



Back in Action^{UK}
Keeping workplaces moving

Back Story

Quarterly Newsletter



Autumn 2023
Issue 09



WELCOME

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Back Story. This quarterly newsletter aims to bring you the latest news, recent research, and the up-to-date guidance on staying healthy in the workplace and beyond.

After a rather damp summer, we enjoyed some late summer sunshine, and the leaves are now starting to turn as we move into Autumn. In this edition we will be sharing some of our favourite, free health apps for you to try this season, to help with everything from sleep to keeping hydrated. We bring you some stress solutions for calming the mind; look at some new research on lowering blood pressure; as well as sharing the latest Back In Action UK news.





BACK TO BASICS

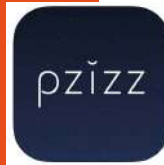
TOP 5 HEALTH APPS

Get Appy!

At Back In Action UK, we understand that working on the foundations for health can help prevent injury, improve quality of life and enhance wellbeing. We bring you our top 5 apps to help you prioritise sleep, hydration, exercise and mental health.



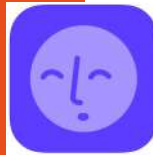
If you would like further advice, get in touch with your Back in Action UK team on **020 7480 5976** or email at enquiries@backinactionuk.com



ONE

Sleep - Pzizz

Good quality sleep is a key foundation for health, but many of us struggle with insomnia. This NHS approved, science backed app uses beautiful 'dreamscapes' - a mixture of music, voiceovers and sound effects - to help you fall asleep, stay asleep and wake up refreshed.



TWO

Breathe - Lungy

We take breathing for granted, but research shows that poor breathing patterns have a negative impact on health. This interactive, mindful breathing app creates an audiovisual experience as you follow the breathing exercises. Research shows it can reduce anxiety and help you feel more relaxed.



THREE

Hydrate - Waterllama

Keeping well hydrated is vital for our health but it can be difficult to keep track of our fluid intake. This app is a simple and fun way to help ensure you are drinking enough throughout the day. It will help you create healthy hydration habits with reminders and other tools.



FOUR

Exercise - Seven

Finding time to exercise can be difficult, but slotting a mini workout into your day is much more manageable and has been shown to be beneficial. This app gives you quick workout ideas for busy days with clear demonstrations - allowing you to gain the maximum benefit in the minimum time!



FIVE

Be Happy - Action for Happiness

The people behind Action for Happiness are on a mission to create a happier and kinder world. This registered charity has created a free app which provides practical ideas and tools for small daily actions that can help change how we feel for the better.

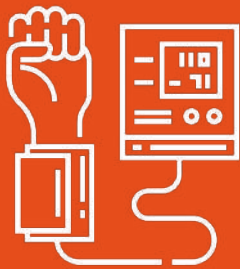


BACK IT UP

RESEARCH ON BLOOD PRESSURE

This section of our newsletter brings you some of the latest research news in the field of occupational health and general wellbeing.

In this edition, we look at how a type of exercise called static strength training can help maintain a healthy blood pressure. The British Medical Journal recently published a study outlining the benefits of this type of training, which requires no equipment.



'Static strength training is more effective at lowering blood pressure than other types of exercise'

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In the UK, high blood pressure is a growing problem, affecting about a third of adults. High blood pressure puts a strain on the heart and other organs. If it remains high for long periods, there is an increased risk of serious health conditions such as heart disease and strokes.

Lifestyle changes such as eating a balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight, reducing salt intake, meditation, limiting alcohol and stopping smoking can help manage high blood pressure. Exercise also plays a key role and new research shows that the best exercise does not require a gym or long periods of training. Static Strength Training or '**isometric**' exercise has been shown to be the most effective way of lowering blood pressure. This type of exercise involves working your muscles whilst you remain in a stationary position for a short period.

If you have high blood pressure, make sure you check with your GP before starting any new exercise routine such as static strength training. You may also find it useful to go through a programme with a physiotherapist to build your confidence. Below are two examples of isometric exercises: try holding these for three rounds of 15 seconds. You can build up to 60 seconds as you get stronger. The guidelines recommend eight minutes of isometric training, three times a week. Remember to keep breathing during the exercises as holding your breath can increase blood pressure!

Wall Sit

Keep your back against a wall with the knees bent and hold. To increase the challenge, lift the arms or try as a single leg exercise.



Bridge Hold

Lie on your back with the knees bent, hip width apart, lift the hips and hold. To increase the challenge try with a single leg.





BACK OFFICE

MEET THE BACK IN ACTION UK TEAM

Back in Action UK are a team of experienced occupational physiotherapists and support staff who provide workplace health and physical health solutions to our clients all over the UK.

In this edition, we would like to introduce you to team member **Daniel James**, Health and Wellbeing Manager at Back in Action UK



Picture: Dan finishing a Born Survivor event



Picture: Dan and his wife Kayley visiting the Star Wars area at Disney

Daniel James

Health and Wellbeing Manager

Can you tell us about your role?

I run the Health & Wellbeing centre at Kingswood for one of Back In Action UK's clients. The facilities include a fantastic gym that has recently been upgraded, and a studio where we run classes such as Yoga and Boxing. Alongside my colleagues, we provide services such as physiotherapy, personal training and weight management programmes to support our members with their health goals.

Have you always worked in health?

Originally my plan was to work in the police force and I had started the training, but a serious injury whilst mountain biking interrupted my course. I then took a different direction and became a personal trainer and have now been working in health for over 10 years.

What do you enjoy about your role?

The most fulfilling part of my role is helping people achieve their goals. During my career, I spent a brief period in a different industry, but missed the great feeling you get when you work with people, helping them positively transform their lives.

What advice do you give people struggling with an injury?

I understand how difficult it can be to overcome pain and injury. Following my bike accident, it took me over six months to get back to full fitness. This experience with my own recovery taught me how setting small daily goals can make a big difference.

How do you spend your spare time?

My wife and I have just welcomed our baby boy, Cassius into the world. We also have three dogs and three cats so we're very busy! I weight train six times a week, but if I do get chance, I will de-stress with a game of Total War: War Hammer or other strategy game to completely relax!



BACK FOR GOOD

SOLUTIONS FOR MANAGING STRESS

A recent survey reported that nine out of ten of us feel under stress at some point during the day. Developing positive strategies to manage everyday stresses can help to calm our heart rates, lower our blood pressure and reduce excessive muscle tension in the body. Here are some research-backed ideas on solutions for stress.



Outdoors

It is well known that walking has positive mental health benefits, but walking whilst listening to uplifting music, a non-news podcast or fiction audiobook has been shown to be particularly effective to help switch off. Gardening regularly is another way to reduce negative feelings and restore a positive mindset.



Indoors

A recent study found that reading a good book can significantly reduce stress by distracting the brain from anxious thinking - even as little as six minutes can have an impact. Journaling is also a useful tool. A daily habit of writing down both positive and negative experiences can reduce anxiety levels.



Connection

Taking time out with friends, either in-person or just a conversation over the phone can improve mood. Hugging a friend or family member has an even bigger effect on reducing stress and may even boost our immune system! Psychologists have also found that spending ten minutes with a dog reduces feelings of sadness and improves happiness - even if it's not your own dog!



A nice cup of tea!

If all else fails, you can't beat a nice cup of tea. There is research that explains how a cuppa can cheer us up. Tea contains an amino acid called 'L-theanine' which has been shown to relax the mind. If you want to go further, add a home made biscuit. Baking or other small creative tasks have been shown to encourage calm and stillness in the mind.

If you would like further advice, get in touch with your **Back in Action UK** team on **020 7480 5976** or email at enquiries@backinactionuk.com



BACK TO THE FUTURE BACK IN ACTION UK NEWS

We would like to keep you up to date with what the Back In Action UK team has been up to and what we are planning for the coming months.



NHS Backlog

The recent strikes by healthcare staff and the aftermath of the pandemic have resulted in an unprecedented backlog for NHS treatment. In fact, the number of people waiting for routine hospital treatment has hit the highest since records began.

Waiting for treatment can be frustrating and stressful. It can also have a negative impact on the workforce, with people reporting that they have had to take long-term sick leave due to the continued delays.

Companies and employees can optimise the use of their occupational health services, such as physiotherapy clinics to help maintain health and fitness whilst waiting for NHS treatment.



Digital Health

One of the ways that the NHS is hoping to improve care and reduce the backlog is to introduce innovative ways of working such as virtual wards. This new digital health initiative aims to allow patients to receive hospital-level care and monitoring in their own homes.

It is hoped that the virtual wards will allow people to be discharged from hospital earlier, or even prevent admission in the first place.

Back in Action UK have been utilising digital health for some time to support their clients in new ways. This includes online physiotherapy assessments, access to the rehabilitation app Physitrack for home exercise plans, and virtual desk assessments.



Fit Note Resources

Fit Notes are issued by a healthcare professional such as a GP or physiotherapist. They provide clear, practical recommendations and guidance about supporting your health at work or helping you to return to work following illness or injury.

The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics (ACPOHE) have developed some new resources with advice for both patients and healthcare practitioners on fit notes.

The resources can be found at www.acpohe.csp.org.uk under the 'Useful Resources' tab.

If you would like to hear more about our services, please call us on **020 7480 5976** or email at enquiries@backinactionuk.com.



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