a 12-week yoga programme had less pain and better quality of life than those who got standard care, such as meds, physical therapy and exercise.

“Cat-cow is a great warm-up pose that stretches and strengthens the deep small muscles in the area of the spine,” says Professor Groessl. As with other yoga exercises, it can help to ease back pain. He adds that the deep breathing done in yoga relaxes the nervous system.

“There is solid evidence that yoga can improve mood and lower stress, which helps reduce the psychological aspects of pain.”



8 For Arthritis Relief, Try Finger Bends

HOW: Hold your left arm straight out, with all your fingers straight, palm up. Bend your thumb slowly towards your palm, hold for a few seconds, then straighten. Repeat with all the fingers on your left hand, bending each and moving it to the centre of your palm, holding and then straightening. Repeat the entire sequence with your right hand.

WHY: When osteoarthritis affects the joints of your hands or fingers, it can cause pain, stiffness, swelling, tenderness and weakness. Hand exercises – such as finger bends, finger lifts, finger slides and making a C, an O or a fist – and wrist bends are easy and can help relieve pain.

Hand exercises also strengthen the muscles that support your hands, helping you do any hand movements more comfortably. These exercises also increase production of the synovial fluid that helps protect and lubricate your joints. A Norwegian study found that women with arthritis who did hand exercises reduced hand-joint pain and improved grip strength and hand function.



Although it may seem counterintuitive to those with stiff and sore joints (for example, people with arthritis), exercise for your entire body is crucial to improve daily function. Physical activity strengthens the muscles and other tissues surrounding the joints, which are essential for supporting and easing stress on your bones. Plus, it strengthens your bones and helps combat fatigue.

Different types of exercise have different benefits: range-of-motion exercises reduce stiffness and increase your ability to move with less pain, or with no pain at all, and resistance exercises build stronger muscles to support and protect your joints. And keep in mind that low-impact exercise, such as walking, cycling or swimming, is easier on the joints.



QUOTABLE QUOTES



I'd rather trust nine people and have the tenth one stab me in the back. I'd take that fall in order to have those nine friendships or working relationships instead of having none. That's not living.

MARGOT ROBBIE, ACTRESS

*We need society,
and we need
solitude also, as
we need summer
and winter, day
and night,
exercise and rest.*

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON,
ARTIST

When one door
closes another door
opens; but we so
often look so long
and so regretfully
upon the closed
door, that we do not
see the ones which
open for us.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL,
INVENTOR



Go a little bit out of
your depth. And when
you don't feel that
your feet are quite
touching the bottom,
you're just about in
the right place to do
something exciting.

DAVID BOWIE, SINGER

I'M WILLING
TO INVEST IN
MYSELF. I'VE
ALWAYS MADE
A RETURN
ON THAT
INVESTMENT.

TIFFANY HADDISH,
COMEDIAN





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CHASING POLE POSITION

*Australian Oscar Piastri's journey
from karting to Formula 1 racing*

BY *Stewart Bell*

Oscar Piastri had an alarming experience on March 6 this year during the countdown to the start of his maiden Grand Prix in Bahrain. He wasn't where he needed to be.

"When the start lights came on, I was actually still pulling up into my grid slot, which was a bit of a 'welcome to F1,'" says Piastri, who many believe has the talent to one day become World

Champion. "It all happened pretty quickly. I did the drivers' parade, and then my laps to the grid, followed by the national anthem and then it was helmet on and jump in the car."

Then, just 15 laps into the 57-lap race in the Bahraini desert, PIASTRI's McLaren conked out with an electrical issue, forcing him to retire early.

With a disappointing debut like that, PIASTRI did well to quickly bounce back at the next race in Saudi Arabia two weeks later. There, on the streets of the ancient city of Jeddah, he was flawless in qualifying and steered his McLaren to an impressive eighth position on the starting grid. He went on to finish the race in 15th place.

Things further improved for the Melbourne-born driver, who on home soil emerged from the most chaotic Australian Grand Prix of all-time – three red flag stoppages setting a new F1 record – scoring his maiden points of four for coming eighth place.

This result saw the 21-year-old PIASTRI join Australian drivers Mark Webber and Daniel Ricciardo in opening their F1 points balance at Melbourne's Albert Park Circuit. PIASTRI had grown up in nearby Brighton, a suburb only a short drive from the Albert Park track, and played AFL and cricket on the ovals that the other F1 drivers know as 'F1 Paddock'.

Not much further down the road, at Oakleigh Go-Kart Racing Club in Melbourne's south-east, PIASTRI first stood out behind the wheel on the karting race track. While he started karting late at age nine, his journey in motorsport actually began three years earlier with radio-controlled racing cars. He not only won at a national level, but also learnt the technical side of car racing.

"There's probably more things you can change on a remote controlled car than there are on most race cars," explains PIASTRI. "You can change springs on the shock absorbers. You can change the toe, camber: all the sort of normal racing car things. You did all that, because you had to be quick."

In 2016, and already enrolled at Melbourne's Haileybury College, at just 14 PIASTRI transferred as a boarder to the school's UK campus in Hertford, England. This meant he could compete in karting as a professional at both European and World levels. By the end of that year, the young driver had secured a sponsorship to drive in the Formula 4 UAE Championship, a racing category intended for young, entry-level drivers who want to make the move across from karting and into Formula 3. It marked the start of his progress through the pathways to Formula 1.

HIS JOURNEY BEGAN WITH RADIO- CONTROLLED RACING CARS

TO MAKE IT INTO FORMULA 1, drivers must 'scale' the ranks of the tiered racing competitions that exist below – Formula Renault Eurocup, Formula 3 and Formula 2. During 2016, Piastri competed in eleven Formula 4 races and took two podiums, before winning six races in 2017 to be placed runner-up for the season.

In 2018 he moved up to the next level of competition – the Formula Renault Eurocup. Again, within 12 months he'd secured his maiden title with seven wins, five pole positions and five fastest laps. The momentum went vertical from there, with successive successful campaigns in F3 and F2 smashing another record: three-straight junior crowns. This success made Piastri Formula 1's hottest rookie prospect.

For a sport that has just 20 driver starter positions across ten teams per race, entry as a Formula 1 driver is both highly competitive and granted to only a hard-working and talented few. Often exceptional success on go-kart circuits and the junior competitions Formula Renault Eurocup, F3 and F2 is not enough.

Drivers, even those with family already involved in the sport, often come up the ranks with the help of the Alpine Academy, which is a programme run by French car manufacturer, Renault, that supports young drivers throughout their early careers. In 2020 Piastri acquired a new manager, Mark Webber, and secured



AUSTRALIAN F1 DRIVERS

Australia may not be a heavyweight in F1, but each year it hosts the Melbourne Grand Prix at Albert Park, and has produced 15 drivers.

Two have won the World Drivers' Championship – Alan Jones in 1980 driving for Williams, and Sir Jack Brabham in 1959, 1960 and 1966.

Australia has only two other race winners. Mark Webber, with nine, made 215 starts for Minardi, Jaguar, Williams, and Red Bull. Webber was a star right from his debut in Melbourne in 2002. The boy from Queanbeyan scored two points for fifth place in a barely competitive Minardi and the entire circuit erupted in celebration.

The other, with eight, is Daniel Ricciardo, who is currently third driver at Red Bull. The Perth-born racer has made 232 starts to date for HRT, Toro Rosso (now AlphaTauri), Red Bull, Renault, and McLaren. Known for his perma-smile, and fighting spirit, Ricciardo is one of the sport's most-loved personalities.



F1 FACTOIDS

- Oscar Piastri is one of three drivers this year born since the year 2000. The others are Logan Sargeant (Williams) and Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri).
- The average height of an F1 driver is 1.77m and the average weight is 68.05kg.
- F1 drivers are paid handsomely with 2023 salaries ranging from US\$1 million for Sargeant at Williams, to the reigning F1 World Champion Max Verstappen at Red Bull on US\$55 million.
- Haas driver Kevin Magnussen was F1's fastest driver last year, hitting 351.7km/h in Mexico.
- Singapore's Marina Bay Street Circuit is the toughest track, with drivers losing around 3kg in sweat with cockpit temperatures as high as 60°C.

a place in the Alpine Academy. These two factors fostered Piastri's golden run through F3 and F2 - and ultimately helped him secure a place in the coveted McLaren Formula 1 team at the start of this year.

From the outset, the French-based Alpine Academy had big ambitions for Piastri. "He's going to learn a lot with us," said Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi when Piastri joined the academy back in 2020. "He's going to bring his unique expertise because he's a great driver. He knows driving racing lines better than anyone else, so he will probably be able to bring his contribution to even the senior pilots, drivers such as Fernando and Esteban, so we are really looking forward to building the future with Oscar."

THE COMPETITION to make it into the F1 competition is fierce, and speculation about which drivers will be dropped, traded or elevated dominates much of the lead up to the start of each season. Back in 2020, it wasn't clear when - or with which of the ten teams - Piastri would make his F1 debut. It was looking like he'd either be loaned to back-of-the-grid squad Williams Racing from 2023 or return to the Alpine outfit and wait it out until veteran Spanish driver Fernando Alonso finally decided to retire. Piastri's links with Alpine remained his strongest option. Alpine had indicated it would trade 3500 milometres in F1 testing, expenses and a reserve

driver position for control over PIASTRI in the 2023 season, yet the deal was not watertight. By 2022, and with nothing definite, PIASTRI and WEBBER were right to be concerned.

But then, the McLaren team came calling. A more competitive team than either Alpine or Williams, McLaren was looking to replace Daniel Ricciardo, whose performance had been underwhelming. McLaren successfully struck a deal with Ricciardo for his early exit; opening the way for PIASTRI to sign with McLaren, and don the team's signature colour of papaya orange.

Meanwhile at Alpine, a 2023 seat opened up for PIASTRI after Alonso signed with Aston Martin. So when Alpine named him as its second driver for 2023, the Australian swiftly shot it down on social media. Alpine took the case to F1's Contract Recognition Board, which rules over driver deals in the sport, and lost. Alpine's team principal Otmar Szafnauer said that he had "never seen anything" like it, and that they had expected more loyalty from PIASTRI, given the millions of dollars invested in his career since 2020.

But Alpine's indecisiveness and delays sorting both Alonso's and PIASTRI's futures had cost it dearly. Both drivers are racing for the squad's rivals in the 2023 season.

Now that PIASTRI is at McLaren, he

needs to consistently perform among the top ten in race finishes to establish himself at the top of the sport – as well as in the team, where he needs to also compete against more experienced teammate Lando Norris.

It's too early to tell whether PIASTRI can rise up, as he did in the junior categories, to become Australia's first Formula 1 World Champion since Alan Jones back in 1980. "Can we expect him to be winning races straight

away? He's good enough if the car's good enough," says David Croft, the voice of F1, Sky Sports. "More realistically, though, we see a driver coming in, taking things in his stride, and learning week after

week. I think he's had a start to the season that he can feel thoroughly satisfied with, but he will want more from his car and more from himself."

As with all racing teams, McLaren has two drivers, each one with their own car. PIASTRI is realistic about his team mate Lando Norris's success in the five years he's competed in F1. "He's just quick, there's no magic to it," PIASTRI says. "He's been with the team for a long time now. So I'm just picking up bits here and there. But, we've been driving in quite a similar way, which is encouraging."

It will be all eyes on PIASTRI as his journey in Formula 1 with McLaren continues. **R**

**HE NEEDS TO
CONSISTENTLY
PERFORM AMONG
THE TOP TEN IN
RACE FINISHES**

Just In CASE

Does your first aid kit have all the essentials?

BY *Anna-Kaisa Walker* ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Kate Traynor*

The last time I cracked open my home's first aid kit, I had one thumb swaddled in bloody paper towels after I'd accidentally nicked it while chopping onions. Fumbling through the zippered compartments as my thumb throbbed, I discovered nothing but a few yellowed bandages, dried-out antiseptic wipes, some gauze, tape and a pair of scissors that looked like the kind kids get in kindergarten.

Luckily I managed to stem the bleeding with the gauze and went on to cook a decent spaghetti bolognese. But I'd come to the sober realisation that my cheap, neglected first aid kit would do my family no good in an honest-to-goodness emergency.

To help you make sure yours

contains all the right things, I spoke to experts in emergency medicine. Here are the items they recommend for any first aid kit.

Aspirin Two 81-milligram tablets of chewable Aspirin can be life-saving if taken within the first hour of a suspected heart attack. But call emergency services first and await instructions; it's not safe for everyone (for example, those on other blood thinners).

Disposable non-latex gloves When helping another person, put these on to decrease the risk of disease transmission.

Hand sanitiser This can be used to clean your hands when soap and water aren't available; use it before putting on the gloves.

Antiseptic wipes If you don't have access to clean running water, use these to clean and disinfect cuts before applying a bandage or ointment.

Antibacterial ointment This helps prevent infection by stopping the growth of bacteria in minor wounds.

Hydrocortisone cream It relieves itching and irritation from insect bites or poisonous plants. You can get it in single-use packets.

Abdominal dressings These large dressings can help control heavy bleeding from major wounds. Keep firm pressure on the dressed wound until help arrives.

Gauze Both the squares and the rolls are good for packing and dressing wounds, and stabilising protruding objects (which you should never pull out).

Waterproof adhesive tape This firmly secures the dressing over a wound.

Self-adhesive bandages Have a variety of sizes in your kit, for minor cuts and scrapes.

Triangular bandage This can be used as an arm sling.

Tweezers The type with pointed tips, which allow for the removal of ticks or splinters and for cleaning debris from a wound, are ideal.

Trauma shears It's worth having good scissors so you can quickly and easily cut thick bandages or clothing.



Trauma shears have a sharp, serrated blade.

CPR face shield If you need to perform rescue breaths, these shields, with a one-way valve, are a good barrier against bacteria and viruses.

Instant cold packs Activated when you squeeze them, they help reduce pain and swelling for muscle sprains or bruises.

Burn hydrogel Gel-saturated burn pads cool and soothe damaged skin; they're ideal when it's not possible to run skin under cool water.

Mylar blanket These "space blankets" help maintain a person's core temperature after a severe injury or shock.

It's important to keep these items nearby and accessible, because you never know when you'll need them. "First aid kits are most commonly used for minor injuries like cuts, but they can also help you in less-common emergency situations, such as heart attacks or life-threatening bleeding," says emergency doctor Dr Nathan Charlton.

IF YOU ARE IN THE MARKET for a first aid kit, here are some basics to keep in mind.

Buy the right container Your first-aid items should be kept in a waterproof bag or an air-tight container with clear compartments that allow you to

see what's inside. That way you won't have to dig around or dump things out of your kit just to see where an item is. A good quality ready-made first aid kit should have most, if not all, of what you need. Look for one created by a reputable organisation like the Red Cross or St John Ambulance, which are sold at major retailers. If any items are missing, buy them separately.

Check expiry dates Add a monthly notification to your calendar to ensure medications in the kit are up to date. "That also reminds you why you have a first aid kit, and it may also help you recall any training you've had," Dr Charlton says.

Get training There's no better way to prepare yourself for emergencies than by taking a course. Around the world, organisations like the Red Cross, Red Crescent and St John Ambulance offer basic

first aid and CPR certifications that can be completed over a weekend.

They also publish manuals, some in pocket size that you can keep in your kit. These guides can steer you through a range of scenarios – from panic attacks to spinal injuries – with pictograms. To be even better prepared, you can download the Red Cross First Aid app on your smartphone to update and maintain your life-saving skills.

**YOU CAN
DOWNLOAD THE
RED CROSS FIRST
AID APP TO KEEP
YOUR LIFE-SAVING
SKILLS CURRENT**



**Zaid Ait Malek running
the Zegama Marathon
in Northern Spain in 2014**



BONUS READ



SKY RUNNER

How pure resilience helped this young man from Morocco scramble his way to victory — in both sport and in life

BY Sorrel Downer



The eyes of the crowd are on Zaid Ait Malek as he takes his place at the starting line. Wild-haired and wiry, he clowns around with fellow competitors, but then, as the race countdown begins, Zaid falls silent, staring straight ahead. “Ten, nine....”

The 38-year-old mountain runner visualises how he'll handle the course's challenges, when he will push, when he'll hold back. Zaid touches his fingers together in prayer. *God protect us all and return us safely.*

The way Zaid approaches this run – the Calamorro Skyrace in March 2022 – is the way he approaches life. Faith, resilience and joy have helped him navigate the journey from Moroccan stowaway, to Spanish sports hero, to husband and father.

But his focus right now is the start of this 27-kilometre run through mountains high above the southern Spanish coast. “...two, one.” When the signal sounds, the ‘sky runners’ pound away and quickly disappear. Some 120 elite runners from across Spain are competing for a trophy.

Moving past brush, loose stones underfoot, Zaid is transported back to his childhood, to the Atlas Mountains where he grew up.

While city children have parks to play in, Zaid and his nine siblings – he is third youngest – had steep,

sheer mountains. They played with goats near the family *jaima*, the tent that nomadic Berbers live in; his mother had woven it from wool. The goats were part of a herd his family cared for and moved with as they sought new grazing areas.

Zaid loved watching the sure-footed animals jump from rock to rock, and mimicked their technique until it became instinct. Another favourite game was throwing stones down the mountainside and chasing them as fast as he could.

The family's *jaima* was above Oudadi, an isolated village some 350 kilometres inland from Casablanca and about the same distance north-east of Marrakesh. As Berbers, they lived far removed from modern life, with their own ancient culture and language.

Life was hard. Zaid's mother, Heda, often went without food so there was enough for her children. Hssain, his father, was a thinker, full of ideas and plans to make things better, and he wanted the best for his children.



Zaid's sister, Smol, and his mother, Heda, in Oudadi when Zaid was a boy

When Zaid was six, Hssain asked him, "Do you want to go to school?" Zaid wasn't sure, but when his father bought him a book bag at the market and told him, "Study well and strive for better," he couldn't refuse. Anyway, he really wanted the bag.

As the first of his siblings to attend school, Zaid found it a shock. He couldn't read or write and spoke only Berber; he didn't know Arabic, Morocco's official language. In the playground, he watched the other children play, but didn't know how to talk to them or join in.

And living in a house – he was staying with his older brother's family in Oudadi to be close to the school – was also strange. He missed falling asleep in the jaima's one room as his parents told him stories, and waking to the sound of bleats and birdsong. He

lived for the holidays, when he could run free in the mountains.

But Zaid was adaptable and made friends fast, and he was always top of the class. Hssain burst with pride when he looked at the school reports his son brought home.

Zaid went on to college, but knew his father struggled to support him. "I should be earning money, not costing it," Zaid finally told him and, against his father's protests, he left school in his late teens to work alongside his cousin Hassan as a labourer on building sites in Casablanca and the capital, Rabat.

Ambitious and keen to keep learning, Zaid caught the eye of his boss, who trained him as an electrician and gave him the higher-paid jobs. By age 20, Zaid was earning enough to send money home. Life was good.

But the talk among the rest of the workers, especially Hassan, was that life was better in Europe, where wages were double or triple what they earned in Morocco. When a boy from near Oudadi returned from Spain with a foreign car, Hassan told Zaid, "We'll be working all our lives and never be able to afford a car like that."

For most, the only way to get into Europe was illegally, hidden in a truck aboard a ferry making the 30-kilometre voyage across the Strait of Gibraltar. Hassan often spent his days off in the port city of Tangier, watching for opportunities to leave Morocco.

In December 2006, Zaid was at his parents' jaima, preparing for the Muslim festival Eid al-Adha, when Hassan called from Tangier. "I'm going to escape," he said. "Come help me find

"You're going to die!" Zaid hissed. "Come out!" But with the sudden panic came an impulse – he too ducked under the truck and grabbed hold of the undercarriage.

The cousins clung on as the truck boarded the ferry. Once the drivers headed to the upper deck, the two dropped down and found a canvas-covered trailer to hide in. Zaid was wearing just a tracksuit and trainers, and they had no water, but as the ferry set sail he felt strangely calm. *I'm here now*, he thought. *This door has opened and I'm going through.*

A stranger in a strange land

At the Spanish port of Algeciras, the stowaways cautiously peeked out. They'd arrived at midnight and the driver had left the trailer in the car

"YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!" ZAID HISSED AT HIS COUSIN. "COME OUT!"

a way to get to Spain." Zaid said no, telling him, "You're mad!" In the end, though, he made the long journey to Tangier – but only to fetch his cousin home for the family celebrations.

On December 30, the pair took a late afternoon stroll to the port – "Just for a look," Hassan promised – before heading back to Oudadi. But when a truck, blocked by a taxi, stopped beside them, Hassan quickly disappeared beneath it.

park and driven away. By 1.30am the port was silent; the pair left the trailer and headed for the busy coastal motorway, the Autovía del Mediterráneo, where they began walking northeast towards Málaga. It started raining, so they took refuge under a concrete bridge before starting again at daybreak.

Around 9am a car slowly approached. "Police!" shouted Hassan, and took off down the road. Zaid



Before his unplanned departure from Morocco, Zaid (front) worked on construction sites in Rabat

jumped a fence and hid behind a tree. When he peered out, he saw the police car coming. Hassan, who had been caught and was in the back of the car – and would shortly be deported – could only watch as his more athletic cousin sprinted off the motorway and out of sight.

Zaid ran until he reached a quiet road. He felt very alone. He was an illegal immigrant, he hadn't eaten in 24 hours, and he had only the wet clothes on his back and a little Moroccan money. He knew nobody, didn't speak Spanish, and had nowhere to go.

But he remembered his father telling him, "You must always follow the open way." He had to trust that

his father was right. It was New Year's Eve, the right sort of day for new beginnings.

When he passed a service station, the Arabic-speaking woman working there called him over and offered him coffee, breakfast, and a bag filled with bread and Coca-Cola. She also gave him the name of friends in Barcelona, so Zaid began to walk in that direction. A couple of hours later, he got a lift from some Moroccans who took him to their house, let him shower, and gave him fresh clothes.

When he told them where he was going, they laughed. "Walking? It's nearly a thousand kilometres. It will take you months!" They were going to visit family in the province of Almería and invited Zaid to join them.

In Almería, Zaid called his mother from a pay phone. "We didn't know where you were," she said, worry in her voice. "You didn't even plan to leave!"

Zaid reassured her he was safe, but added, "Now that I'm here, I'm going to try to make a better life."

Hanging up, Zaid heard someone speaking Berber. The man in the next booth introduced himself as Jilali – and he was from a village near Oudadi. "What a coincidence!" exclaimed Zaid.

Jilali said he worked nearby as a fruit picker; his boss had given him a house to use and was looking for workers. "Come with me," he said.

Meeting someone from home felt like fate, and so, after thanking his new friends, Zaid left with Jilali.

Picking tomatoes and watermelons for eight hours a day gave Zaid blistered hands and backache. And with temperatures under the plastic roof hitting the mid-40s in summer, the conditions were tough. Zaid was now working close to the Tabernas Desert in the sprawl of horticultural hothouses known in Spain as the Sea of Plastic.

As an illegal immigrant Zaid could be deported at any moment. But it was worth it; his boss gave him a contract and paid his taxes and contributions. And after three years Zaid would be eligible for Spanish residency. Then he could look for a better job and visit his family.

Jilali's house was run-down, with

teach himself Spanish so he'd be ready for any future opportunities. Finally, he felt his life was coming together.

An unexpected detour

One morning in 2009, two years after his arrival in Spain, Zaid's phone rang as he was picking tomatoes. It was his brother, in tears, saying, "Our brother Hassan is dead." A bottle of butane had exploded, and Hassan, the second eldest sibling, had died of his injuries.

Then his father came to the phone. Zaid told him, "I'm coming home."

But Hssain said, "Nothing will be gained by that. Your brother won't return and you'll regret it. Stay on the path. Find what you are searching for and accomplish your dreams."

Zaid sat on a crate in the hothouse and cried. Then he shut himself in his

"STAY ON THE PATH, AND ACCOMPLISH YOUR DREAMS," HIS FATHER TOLD HIM

no electricity, so Zaid set to work hooking up a power supply. He bought light bulbs and plugs, a television, and the tools and parts to fit a shower. When the boss came for a visit, he was amazed. "What has happened!" he said to Zaid. "You've just got here and you've done all this?"

Meanwhile, Zaid's fellow workers, on seeing how fast he ran on the football pitch on his time off, invited him to join the local team. And he began to

room, not working and barely eating for two weeks, just lying on the bed, turning things over and over in his mind. His friends rallied round, persuading him to stay.

It was true, Zaid knew, that with the money he was sending home, his father had managed to buy a half-built house and was working on finishing it. So he decided to try to stay positive. He was homesick, but would push on.



Zaid picking tomatoes in a hothouse soon after arriving in Spain

A year later, he received another call from Morocco – his father had passed away from cancer. It was the bitterest of blows: Zaid was tortured knowing how much his father had missed him. He wept, thinking, *He did so much for me and died without me.*

Zaid was just weeks away from getting the papers that would allow him to stay in Spain; finally, three years after leaving Morocco, he would be able to go see his family. But when he made the application in January 2010, it was denied; he was told he hadn't worked enough days to qualify, yet he knew he had. Zaid confronted his boss and discovered that in order to save money, he hadn't declared the full number of days Zaid had worked.

Zaid was shocked. But as an illegal

alien there was nothing he could do. If he wanted a life in Spain, he would have to stay and work an extra year to make up the time. In October, when he heard about temporary work picking olives in the groves of Baena, in the autonomous region of Andalusia in southern Spain, he left, hoping to find a more reliable boss.

With nobody to play football with in his new base, Zaid took up running. One rainy evening, he caught up with three Spanish runners from the local athletics club, Media Legua Baena. They talked a lot over the 16-kilometre run, Zaid effortlessly keeping pace. He was wearing old trainers and had no fancy running gear, but the club members could see he had talent.

READER'S DIGEST

The following day, as Zaid watched people training at the athletics club, a police car drew up. His heart pounded as a uniformed officer lowered his sunglasses.

“Remember me?” he said, and to Zaid’s relief he saw it was one of the runners. “The club president wants to meet you,” said the man.

Media Legua was looking for talented runners to help them win regional road races, but more importantly, the members were part of a kind and welcoming community.

“If we help you with residency papers and look for work for you,” club president Jesus Morales told Zaid, “would you like to stay with us as a runner for the club?”

“Yes!” Zaid replied.

One of his jobs was assisting Carlos Chamorro, who ran the club’s training programme for kids. Carlos took in Zaid’s huge smile and friendly manner as Jesus introduced him,



us,” recalls Jesus. “We shared what we had, and he gave us everything he had to give.”

After some technical training, Zaid – who had been nicknamed ‘Ferrari’ by club members – was soon travelling on the team bus and proudly

THE CLUB MEMBERS MADE ZAID FEEL LIKE HE WAS ONE OF THE FAMILY

and liked him immediately. The new assistant’s enthusiasm and sense of fun soon made him a hit with the children, too.

The club members made Zaid feel like one of the club’s family, helping fix up a house for him and donating the furniture he needed.

“We loved him so much and he,

running for the club in road races across the region.

One Saturday late in 2010, Carlos invited his friend for a training run in the nearby Sierras Subbéticas mountains. Zaid was in his element.

“This is like being six years old and playing in the Atlas Mountains again,” he told Carlos, laughing as he



Opposite: Zaid with Curro Navarro, secretary of the athletics club Media Legua Baena. Above: Zaid at the 2015 Transgrancanaria race

leapt up the steep and rocky terrain and sprinted down the slopes. Carlos couldn't believe his eyes. *He's like a mountain goat!* he thought. *He has no fear!*

While road races are run on even surfaces, mountain running involves rough trails and steep climbs. Carlos explained there were trail-running and high-altitude competitions for local, regional, national, and world titles. Zaid listened, amazed – this was the challenge he'd been searching for! “There's a race here in the Subbéticas next spring,” said Carlos. “We should train and try to get in.”

The race was the 2011 Subbética Trail, a 26-kilometre regional championship that attracted the best runners in Spain. Along with a small group from the club, Carlos and Zaid both qualified. On the day, Zaid, sporting new trainers, lined up with more than 150 competitors, and set off fast. Running behind, Carlos could hear competitors discussing his friend. “He thinks it's a road race!” said one. Going too fast uphill would soon sap any runner's energy.

But Zaid made it up the mountain so quickly that, once on top, he couldn't see anyone following, and started to panic. *I'm lost!* he thought. Just then the race steward, who'd been resting nearby, jumped up, startled. “You're here already?” he gasped.

Zaid pushed on, running incredibly

READER'S DIGEST

fast on the dangerous downhill portions, too, and won the race. It was a dream come true to cross the line to loud applause – and to share this experience with the people who had helped him so much. He had finished two minutes and 17 seconds ahead of the reigning champion and more than ten minutes ahead of the rest of the field. Leads in these races are usually measured in seconds.

For an unknown beginner to win this prestigious event by such a margin was astonishing. Everyone was asking who he was and where he'd come from. The regional selector said he thought Zaid could qualify for the national championship, the Copa de España. He did – and he beat all competition in 2013 and again in 2014.

Such was his mental and physical drive that Zaid even won races while fasting for Ramadan – though he would say it was his Muslim faith that gave him strength.

One of Spain's most iconic high-altitude races is the Zegama-Aizkorri Marathon. It's 42 kilometres, with an elevation gain of 2700 metres. Thousands of runners apply to enter; only 500 qualify. Although Zaid was a newcomer, in 2013 the club persuaded the organisers to give him a chance. When he came fourth, completing the race in less than four hours – only four minutes behind the winner – it was clear to everyone Zaid had the potential to become world champion.

Zaid was rising through the ranks,



and, because he was about to shift his focus to running in the more elite races, he and Carlos ran their last race together in 2015. As Carlos approached the finish line, he saw his friend waiting for him – so they could cross the line together.

Reunited

With the Baena club's help, Zaid received his Spanish residency papers in 2012. He would need to requalify each year, fulfilling a minimum number of days of employment. But it meant that finally he would be able to leave Spain to visit his family.

It was midnight when he arrived home and pushed the door open. Everyone was waiting for him. There was sadness that his father and brother weren't there to greet him, but his



Opposite: Aicha captured Zaid's heart. Above: Zaid running the 2015 Retezat SkyRace in the mountains of Romania

mother was determined to make this a joyous homecoming. She stepped forward and embraced him, smiling. "I'm happy to see you return," she told him. Zaid promised he'd come again soon, and often.

Though Zaid's life was now in Spain, his roots were in Morocco, and soon, so was his heart. A young woman named Aicha Ouhou, born in the neighbouring village but raised outside the area, was part of an extended circle of friends who followed Zaid's racing success on Facebook. The two had never met, but in the course of online chats they had developed a special bond.

On Zaid's second visit home, in 2013, he met Aicha for the first time. As soon as he saw her laughing eyes, he knew they would be together – the glances they shared spoke volumes. On subsequent trips a romance blossomed; they married the following year.

Carlos and friends from Baena attended the wedding in Oudadi, and to Zaid, watching as they celebrated with his family, it was as if all the parts of his life – love, running, happiness and success in two countries – had finally come together.

Then came a major setback.

In 2014, the Andalusian Mountaineering Federation (FAM) began what was intended to be a fast-track process of naturalisation for Zaid on the basis of his exceptional value to Spanish



Zaid and his family in 2022 at the Jimbee Volcano Ultra Marathon in Colombia

athletics. But nothing happened. Over the coming years, nobody knew why Zaid wasn't getting a response from the government on his naturalisation application.

Then, in 2018, he learned he was about to be deported. Because he was racing so much, he had fallen short of the number of days he was required to work in order to retain his residency status. "This is the end of the dream," he told his friends. "I'm done."

But his friends were having none of it. As Zaid's spirits flagged, the international running community stepped in to support him. Spanish runner Javier Ordieres started an online campaign called 'Zaid Stays!' (#ZaidSeQueda) to put pressure on

the authorities, and it quickly spread across social media.

"The moment we heard he needed help," says Javier, "everyone threw themselves into it 100 per cent."

On September 29, 2018, Zaid began what was to be his last race before deportation, the 110-kilometre Ultra Pirineu in Bagà, Spain; there were 923 participants. He was exhausted by stress, but hundreds of people were there to encourage him, holding placards and cheering him on. He ran like the wind and finished second.

As he stood in the finish line area he looked at his phone and saw hundreds of messages of support flooding in, among them offers of legal help.

PHOTO: JOSE MIGUEL MUÑOZ

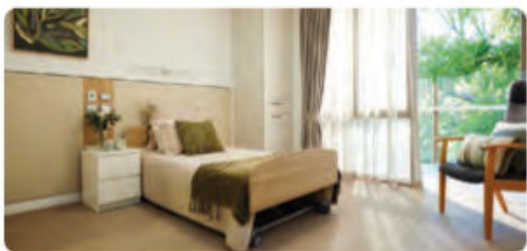
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Brightwater's care is backed up by our dedicated Research Centre assisting us to discover new ways to improve the wellbeing and quality of lives of our residents.

It was soon discovered that the citizenship application prepared in 2014 was still sitting in the registry in Baena; apparently, a clerk had mistakenly filed it away.

Zaid was granted Spanish nationality on November 30, 2018. After 12 years of uncertainty, he was finally safe, finally settled. Signed by Jimbee, a major Spanish sports sponsor, he has a team behind him that believes in him, and the support he needs to pursue his professional career.

In some races, the winner is called 'Champion of Spain'. But as a Moroccan citizen, Zaid had, up to now, been unable to step up to the podium when he won those; that honour went to the Spanish second-placed runners. Ever generous of spirit, Zaid had said he didn't mind. But, clearly, it wasn't right. Now, he could take his place on the podium.

And he could compete in international events, like the 244-kilometre Volcano UltraMarathon in Costa Rica – a showcase for mental and physical fortitude – which he won in 2021. His ambition: to become the mountain-running champion of the world.

The Finish Line

Our story began at the 2022 Calamorro Skyrace. Zaid reaches the finish with great loping strides and a wide grin, and takes second place. He hugs the winner, congratulating him, then looks around for Aicha, who is waiting by the barrier with their seven-year-old son, Elhousseine.

Along with their baby girl, Israa, they live in Cartagena, on the Mediterranean coast in the Spanish province of Murcia. But Zaid's Berber roots are all-important.

"I'm building a house near my mother's in the Atlas Mountains, and we'll spend part of the year there," he says. "It's a fine place to bring up children, in the middle of nature. And it's perfect for high altitude training. I'm hoping to make it a centre where runners from all over the world can stay and train."

Zaid took his father's advice: he stayed on the path and, despite the challenges, fulfilled his dreams. Smiling, he offers his secret to success: "Just jump from stone to stone like a goat – and always think positively." **R**



Big Kitty

An enormous cat has found his fur-ever home after becoming a hit on the net. A severely overweight 'Patches' – who weighs 18.3kg, nearly four times that of most domestic cats – is "the largest cat anyone has ever seen", according to the animal shelter that posted pictures of the monster moggy online. LADBIBLE.COM

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Above: Holocaust survivor Eddie Jaku tells his story in 2D and answers questions using artificial intelligence (AI) and language processing technology

SURVIVOR STORIES Live On Through AI

BY *Joanne Karcz*

The elderly man sits facing me, his arms resting on the upholstered sides of a pale blue club chair. He's not moving. I am standing a metre or so away beneath a round flat silver flying saucer-like disc. A circle of bright blue light on the underside of the disc is carefully aligned above my head.

"Good morning, Eddie," I say, feeling rather uncomfortable and not a little weird as I am talking to an image of Eddie projected onto a black

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

screen. Eddie looks at me for a long couple of seconds. His facial features begin to move, his eyes sparkle and he returns my greeting.

Holocaust survivors Eddie Jaku, Olga Horak (nee Rosenberger) and Yvonne Engelman subjected themselves to a week of intense interviews to create the recordings used in this high-tech exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum. The Holocaust was the systematic murder of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II.

Using artificial intelligence (AI) software, visitors can 'talk' to the three survivors. The volunteer guide tells me to ask Eddie "anything". Staring at this man who isn't really there, I am suddenly at a loss for words.

I relax and we settle into a stilted conversation. I can almost hear the software sifting through hours and hours of interviews and key words before Eddie settles on an answer. Once he admits: "I wasn't asked that in my interview." While a little clunky, it's a remarkable use of technology.

Eddie tells me about his journey to Australia on a converted troop carrier in 1950 after World War II. He had to sleep with three men, in a different cabin from his wife and son.

With a chuckle, he adds that they were fed spaghetti in all its forms. In Australia, a "very nice family" gave them one bedroom of their two-bedroom house. The families "became firm friends".

Eddie Jaku passed away in 2021 aged 101. His legacy lives on in this exhibition and in his book, *The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor*, published in 2020.

The interactive Q&A and biography is one part of the exhibition 'Reverberations: A Future for Memory', which focusses on the stories and experiences of Holocaust survivors.

I read that while Holocaust survivors find it difficult to tell their story, some also find it cathartic. One says, "When I am talking, I get a feeling of relief inside". Another reflects, "After each of my talks to the children, I am left with a feeling of great satisfaction."

A child survivor says, "I'll be one of the last to tell our stories." Another explains, "I'm honouring [my parents] every time I speak."

In the theatre I watch images of survivors answering a range of thought-provoking questions. I hadn't considered the continuing impact of survivors' experience of the Holocaust. A woman shares that she

I can almost hear the software sifting through hours of interviews



Above left and right: Exhibits share the experiences of those who lived through the Nazi concentration camps during World War II

was “brought up to be very scared” while another “missed out on a childhood and a youth and a family”. One still has nightmares and another doesn’t “feel very comfortable in Germany”.

The number of Holocaust survivors is diminishing. This exhibition enables them to share their stories after they have gone.

Leaving the exhibition, I stumble across an exhibit of a blanket made from animal and human hair. The text reads: ‘This blanket was thrown over 18-year-old Olga Rosenberger’s skeleton-like body during the liberation of

Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp in 1945.’

The person in the photograph beside the blanket is Olga, one of the women in the Reverberations Exhibition downstairs. My arms get covered in goosebumps. **R**

The exhibition, ‘Reverberations: A Future for Memory, at the Sydney Jewish Museum,’ (148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst, Sydney) runs until October 2023. Expect airport-like security when visiting. Check opening times at www.sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

How Much Can A Brain Hold?

According to one estimate, neurons of the brain combine so that each one helps with many memories at a time, exponentially increasing the brain’s memory storage capacity to something around 2.5 petabytes. For comparison, if your brain worked like a TV digital video recorder, 2.5 petabytes would be enough to hold three million hours of TV shows. The recorder would need to run continuously for more than 300 years to use up all that storage. *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*

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8 sneaky ways not getting enough sleep affects your looks

Putting sleep on the back burner can negatively affect your skin.



PETS

5 BEST TIPS FROM VETS FOR SAFER DOG WALKS

From sprains to bites, thousands of people are injured each year while walking their dog. Here's how you both can stay safe.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

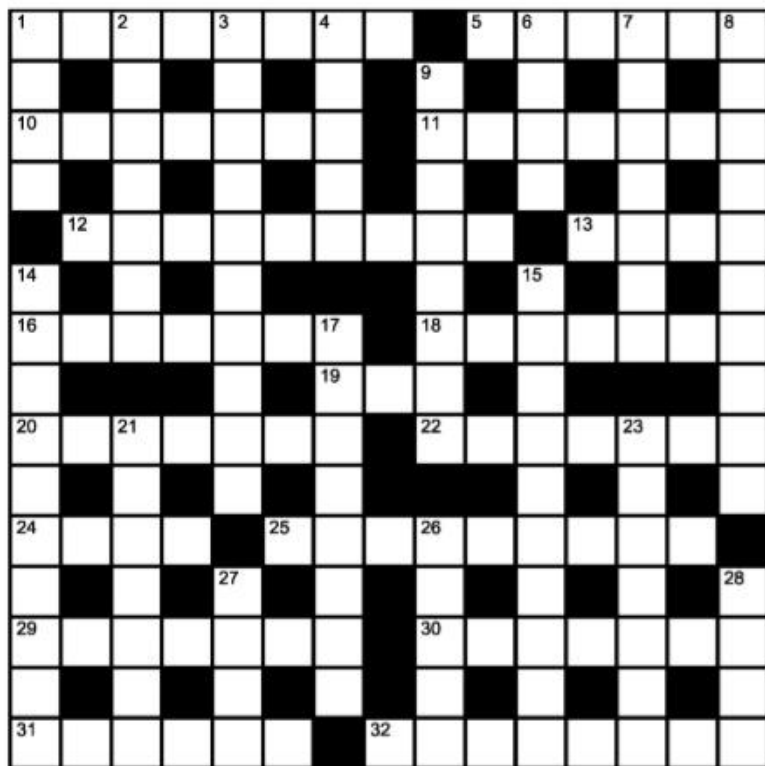


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PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 142.



Crossword

Test your general knowledge.

DOWN

- 1** Intersects (4)
- 2** Rising suddenly (7)
- 3** Like a double rainbow, maybe (10)
- 4** Where the Owl and the Pussycat went (2,3)
- 6** Border (4)
- 7** Tuscan wine (7)
- 8** Completely puzzled (10)
- 9** Hospital conveyances (8)
- 14** Running machines (10)
- 15** Neopolitan buffalo cheese (10)
- 17** Result of using 14 Down, perhaps (8)
- 21** Place in order (7)
- 23** Tortilla meal (7)
- 26** Kim ---, of *Vertigo* (5)
- 27** To boast (4)
- 28** 30% of the Earth's surface (4)

ACROSS

- 1** Injured one (8)
- 5** Mexican holiday destination (6)
- 10** Fencing moves (7)
- 11** Old pals' get-together (7)
- 12** To a small degree (9)
- 13** Blue dye (4)
- 16** Gets back (7)
- 18** Rare plants (7)
- 19** Amusingly ironic (3)
- 20** Generally (2,1,4)
- 22** Quite large (7)
- 24** Germany's former currency (4)
- 25** Travel schedule (9)
- 29** Impresario's goal? (4,3)
- 30** Lithuanian capital (7)
- 31** Heavy hammer (6)
- 32** In which Jud Fry dies (8)

Puzzle Answers

PAGES 142

6		4		8			7	
		9		7		3		
		2	4	5				
	6	3					2	
4	7				5			
	9					6		
					1			
						4	8	2
5					4	7	1	

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: To win, put a number from 1 to 9 in each outlined section so that:

- Every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9), and without repeating any of them;
- Each of the outlined sections has all nine numerals, none repeated.

IF YOU SOLVE IT WITHIN:

15 minutes, you're a true expert

30 minutes, you're no slouch

60 minutes or more, maybe numbers aren't your thing

To enjoy more puzzles and interactive games, go to www.readersdigest.com.au/games-jokes

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FAMILY FUN

**Puzzle
Answers**
PAGE 142

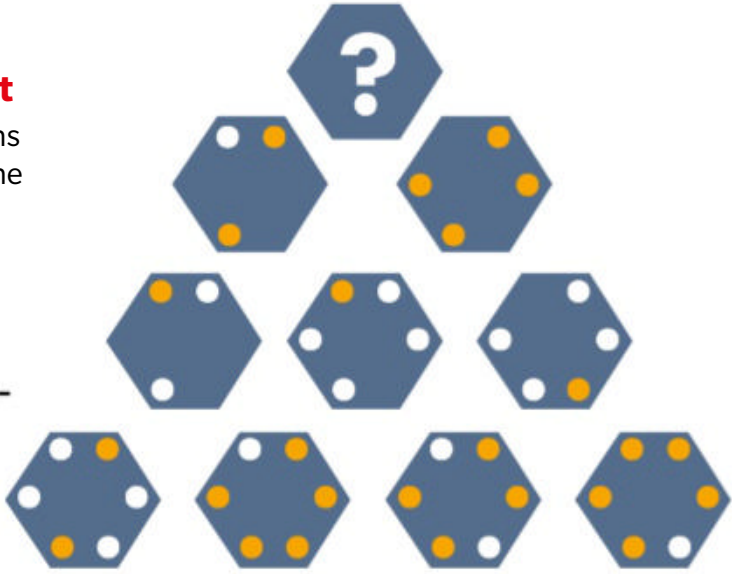
Spot The Difference

There are ten differences. Can you find them?



What Comes Next

Which of the five options below should replace the question mark?



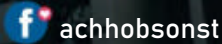
- A
- B
- C
- D
- E

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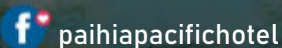


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TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

- 1.** At the 95th Academy Awards in 2023, which film won in seven categories? *1 point*
- 2.** Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative has awarded 19 European cities grants to do what in 2023? *1 point*
- 3.** Developed in the late 1930s, what sport is played on horseback, using a stick to capture the ball and score? *1 point*
- 4.** What chocolate bar has a version infused with sake, giving it an alcohol content of up to 0.8 per cent? *1 point*
- 5.** Which seabird will fly the equivalent distance of nearly three times to the moon and back over its 30-year lifespan? *2 points*
- 6.** What is the highest natural point in Singapore? *2 points*
- 7.** What does it mean if a docked ship is flying the maritime-signal flag 'Blue Peter'? *1 point*
- 8.** Which country shares a border with every other

- South American country except Ecuador and Chile? *2 points*
- 9.** What global milestone did the human race reach on November 15, 2022? *2 points*
 - 10.** What country is the leading producer of wool in the world – New Zealand, China, Australia or Uruguay? *1 point*
 - 11.** Ancient cultures were known to use what sweet and sticky substance as a food preservative? *1 point*
 - 12.** Museums are employing what smartphone technology to superimpose images on nature,

colourise ancient sculptures and add information in many of their exhibits?
1 point

- 13.** Cleopatra had her portrait carved into what gemstones? *1 point*
- 14.** Who wrote the 'No. 1' book series, about a woman from Botswana who opens an investigative business? *2 points*



15. Mr. Potato Head, the popular children's toy, had a body made of what until 1964? *1 point*

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. 2. Paint public murals. 3. Polocrosse. 4. Kit Kat. 5. Arctic tern. 6. Bukit Timah Hill at 164 metres above sea level. 7. Ready to sail, all aboard. 8. Brazil. 9. A population of eight billion. 10. Australia. 11. Honey (its high sugar content kills micro-organisms). 12. Augmented reality (AR). 13. Emeralds. 14. Alexander McCall Smith (No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series). 15. A real potato. The kit contained separate plastic parts with pins to be stuck into a potato.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

From Page 136

Crossword



Sudoku

6	5	4	1	8	3	2	7	9
1	8	9	6	7	2	3	5	4
7	3	2	4	5	9	8	6	1
8	6	3	9	4	7	1	2	5
4	7	1	2	6	5	9	3	8
2	9	5	3	1	8	6	4	7
3	4	8	7	2	1	5	9	6
9	1	7	5	3	6	4	8	2
5	2	6	8	9	4	7	1	3

Spot The Difference



Answer: E

The contents of each hexagon are determined by the two hexagons immediately below it. Only when the same coloured dot appears in the same corner in these two hexagons is it carried forward to the hexagon above. However, yellow dots turn to white and vice versa.



WORD POWER

Wintry Weather

The cold brings terms related to the chilly season.

BY *Rob Lutes*

- 1. sleet** – A: snowball thrown a great distance. B: frozen or partly frozen rain. C: ski jumper.
- 2. psychrophilic** – A: thriving in low temperatures. B: hallucinating due to cold weather. C: fearing the cold.
- 3. hoarfrost** – A: ice crystals formed on the ground at temperatures below freezing. B: wet, slushy snow. C: drink sold at winter resorts.
- 4. crampons** – A: gloves for working in cold weather. B: metal spikes attached to boots for traction on ice. C: chains used to increase tyre traction.
- 5. balaclava** – A: close-fitting garment for the head and neck. B: warm pastry eaten in winter. C: broom used to clear snow.
- 6. apricity** – A: appreciation of cold weather. B: warmth of the sun in winter. C: slipperiness of frozen ground.
- 7. chilblains** – A: deep ruts in icy roads. B: swelling caused by exposure to cold. C: long underwear.
- 8. sitzmark** – A: discolouration of skin caused by frostbite. B: winter hut similar to an igloo. C: depression in the snow formed by a skier falling backwards.
- 9. névé** – A: blue Arctic ice. B: cold north wind. C: granular snow at the top of a glacier.
- 10. luge** – A: small sled ridden in the supine position. B: snowshoe. C: wide, thick scarf.
- 11. whiteout** – A: blizzard that severely reduces visibility. B: window frost. C: bad fall on ice.
- 12. galosh** – A: hot beverage. B: overshoe for winter weather. C: mythological winter creature.
- 13. brumation** – A: sticky snow that adheres to trees. B: act of sweeping snow from steps. C: reptilian state of sluggishness in winter.
- 14. frigorific** – A: desolate. B: blustery. C: causing cold.
- 15. frore** – A: frosty. B: deep, as snow. C: incapable of withstanding winter.

Answers

1. sleet – B: frozen or partly frozen rain. Conditions were damp and foggy after morning sleet.

2. psychrophilic – A: thriving in low temperatures. The psychrophilic bacteria grew quickly once refrigerated.

3. hoarfrost – A: ice crystals formed on the ground at temperatures below freezing. Mallika loved walking through the hoarfrost on the lawn.

4. crampons – B: metal spikes attached to boots for traction on ice. Whitney fastened crampons to her boots before trekking up the mountain trail.

5. balaclava – A: close-fitting garment for the head and neck. Wearing a balaclava and goggles, Corbyn was almost unrecognisable.

6. apricity – B: warmth of the sun in winter. The apricity made the hike through the mountains more tolerable for the kids.

7. chilblains – B: swelling caused by exposure to cold. The chilblains on Tabby's hands made it difficult for him to hold a fork.

8. sitzmark – C: depression in the snow formed by a skier falling backwards. Perry laughed at the sitzmark left behind by his tumble.

9. névé – C: granular snow at the top of a glacier. The climbers trudged across the névé at the east end of the glacier.

10. luge – A: small sled ridden in the supine position. Manu rode the luge down the winding course.

11. whiteout – A: blizzard that severely reduces visibility. When the storm became a whiteout, vehicles pulled off to the side of the road.

12. galosh – B: overshoe for winter weather. Roger donned a pair of galoshes before heading out in the snow.

13. brumation – C: reptilian state of sluggishness in winter. Professor Elanik explained that the stationary snakes showed signs of brumation.

14. frigorific – C: causing cold. The chemicals formed a frigorific mixture, a quicker alternative to mechanical refrigeration.

15. frore – A: frosty. While the couple walked home after visiting friends, the familiar terrain took on a frore beauty.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

5–9: Fair

10–12: Good

13–15: Word Power Wizard

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM236S** when ordering

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Postage
Offer ends
31/07/23

Double Layer Blanket – get ready to snuggle!

*Soft and cosy
Sherpa fleece*

Cuddled up on the sofa or tucked up in bed, you'll love the warmth, lightness and unbelievable softness of this amazing blanket. The top is velvet fleece with a smart tartan design, the reverse, sumptuous Sherpa fleece. You can choose from two sizes – 170 x 130 cm or 240 x 230 cm. And as they're made from easy-care polyester, you can simply pop yours in the washing machine to keep it looking like new.

**2 sizes
available!**

Double Layer Blanket • DLBLK

Small..... \$59
Large..... \$79

4 mths payment terms
available



*Large size
blanket shown on double bed*

Stand Longer In Greater Comfort

– less strain on your hips and knees

Sore or aching legs can spoil the fun of cooking and make chores like washing up feel like hard work. This mat provides a full 2 cm of cushioned support that could help ease the pressure on your hips, knees and ankles. It's made from easy-clean, durable and slip-resistant foam with a textured surface and bevelled edges for extra safety. Choose 180 x 60 cm or 100 x 51 cm.

Medium Comfort Mat

• FLMTM \$89 or
\$22.25 x 4 mths

Large Comfort Mat

• FLMT \$159 or
\$39.75 x 4 mths



*Makes chores
less tiring!*

Medium Mat – 100 x 51 cm

*Bevelled
edges for
extra safety*

*Super large mat
– 180 x 60 cm in size*

Beautiful Big Butterfly Throws – available in two sizes

Add instant life and colour to your room



*Perfect to
snuggle into
in the cooler
weather*

These gorgeous butterfly throws will bring colour and life to any setting. They're made from cosy flannel, so they're ideal for snuggling into when the weather is chilly. Choose from small 130 x 150 cm or large 180 x 200 cm – they're perfect for an armchair or sofa, or even a single bed.

Butterfly Throw

• BTROW
Small (130 x 150 cm)
\$39.95

Large (180 x 200 cm)
\$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths



Reversible Faux Aged Leather Furniture Covers • RVFV
Armchair (240 x 215 cm) \$89
2-Seater (282 x 172 cm) \$119
3-Seater (350 x 172 cm) \$139

4 mths payment terms available

Soft, comfortable reversible design

Reversible Furniture Protector Covers – in faux soft aged leather and polyester Sherpa fleece!

Here's a very stylish way to protect your furniture from wear and tear – even cat's claws! In winter, you can snuggle into the thick polyester Sherpa fleece then, when it's warmer or you just fancy a different look, you can flip it over to realistic faux aged leather. There are three pockets on each side for glasses, magazines and remote controls and, it will fit most recliners, 2-seaters or 3-seater sofas.

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM236S** when ordering

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Postage
 Offer ends
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Classic Round Cushion – prettily buttoned and pleated



SAVE \$10
 Buy two for
\$59.90 or
\$29.95 x 2 mths

These cushions are all about texture, from the softness of the polyester velvet to the light and shade of the intricate pleating. Overall, the effect is both elegant and decorative – the perfect accents for a sofa or armchair. 40 cm in diameter and a 10 cm deep in midnight blue or grey, they will complement most colour schemes as well as each other, so you could also use two or more to mix and match.

Pleated Decorative Round Cushion
 • PRNDC
\$34.95 each



Stylish pleated design adds a decorator touch to your home

Rubber Ramp To Help Make Your Home More Accessible!

– tough rubber, ridged, easy-to-use
Threshold Ramp

This ramp could improve your access if you need to enter a raised doorway or transition from different levels in and around the home. It's made from rugged, 100% recycled rubber and measures 7.6H x 90W x 4.6D cm. It also has deep ridges to hold it securely in place on most hard surfaces, both wet and dry, and would be especially useful if you rely on a mobility aid such as a wheelchair, Zimmer frame or walking stick.

Deep ridges hold ramp securely in place

A smooth transition from one level to another



Threshold Ramp • THRMQ
\$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths

- Slip resistant rubber
- Quick and easy to install • Interior and exterior use



Perfect mobility aid



Improves your access

Great Sounding Mini Digital Radio – remarkably only 74H x 12W x 3.5D cm!



Great Features:

- Bluetooth capability
- 3W Speaker
- Digital & FM stations
- USB input
- Plays up to 20 hrs on a full charge

Here's an easy way to listen to digital or FM stations or tracks from your phone or a USB when at home or on the move. This radio measures just 7H x 12W x 3.5D cm and comes with a wrist strap, yet it boasts a 3 watt speaker, Bluetooth connection and headset jack, and stores up to 10 FM and 10 DAB stations. Fully charged using the cable supplied, it plays for up to 20 hours.

Portable Digital And FM Radio • PORTR
\$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths

Compact yet powerful! Stores up to 10 FM and 10 DAB stations

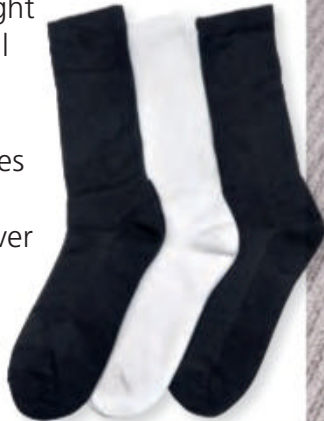


Gentle Grip Socks – stay up without constricting!

Set of 3

These socks are so stretchy and comfortable you'll forget you're wearing them. Another big plus – they won't sag or wrinkle round your ankles. The mix of 80% natural, absorbent cotton and 20% spandex grips your ankle and lower calf very gently so they stay in place without a tight band. One size will fit most men and women perfectly and our set includes 2 black pairs and 1 white pair to cover all occasions.

Gentle Grip Socks • GGRIP
\$19.95



*Non-binding
gentle-grip
comfort*

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM236S** when ordering

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Postage
Offer ends
31/07/23

Holds up to 30 albums

*Keep your
collection
organised and
protected*

LP Storage and Carrying Case

– it holds up to 30 albums

Here's a great way to keep your prized album collection organised and safe from dust and scratches. If you like to listen with friends, this case is also easy to carry around. Made from MDF covered with PVC and fitted with reinforced corners for maximum protection, it measures 35W x 38H x 17D cm to hold up to 30 vinyl LPs. Complete with a clip fastener, it's the perfect storage solution for your valued musical memories. *Albums not included.*

Storage Carry Case • LSTGC
\$69 or \$17.25 x 4 mths

SAVE \$10
Buy two
for \$128 or
\$32 x 4 mths

Easy to carry case



100% soft cotton with buttoned front

Flattering style and soft blue colour



Features large patch pockets

100% Cotton Robe – super absorbent for comfort

Wrap-around dressing gowns have an embarrassing habit of falling open. Thanks to its 5 button fastening, this one always stays discreetly closed. It also looks smart, so it's perfect as a housecoat as well as for slipping on after a shower. Made from soft and absorbent 100% terry cotton in flattering baby blue, it has a neat collar, 2 useful patch pockets and measures a generous 107 cm long for total comfort. Sizes S, M, L and XL.

Button Front Dressing Gown • BFDRG \$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths

Luxurious Heated Cushion – soothing, adjustable warmth

Cuddle this cushion for comfort, rest against it to soothe your back or shoulders, warm up your icy feet – with 3 heat settings to choose from, you can enjoy the perfect level of warmth wherever you need. Soft and supportive with a cosy, washable fleece cover, it measures 15H x 40W x 30D cm, has a removable 2 metre power cord and switches off automatically after 90 minutes. Total bliss!

Mfr SS02B(30x40)

RADIATES HEAT

Heated Cushion • HCUSH \$69 or \$23 x 3 mths



Easy-to-use LED controller

3 HEAT SETTINGS



Your jewellery and spectacles will sparkle like new



Clean your jewellery at home

Ultrasonic Jewellery Cleaner – 1000s of waves per second cleans jewellery and glasses to perfection!



Cleans jewellery...



...spectacles



... even coins!

Using only water, it generates thousands of pulsing ultrasonic waves which reach into the smallest spaces, lifting dirt, grease and dulling soap residues. A special watch band stand is included. Mains powered, it measures 14H x 13W x 20L cm and also comes with a cleaning basket for smaller items.

Ultrasonic Cleaner

• USJCF \$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths

Superb features: • High frequency 40KHz ultrasonic waves
• Watch stand & small item basket • 750 ml stainless steel tank

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM236S when ordering

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
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Mother Of Pearl Set

The exquisite life-like pearls in this jewellery set always create the best impression. The elegance and sophistication they exude will delight you. Truly, they're perfect for any occasion!

Mother Of Pearl Set

• 0810282 \$89 or \$22.25 x 4 mths

Great Features:

- Nickel free and anti-allergic
- Necklace: 45 cm long & Bracelet: 20 cm long
- Comes in an elegant presentation box



Set includes necklace, earrings and bracelet

Breathtakingly beautiful



Silhouetted Trees Table Lamp

The beauty of a winter forest

– stunning day and night

You'll love the way the trees spring to life when you turn on this beautiful lamp – the intricate network of branches captures all the beauty of a winter forest. The precision-cut steel shade has a painted white finish, stands 30.5 cm high and measures 12.5 cm in diameter. The lamp is mains powered with a 165 cm cord – simply add your own E14 screw bulb to enjoy the stunning effect in your sitting room, bedroom or hall.



Trees Silhouette Table Lamp • TSLMP \$29

Stands 30.5 cm high

This exquisite lamp emits an ambient glow through silhouetted branches!



Fashionable, flared style

So soft and luxurious – perfect for keeping you warm and cosy!

SAVE 50%



Beautiful Faux Suede Coat – a fabulous way to stay warm

The height of style, this gorgeous coat has a fashionable flared cut to flatter every figure. The mushroom toned faux suede is supple and soft to the touch, while the luxurious, faux fur lining and trim will keep you as warm as toast on the coldest day. There's even a matching, detachable hood to keep out icy winds! Decorative seaming, side pockets and four large buttons complete a very chic look. Available in sizes S, M, L, XL.

Faux Suede Jacket • FSJAK
Was \$159 NOW \$79.50 or \$19.88 x 4 mths – SAVE 50%! while stocks last



Stylish detachable hood



Can be used on the bed, sofa or floor

3-in-1 Elevate your head, sit up or place under your legs

Fits easily on your bed and can be used under your own pillow for tailored comfort

Quality Wedge-Shaped Pillow

– gentle elevation could bring extra comfort

Some people find they can sleep more easily if their whole torso is gently elevated rather than just their head. If that sounds like you, this well-designed wedge pillow could help you feel more comfortable through the night. Made from memory foam for tailored support, it measures 60 x 60 cm and tapers from 15 cm to 2 cm in height. The zip-off washable cover is a mix of polyester and bamboo.

Bed Wedge Pillow With Bamboo Cover • WDGPB
\$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths

Naturally anti-microbial bamboo blend cover, removable and washable!



Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM236S** when ordering

\$2 Postage
Offer ends 31/07/23



GREAT ACCENT PIECE

Hardwearing, easy to clean rug in a bold geometric design!

Aztec Circle Rug

– stylish in any room

A round rug works beautifully as a focal point, adding warmth and texture as it softens the effect of sharp corners and straight lines. At 100 cm in diameter, this one is perfect for the sitting room, bedroom or hallway and, with its stylish geometric design in shades of brown, it will complement most settings. Tough and easy to clean in polyester with a slip-resistant backing, it's also very soft to the touch.

Aztec Circle Rug 100 cm
• AZTCR \$39.95

Tiffany-Style Solar Butterfly – gorgeous hand-painted glass wings

Painted by hand in warm shades of rust and copper, the glass wings of this superb butterfly give off a golden glow after dark. The sculptural steel frame also has a copper finish to enhance the effect. 27 cm tall, it will sit on your outdoor table, fence or a windowsill and light up automatically after dark. Simply place the solar panel in a sunny spot to enjoy its beauty night and day.

Solar Light Butterfly

• TSBUT

\$39.95

27 cm tall!



An eye-catching focal point in your garden!



Amazing Flexible Torch

– hands-free bright light anywhere!

Hanging from a hook, clamped to a workbench, held in place by magnets, wrapped around a pipe – you can position and bend this incredible torch to shine a powerful, bright light exactly where you want it, no hands needed. Tough yet lightweight, it measures 4.5 cm in diameter and extends from 24.5 to 63 cm in length. Powered by 3 x AA batteries (not included).

Flexible LED Torch • FLEXI \$32.90

EXTENDABLE,
FLEXIBLE, BENDABLE

Hang, stick,
flex or clamp
the LED torch
to illuminate
your task



Magnetic base

Great Features:

- Bright LED light
- Ability to hang, stick, clamp or flex it onto surfaces
- Ideal for hard to reach areas
- Magnetic base
- Hanging hook included
- Battery operated

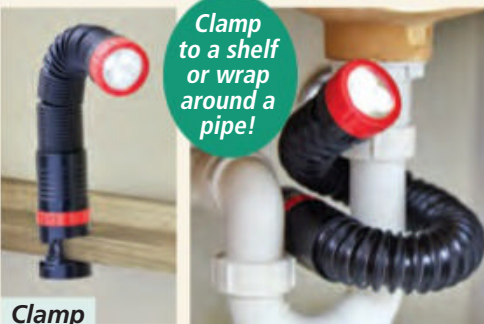
SAVE \$10

Buy two for
\$55.90 or
\$27.95 x 2 mths

Magnetic
base

Handy
hook

Extends from 24.5 to 63 cm



Clamp
to a shelf
or wrap
around a
pipe!

Clamp



Step On It Lawn Edger

– neater borders fast!

Imagine walking along your borders and leaving a neat edge behind. This brilliant tool has a curved stainless steel blade topped by a platform long and broad enough for either foot. The base of the handle will then keep it in place as you slice cleanly through untidy grass – and you won't throw dirt around as you would with a line trimmer. 118 cm long, it can take the pain out of a tiresome chore.



Immaculate edges one step at a time!



BACK SAVER!

Step Lawn Edger

• SLAWN \$39.95

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
31/07/23

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM236S when ordering



Delightfully Decorated Solar Ornaments Hedgehog Or Tortoise – you choose!

Enjoy colour by day and soft light by night

Tortoise

At first glance, these cute garden visitors could be stone planters with multi-coloured succulents in place. Look closer and you'll see there are LEDs nestling among the leaves, ready to glow prettily after dark. Made from polyresin with an attractive stone effect, the Hedgehog measures 11H x 10W x 18L cm, the Tortoise 11H x 12W x 20L cm. Both would look adorable in any outdoor area – you could find it hard to choose!



Hedgehog

Add whimsy to your outdoor space!

SAVE \$10
Buy two for
\$69.90 or
\$23.30 x 3 mths

Solar Garden Tortoise Or Hedgehog

• GSPETS \$39.95 each



So compact – fits in your glovebox

Pump up car or bike tyres, pool toys, as well as sporting or camping equipment with ease!

Easy-to-read LED display

Cordless Air Compressor – rechargeable, compact, powerful and safe

Pump up tyres, sporting gear and pool toys any time, anywhere, with this cordless air compressor. Small enough for the glove box at just 20L x 5.5W x 4.5D cm and rechargeable using the USB cord supplied, it's powerful enough to inflate rapidly up to 150 psi. It turns off

automatically at the pressure you set on the clear LED display and, complete with 4 different nozzles, it fits neatly in the pouch supplied.

Includes 4 different nozzles



Inflates your football quickly!



Cordless Air Compressor

• COAIR \$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths

Cadbury DAIRY MILK



THERE'S A GLASS AND
A HALF IN EVERYONE

DAIRY MILK, THE GLASS AND A HALF DEVICE AND THE COLOUR PURPLE ARE TRADE MARKS USED UNDER LICENCE.
THE EQUIVALENT OF A GLASS AND A HALF OF FULL CREAM MILK IN EVERY 200g OF CADBURY DAIRY MILK CHOCOLATE.

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