



Regular swimming brings colds comfort

Frequent exercise is one of best ways to avoid illness

GET MORE ACTIVE

like JACKIE

Her dance class gives Jackie 'me time' whilst her children are at after school club and counts towards her **3x30** days

ACTIVE CUMBRIA.COM

For more ideas on getting more physically active including dance visit...

Regular swimmers are less likely to catch a cold this winter and will suffer less severe symptoms, according to new research.

In a report published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, scientists from North Carolina found adults physically active on five or more days a week suffered from cold-like symptoms almost half as frequently as those exercising once a week or less.

Exercise like swimming is fantastic for reducing stress which helps maintain a healthy body.

The study, which tracked 1,002 adults between 18 and 85 over a 12-week period, also found the severity of the symptoms fell by 41 per cent for those who felt fittest and 31 per cent for those who were the most physically active.

The researchers said the results were due to a temporary rise in immune system cells every time the body exercises, which led to an increased resistance to viruses and bacteria.

Aerobic exercise and perceived fitness were the most significant factors measured while eating fruit was also linked with a lower frequency of colds.

To find out more about how a healthy diet can improve your performance in the pool and out visit www.swimming.org.

If maintaining health is your goal then you are in the right place. This section supports the Health programme in Swimfit. The Health programme is all about using swimming to maintain your health. And swimming comes with plenty of benefits. Here are a few:

- Female swimmers have been shown to experience significantly less tension, depression and anger after exercising than before;
- Around one in six people in Britain suffer from depression. Swimming can improve psychological well being;
- Swimming can support up to 90 per cent of the body's weight in the water, meaning that those with disabilities, injuries or illnesses such as arthritis can take part in a comfortable and safe

environment.

After you have registered for free with MySwimfit you will be able to access our online session cards. You remain on the programme for four phases working through 32 carefully devised sessions that increase in intensity ensuring you remain in tip-top shape.

And don't worry if you can only swim one stroke, such as breaststroke or front crawl, as this is all the programme demands.

But you may want to improve your strokes, or try new ones, as you progress and there is plenty of guidance in this section of the website to help you.

Throughout Swimfit you are encouraged to become increasingly aware of the intensity at which you work. Intensity of exercise is an important factor in helping you to achieve your goals.

Each session card has four sections delivering an overall intensity rating. Your target is to work through the programme to deliver 100 per cent intensity. And MySwimfit tracks your progress as you go.

Beating the freeze by just chilling out

How healthy is your immune system? I ask because clearly, if this snow is anything to go by, we are in for a long haul this winter. Being able to remain active is very important but does require some work. Looking after our health is just good practice. Our immune systems operate on two levels. On one level fighting the viruses and bacteria we meet everyday and on the other, building up a resistance to them. On the occasions I do find myself under attack, I do not succumb but push on and find myself analysing my symptoms. For me there is still some novelty. Knowing when to stop is very difficult and more so if you run your own business. I become passionate about keeping myself in tip top condition as my work depends on it. I can't be the only person who holds their breath when someone nearby coughs or sneezes. I also wear a loose scarf to cover my nose in crowds and will never touch door handles with bare hands when elbows will do.

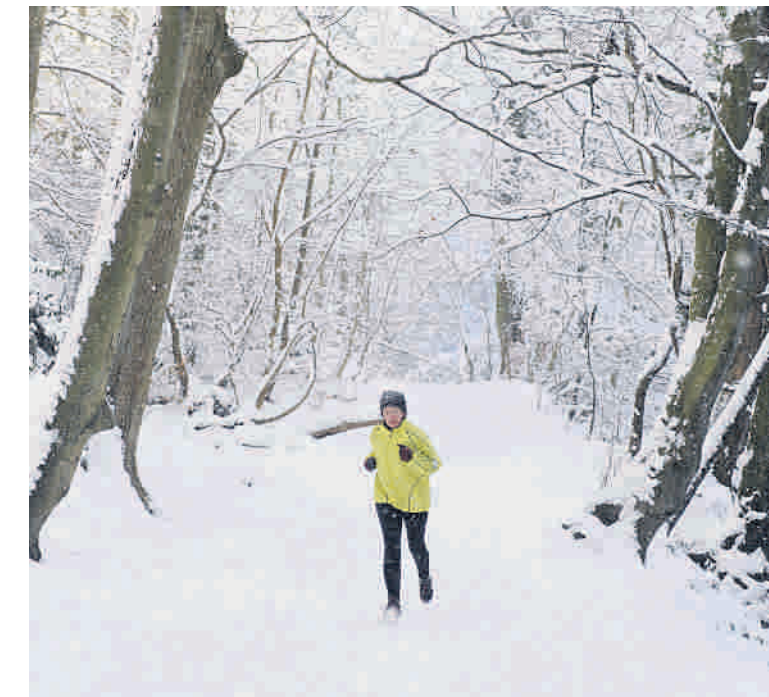
If you are someone who catches more than your fair share of seasonal ailments it may be because your immunity is suppressed. We are, understand, expected to catch a couple of colds during the season. Any more and you should investigate the reasons why. Starting with exercise; do not overdo it. I am guilty of this and it could account for a lot. You can dampen your immunity by doing too much. Moderate exercise will encourage good health but lowering your reserves is certainly

By Carol Westmorland champion cyclist and Pilates instructor

not a good idea. Allow yourself some time out and cross-over your training. Try some indoor core stability work when you can't always get outdoors. Becoming accustomed to one discipline can have a plateau effect so see it as an opportunity to revitalise and renew. Sleep; I am good at this. Numerous studies have shown that getting seven hours is vital. Again, too much of a good thing is bad. Try to get up at the same time each day - even when on holiday - to keep your body clock ticking nicely. Catch a mid-afternoon nap of no more than 20 minutes if your day is a long one. When I do this my body knows exactly when to come to and I feel utterly refreshed. I realise that not everyone can manage this but those that can, should enjoy it without a trace of self-indulgence. Being on top form is good news for everyone.

Your five-a-day should be very easy with winter warming food on the menu. I would say we go off the scale at this time of year. A favourite is a thick broth full of lentils and pulses with chunky vegetables that have slowly simmered with the obligatory garlic added in.

Food is so important in our battle against the bugs. Spinach is full of vitamin



Snow going: A jogger in Gelt Wood near Brampton

A, which is an immunity booster. We just pour hot water over ours to wilt it and it can be added to so many dishes. Exotic mushrooms, particularly oyster mushrooms, are full of beta glucans which stimulate our immune system. Having been teetotal for sixteen years I felt encouraged to read that moderate alcohol may be healthier than nothing at all and, of course, it is actually rather relaxing. I am now known to partake, albeit gingerly. Being happy to gather with friends has been

shown to strengthen your ability to fight off viruses by building up immunity. Scientists now know that stress is one of the biggest immunity dampeners around. While most of us can't simply de-stress (a bit of it is okay), we can factor in some soothing activities. Being more assertive has been proven to help but keeping your feelings in isn't. By using positive language to express yourself it is possible to 'rewire' your brain. Be honest

with those around you and avoid harbouring negative thoughts. I find that a positive person will say 'I can feel that stretch' whereas a negative person will say 'that pulls'. The negative person will also be the person with the more pressing need to do something about it.

As I write we are snowed in. Even with Bertie Beetle's snow tyres the snow is drifting from the eastern fells behind us. Rather than take the negative approach I am going to embrace it with the knowledge that this is an unexpected 'holiday'. For someone who takes their only holiday between Christmas and New Year it is quite a treat. My earnings may have ground to a halt but I can do nothing about it and feeling negative is a waste of energy.

Pilates, for me, calms and the social interaction adds a real tonic. You could just make sure you get outside when the days are darker; it is proven to lift our spirits. Grabbing a willing cat is also known to remove stress and I can't be persuaded that joining our four legged delights charging about in the snow isn't good for us.

Finally keep a journal. Apparently putting pen to paper and writing down your thoughts and feelings can cut stress levels and boost your immunity. So there you have it literally in a nutshell. Allow yourself some 'me' time and take some of the pressure off then enjoy a wonderful and restorative Christmas. Merry times to you all.

Course meant I really could come to her aid

I HAD an unnerving moment in the Lake District a couple of weeks ago.

I was calmly walking up to Alcock Tarn above Grasmere when I heard a yell and a loud 'thump' on the path behind me.

I turned round to see an elderly-ish woman lying on the ground.

My first thought was: "Oh my God! She's broken her ankle!"

But it was my second thought which defined the situation for me... "Oh my God! I can't remember anything I was taught on my first aid course!"

It was Wednesday, and I'd spent the previous weekend learning 'outdoor first aid'.

It seemed I might get to put my new-found skills to use sooner

Guidebook writer Vivienne Crow shares her love of the great outdoors

than I'd expected.

With my head dealing with these thoughts, the rest of me had already responded instinctively and was running down the path.

As it happened, the woman turned out to be unhurt. She had slipped on some rocks and was getting back to her feet as I approached.

"I'm fine," she said. "Just lost my footing. Silly really."

No bones broken, but it could easily have been otherwise.

Last year, Mountain Rescue

teams in the Lake District dealt with 315 accident victims.

Of those, 114 had suffered fractures and 17 dislocations. Fourteen were treated for hypothermia, 12 had had heart attacks, three were in shock, four were unconscious. The most common injury sites were the ankle (71 casualties), the lower leg (37), the head (27), the knee (21) and the arm (18).

That's quite a lot of accident victims and quite a lot of different injuries.

Would I know what to do if I came across one of them?

This is a question I've asked myself many times.

I'm out on the hills most weeks, and, in the summer, sometimes several days a week.

The law of averages suggests that, at some point, I may come across an injured walker or climber.

I did a couple of 'first aid at work' courses in the 1990s, when I was still deskbound at Cumbrian Newspapers, but I doubted whether or not I would remember what I'd been taught.

So I enrolled on a course with First Aid Academy.

In the space of two days last month, the tutor, Alan, taught us how to deal with broken bones, head injuries, sprains and strains, neck injuries, major bleeds, hypothermia, heart attacks, unconscious casualties, burns, asthma attacks, shock, tick bites, snake bites... the list goes on.

We learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation, how to recognise major trauma, how to keep an accident victim warm on the hills, how to summon help...

It seems like a lot in just two days, but in that time Alan made sure each of us repeated the procedures over and over again until we got it right.

I can't count the number of times I rolled my fellow course attendees into the recovery position!

So, although that moment of panic near Alcock Tarn had me temporarily convinced that I couldn't remember any of it, I know that, if faced with a real emergency, I would deal with it confidently.

But let's hope I never have to...

Be part of it! For more activities visit www.activecumbria.org

Follow us www.twitter.com/activecumbria

Be part of it!