

## Health

# IMPROVE MIND, BODY AND SOUL

Looking for a happy and healthy 2020? Experts at The Spire Leeds Hospital answer your questions. **Catherine Scott** reports.

**I have been dieting for years with no results and I have a BMI of more than 30, should I consider surgical help to get my weight under control?**

Professor Peter Lodge, Consultant Hepatobiliary and Weight Loss Surgeon, says: "A BMI (body mass index) of more than 30 suggests that you are becoming dangerously overweight, a condition known as morbid obesity. This is because you are at risk of developing illnesses associated with being overweight - diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease and liver disease. Breathing difficulties such as asthma can also occur and there is an increased risk for several cancers.

"Unfortunately, for some people with a high BMI, dieting cannot successfully produce long-term weight loss. Although exercise is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, once we become significantly overweight, exercise becomes much more difficult. There are several surgical options available these days and the best plan is to see a specialist who can guide you towards the right approach."

**How do I maintain healthy joints in 2020?**

Professor Nick Harris, Consultant Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgeon

and Professor of Sports Medicine, advises: "Keep active. Low impact activities such as walking, swimming and cycling are less damaging to joints. Maintain a full range of motion in the joints. Regular stretching will help this. This is best done after a gentle warm up rather than when the muscles are cold. Strengthening the muscles around joints helps support them.

"Lose some weight. Losing one pound of weight reduces the loads across your knee by four pounds. Maintain a strong core. This helps with posture and balance. Don't work through joint pain.

"Maintain a healthy diet. Omega 3 found in fish has been shown to reduce inflammation which can help with arthritic joints and is also a source of Vitamin D.

"During the winter months everyone in the UK will see a reduction in their Vitamin D levels due to the lack of exposure to sunlight. Vitamin D is important in bone metabolism and muscle function as is Calcium. Many people take Vitamin D supplements over the winter months."

**I have decided to take up running in 2020 to get fit and lose weight. How do I avoid injuring myself?**

Chris Duffy, Physiotherapy Manager and Sports Injury Lead



**BENEFITS:** Exercise can have a positive effect in your physical and mental health

### REDUCE ALCOHOL

#### Should I do Dry January?

Dr Mark A. Aldersley, Consultant Hepatologist, says: "Whilst abstaining from alcohol for one month may improve your feeling of wellbeing and break habits of drinking every day, it will not have any long-term effect on your health. Find out how many units are in your favourite drinks. The Chief Medical Officer recommends that for both women and men it is safest not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.

the process - it can take weeks or months to become flexible. You will need to continue working on it to maintain it.

"Stretching can help you avoid muscle strain, reduce muscle tension, increase your range of motion and help with relaxation. It can also help reduce the risk of back problems and improve circulation.

"It's best to warm up muscles before stretching so they are more pliable. Five to 10 minutes of light activity such as a quick walk or jogging on the spot until you feel some warmth in your muscles. You can also stretch after an aerobic or weight-training workout. Remember to hold the stretch for around 30 seconds. Use static stretches post-exercise rather than bouncing style stretches which may cause injury. A post-exercise stretch will slow down your breathing and heart rate and bring your body back to a resting state.

#### I often feel down and depressed will exercise help?

Dr Allan Johnston, Consultant Sports Psychiatrist, says: "Mental health includes our physical, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act, can determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

"Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem. Being active, enjoying the outdoors and having a healthy, balanced diet - the brain needs nutrients to function well, too! These all impact how we feel and have a positive effect on our mood."

Physiotherapist, says look after your muscles to prevent injuries with expert stretching.

"Stretching is not just for athletes, runners and gymnasts. We all need to stretch to protect our mobility and it should be done daily. Just make sure that you do it properly

and warm up the muscles first by performing light exercise.

"Daily stretching helps keep the muscles flexible, strong and healthy and that flexibility is needed to maintain range of motion in the joints. You will need to do it regularly and remain committed to

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