

National Ambulance LGBT Network



A Recipe for Wellbeing

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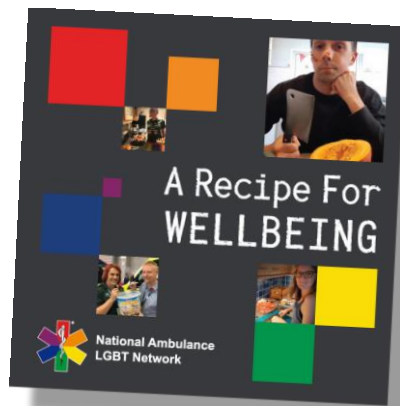


**National Ambulance
LGBT Network**



National Ambulance
LGBT Network

LIMITED EDITION VERSION



A special printed edition of this book has been produced. Only 1,000 of these are available.

To obtain one contact your local LGBT Network Lead (while stocks last).

Alistair Gunn, Chairperson

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Introduction

Welcome to our book which focuses on the subject of wellbeing and explores this through looking at recipes people like to prepare. If all this sounds a little crazy, bear with us and all will hopefully become clear!

Although the term wellbeing is not entirely new, there has recently been an increased focus on understanding this in an attempt to improve people's lives. This means it is an excellent time to focus on this term, and some others that go with it, and consider how it all works.

As well as setting out a new framework for understanding wellbeing, we thought it would be interesting to explore one facet of wellbeing and collect different ideas. Everyone likes to eat and many people have a special recipe. In August 2019 we asked the National Ambulance LGBT Network committee to contribute one recipe and explain how this links to their wellbeing. This turned out to be surprisingly revealing.

Finally, as two people passionate about supporting mental health and promoting wellbeing, please take time to read on and find out more. The framework we are outlining may be useful to you, or a colleague, one day!

Alistair and Jules

Introducing Wellbeing and Resilience

Before we start to discuss the framework let's have a look at some of the key terms that feature within it. The 'big three' words are:

Wellbeing

What does wellbeing mean and why is this so important to LGBT ambulance staff?

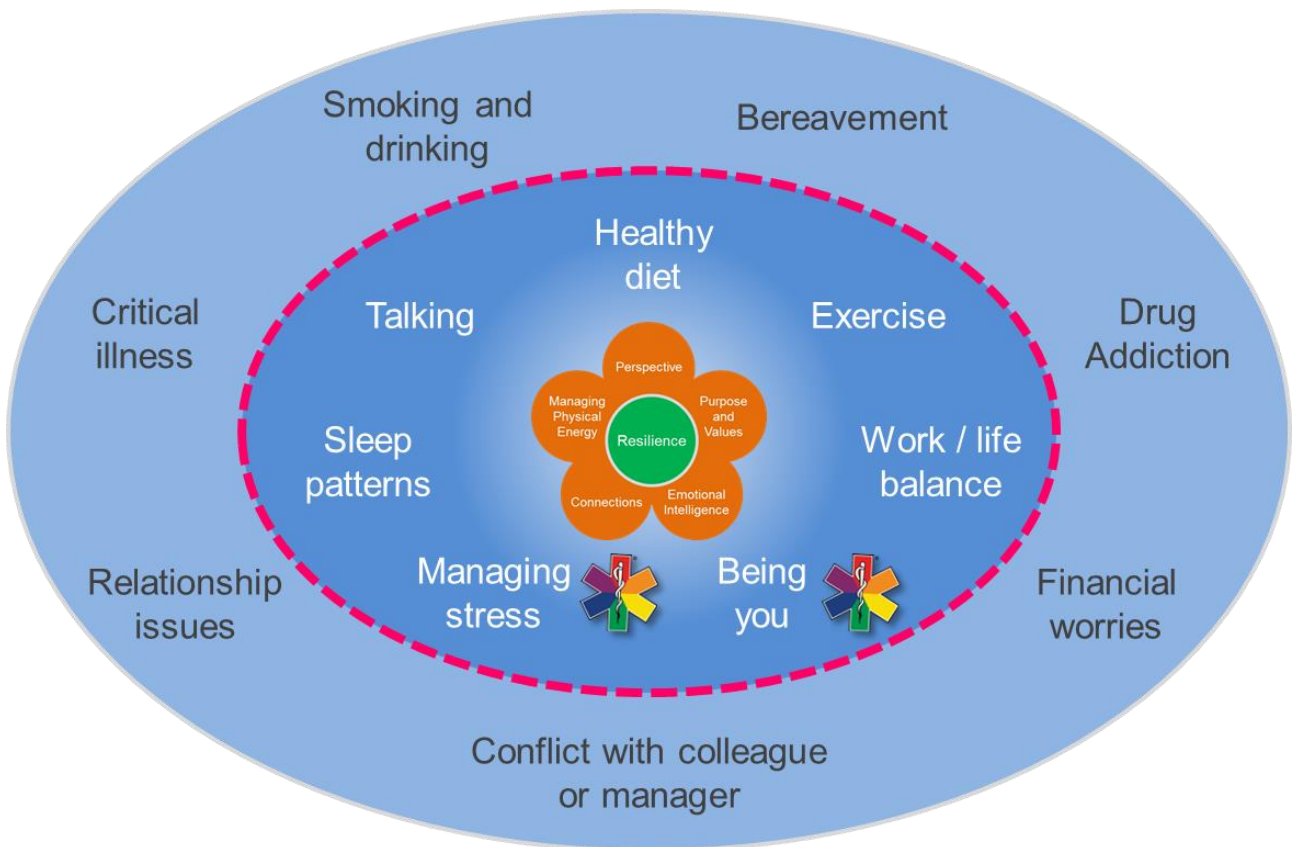
Resilience

Our own personal resilience is at the centre of wellbeing, but what does it include and how can we take control of it?

Mindfulness

Can taking a few minutes each day to relax and experience mindfulness can really make a difference?

The Framework



At the heart of the wellbeing framework is understanding our own personal resilience. For many this is a relatively new concept but is really important. It helps to explain why two people, who encounter exactly the same experiences, may have a differing response. Before going further it is important to understand what we mean by personal resilience.

Definition of Personal Resilience

Resilience is a capacity which helps people and organisations respond well to challenge, setback and even crisis. It describes the ability to 'bounce back', to recover and respond with commitment and optimism. It is not an innate quality which people either have or don't have, it can be learned and developed in anyone.

(Barry Winbolt website)



One model suggests there are five facets to personal resilience and these are set out in the resilience flower shown here. These are facets that can affect each of us to a varying degree, yet many of which we have some control over. On the next slides there is more detail on each facet and we will also look at how each can be developed.

Developing Resilience

Individuals can build and develop their capability for resilience by taking practical steps in each of the five facets of the resilience flower.

Perspective

- Recognise that perceptions and the way we think about challenges drives feelings, not the situation. Practice uncovering and challenging negative beliefs, empowering new, more positive beliefs.
- Step into your successes and acknowledge what you have done well.
- Focus on what you can change rather than on what you can't.

Purpose and Values

Take some time to reflect on the following:

- What is the purpose at work / outside of work?
- What one thing could you start doing / do more of that would help you focus on your purpose at work / outside of work?
- What one thing could you stop doing / do less of that would have minimum negative impact but would release time so you could focus on achieving your purpose at work?
- What is most important to you? What do you value? How does work fit / not fit with your personal values?
- What are your strengths? How could you use more of your strengths at work?

Emotional Intelligence

- Acknowledge your own feelings and express them appropriately. An easy way to say this is: feel it, name it, express it.
- Find ways to help you become more aware of, and process, your emotions. Practicing mindfulness is one of the ways in which we can become more aware of our emotions.

Connections

- Make time to network with colleagues and develop an extensive set of relationships that will help you through difficult times.
- Invest time in mutually supportive relationships.
- Help others, in or out of work.
- Think about both who is in your support network and what types of support they offer. Are you getting the different types of support that you need and, if not, where could you get that support?

Managing Physical Energy

- Exercise regularly.
- Manage boundaries between work and home life. Find ways to 'switch off'.
- Take regular breaks when at work. Eat lunch away from your desk.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat healthily.

Understanding the Framework

The framework we have put together looks at the wider concept of wellbeing. Around our own resilience is a number of factors that we think are particularly relevant to ambulance staff. For many people in our services exposure to difficult situations and even shift work are all factors we should consider.

There are two factors we have put the Network star against and would like to consider these in more detail.

Managing Stress

Managing stress might seem like an obvious thing to say, but when your job involves frequent exposure to managing others people's stressful situations, some of which may impact on you, it takes on a whole new significance. It is important that we recognise the signs that something is wrong and that we have been personally affected by something we have encountered.

There are a number of different organisations that can support and every Trust has things in place to help. Take some time to find out what these are in case you, or a colleague, needs this at some point.

Being You

Once again, this can seem like the most obvious thing to say, but it is proven that people who do not take their 'whole self' to work are more likely to suffer from stress and poor mental health. Many LGBT people prefer to 'leave a part of themselves at the door' for fear of what people might say or not be treated fairly at work.

Everyone can help to make our Ambulance Services LGBT friendly and show we really care about everyone, irrespective of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Disruptors to Wellbeing

The outer ring of our framework are some of the factors that can have a negative impact on our wellbeing. Some of these can have devastating effects on people, regardless of the resilience of the person involved.

First thing is to understand that any one of these (and many other things) can challenge our whole sense of wellbeing. This is represented by the lightning strike on the framework.

Sometimes one issue can be manageable but often several 'disruptors' can come into play at the same time, or a second is a consequence of the first.

The old adage of 'one problem feels like one, two problems feels like two and three problems feels like a thousand' comes into play here.

The Recipes

Cheesy Comfort Prawn Risotto

Alex Ewings

Ingredients

- Risotto rice
- Bacon lardons (small bacon squares)
- Cooked king prawns
- Vegetable stock cube
- Tub of Philadelphia cheese (small tub)
- Parmesan shavings

You can replace the prawns with cooked chicken pieces or meat substitute.

Instructions

- In a large wok, cook the bacon and then put in a bowl for later.
- With a dash of oil, heat 75g of risotto rice per person.
- Mix the stock cube with 500ml of boiling water.
- Slowly add the stock mix to the wok and risotto rice on low to medium heat.
- Once rice starts to absorb the stock, add prawns and bacon pieces and leave on medium heat.
- When almost all stock is absorbed, mix in the Philadelphia cheese. Don't boil or allow to dry up.
- Stir on the parmesan shavings to make a sticky cheese consistency.
- Serve and enjoy.

Link to Wellbeing...

This is real comfort food! Not the quickest thing to cook (takes about 45 minutes) but the sense of reward can really pick you up.

Salmon Tagliatelle

Alistair Gunn

Ingredients

- 1 bag of fresh tagliatelle
- 1 pack of smoked salmon (quantity to taste or budget)
- 1 pot of crème fraise
- 1 dill plant

Fresh tagliatelle works well as it takes literally minutes to cook, but you can use the normal bagged stuff instead. If you are feeling the squeeze you can replace the pack of smoked salmon with trimmings, and if you are feeling flush throw in a handful of king prawns as well. If you are on a health kick replace the crème fraise with the low fat variant.

Instructions

- Boil some water and cook the tagliatelle as instructed on the packaging. Do not overcook.
- Once cooked strain out the water and stir in the crème fraise. Chop up the smoked salmon fillets and add these too. Put the mixture back on heat for three minutes to heat through.
- Take a handful of the fluffy ends of the dill plant, removing the stalks, and throw this into the mixture. Stir this in thoroughly.
- Now serve in large bowls and accompany with some nice bread.

Link to Wellbeing...

I need to start by saying I am no great cook and my repertoire is confined to a few simple recipes and what I call 'CBA meals' (work that one out for yourself!). I do like food though and so a few simple recipes that feel a little bit decadent are useful when entertaining or even when you just want to spoil yourself.

As I said above nothing really makes you feel more virtuous than cooking your own food, or even making something for other people. Getting a few people round the table for food and a chat is always good and a great way to bond with people and relieve some of the stresses we encounter. Although I'm not a great cook, I know there are times to switch off and do something different and healthy, and cooking a fresh meal works for me.

Vegan Brownies

Amanda Cahill

Ingredients

- One third cup of non-dairy milk (soy or almond etc)
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- ½ cup vegan chocolate chips
- 375g can of chick peas
- ¾ cup nut butter (peanut or almond)
- 5 tablespoons coconut sugar
- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder
- ¼ cup almond flour
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt (depends on whether nut butter is salted)
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- 4 tablespoons of vegan chocolate chips for folding in and topping

The vegan chocolate can be a little expensive, you can use regular chocolate but obviously can't declare them vegan if you are planning to share. You can swap out the nut butter for a nut alternative and the almond flour can be replaced by all-purpose flour. The coconut sugar can be replaced with sweetener or other sugar

Instructions

- Heat the non-dairy milk and maple syrup until just about boiling.
- Add the half cup of chocolate chips and mix until melted and smooth. Set aside.
- Line a brownie tin with baking paper and preheat the oven 180°C.
- Put the chickpeas, nut butter, sugar, cocoa, vanilla, salt and baking powder in a food processor for 30 seconds. You can do this manually too, will take a while but think of the exercise. Sometimes the nut butter does not fully incorporate but that's grand.
- Add the warm melted chocolate from step 2 to your mixture along with the almond flour and mix together until smooth and even, if it is too thick you can add another tablespoon of milk.
- Fold in 2 tablespoons of the chocolate chips.
- Transfer the batter immediately in to the brownie tin, spread using a spatula to even it out as much as possible. This batter doesn't melt like a regular brownie so you need to ensure it is not uneven otherwise the bake will be uneven.
- Sprinkle the remaining chocolate chips on the top.
- Bake for 35 to 40 minutes and cool for a further 10 minutes.
- Serve with some ice cream. Eat, share and enjoy.

Link to Wellbeing...

I am not a baker, having made these a number of times, it's pretty simple and straight forward. It is delicious! This is my variation from veganricha.com – loads of easy great recipes there, even if you don't have a specific diet, just explore.

Exploring a more vegan / vegetarian diet following from years of IBS type symptoms that really affected my mood, I found this and realised that there was no need to feel deprived by my guts needs... you just adapt.

Chicken and Chorizo Skewers

Emma Burrow

Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 chicken breasts – cubed
- Slices of chorizo
- Chopped red and green peppers
- Chilli flakes
- Nando's lemon and herb marinade
- Reduced fat halloumi
- Salad to garnish

Any marinade can be used

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 200°C. Put chicken in a bowl, pour over the marinade, stir, cover and put in the fridge for two hours.
- Bake sweet potatoes for 30 minutes or until soft.
- Make kebabs by alternative chicken, chorizo and peppers on to skewers.
- Place skewers on a baking tray, place on the middle shelf of oven and cook for 20 minutes, turning once, until chicken is cooked thoroughly.
- Scoop flesh out of the sweet potatoes and place into a pan. Mash, add chilli flakes and heat thoroughly.
- Slice halloumi and dry fry for 2 to 3 minutes each side.
- Serve with salad.

Link to Wellbeing...

I love Nando's so this is my version to enjoy at home. It's easy to do and I usually do extra for the next day. The mash can be frozen for another time.

I try to eat healthily as much as possible. After previously having cancer four times I now make sure I look after myself as best as possible including eating healthily, keeping fit and generally looking after my wellbeing.

Emma's Veggie Lasagne

Emma Milman

Ingredients

- Lasagne pasta sheets (dried keeps easily in the cupboard)
- Chilli flakes
- Oregano
- Aubergine
- Courgettes
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Garlic
- Canned tomatoes
- Jar of white sauce
- Olive oil
- Grated cheese
- Red wine
- Worcester sauce

Instructions

- Fry your spices in olive oil. Add chopped onion and garlic. When browned add chopped up aubergine, courgettes and mushrooms. Cook for 10 minutes and then add red wine and Worcester sauce. Cook for another 10 minutes.
- Boil the dried lasagne sheets for 8 minutes. Put these into cold water so they do not stick together. Dry on a tea towel.
- Put your vegetable sauce into a big pot. Cover with the pasta. Add another layer of vegetable sauce and cooked pasta. Add the jar of white sauce and some grated cheese.
- Cook in the oven at 200°C for 20 minutes and then serve.

Link to Wellbeing...

I love this recipe because it is filled with vegetables. It is easy to share and makes lots of portions that you can save for lunch. Easy to share and lots of vegetables.

Singapore Noodles

Gareth Thomas

Ingredients

Read the recipe first to make sure you want to attempt this one!

- 225g thin rice noodles
- 50g Shiitake mushrooms
- 175g frozen peas
- 4 medium free-range eggs, beaten
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 3 tablespoon groundnut oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 1½ tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 1 tsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 6 fresh red or green chillies, de-seeded and finely shredded
- 6 fresh or tinned water chestnuts

- 3 spring onions, finely shredded
- 100g small cooked prawns, shelled
- fresh coriander leaves, to garnish

For the sauce:

- 2 tablespoon light soy sauce
- 3 tablespoon Indian Madras curry paste or powder
- 2 tablespoon Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 250ml tinned coconut milk

Instructions

- Soak the rice noodles in a bowl of warm water for 25 minutes. Drain and set aside.
- Soak the mushrooms in warm water for 20 minutes. Drain and squeeze out the excess liquid. Remove and discard the stems and finely shred the caps into thin strips.
- Beat the eggs with sesame oil, salt and pepper. Set aside.
- Mix together all the sauce ingredients in a bowl and set aside.
- Heat a wok or large frying-pan over high heat until hot. Add the groundnut oil, and when very hot and smoking, add the garlic, ginger and chillies and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add the water chestnuts, mushrooms and spring onions and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the rice noodles, prawns and peas, and stir-fry for 2 minutes.
- Add the sauce and cook over high heat for another 5 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated. Pour the egg mixture over the noodles. Stir-fry constantly until the egg has set.
- Turn onto a large platter, garnish with coriander leaves and serve.

Link to Wellbeing...

The recipe comes from a Ken Hom cook book and the very first time I cooked it I was trying to impress a boy! I went to the local Chinese supermarket and bought all the ingredients before heading home to prepare a meal to impress!

However, things didn't go quite to plan! I learnt the hard way that rice noodles are quite delicate little things, as soon as I added them to the wok they dissolved and turned to paste! I pressed on and added the egg mix as the recipe directs and yet more pasty mush appeared in my wok! I had no other options available so I served up my creation and hoped for the best. It didn't look great, but it kind of tasted okay.

That was about 15 years ago now, my cooking skills didn't scare the boy off, we're still together, still laughing about the time I cooked him the worst meal he's ever eaten. No, I've never attempted to cook this again. I wish any that want to try the very best of luck!

Hungarian Biscuits

Jim Graves

Ingredients

- 100g margarine
- 50g caster sugar
- 25g drinking chocolate
- 100g self-raising flour

Icing:

- 50g margarine
- 100g icing sugar
- Drinking chocolate / coco to taste
- Very strong coffee

Instructions

- Heat oven to 150°C / 130°C fan.
- Mix the biscuit ingredients together into dough.
- Take a small amount and roll into a ball approximately 2cm across and lay them on a baking sheet with plenty of space between each one.
- Dip a fork in milk and gently press each ball to leave a mark in the top – don't press too hard!
- Bake for 15 to 20 minutes (checking after 15 minutes) and remove from the oven to cool.
- Mix the icing ingredients together – you don't need too much coffee, just to taste.
- Put icing on the biscuits and create a sandwich.
- Enjoy!

Link to Wellbeing...

This is a family recipe that my Granny made for us all. Usually nicknamed 'hungry biscuits'!

For me the act of cooking is relaxing in itself allowing me to forget other stresses. In the case of this recipe it also brings back lovely memories of making these with my Granny.

Christmas Cake

Jonny Holmes

Ingredients

- 900g dried mixed fruit
- 225g plain flour
- 225g dark soft sugar
- 225g butter
- 4 eggs
- Lots of alcohol (brandy, sherry, Cointreau)
- 1 tablespoon treacle
- ½ teaspoon of ginger
- ½ teaspoon of nutmeg

The more alcohol the better. My cake usually has a puddle underneath after feeding it, and when I come to ice and decorate it!

Instructions

- Soak the fruit for a few days in alcohol prior to making the cake.
- Cream eggs and butter.
- Fold in the flour and spices.
- Mix in all the ingredients and bake for 4 hours at 160°C.
- Once cooked, feed with more alcohol on a regular basis until it's time to marzipan and ice it.
- Decorate to your desire.

Link to Wellbeing...

I make this cake every year with my Mum and have done so since I was four years old. It brings back happy childhood memories and signifies the beginning of the festive period in my family. Many happy memories are attached to this annual ritual.

No matter what is going on it is a time where my family (predominantly my Mum and I) come together and enjoy time together doing something we enjoy making; something delicious.

Curry with a Cuddle

Jules Lockett

Ingredients

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 medium onion (colour doesn't matter)
- Peanut butter – protein version for added energy boosting oomph!

Either:

- 250ml coconut milk – not so healthy option *or*
- 250ml light coconut milk – slightly healthy option *or*
- 250ml water – very healthy option

- ½ medium cauliflower – fresh or frozen
- 3 bulbs of garlic – dependant on taste preference
- 1 teaspoon of ground ginger (if you have it, not essential)
- 1 chopped green chilli (1 heaped teaspoon of chilli powder if not available)
- 1 tablespoon of garam masala
- 1 heaped tablespoon of curry powder – dependant on taste preference
- 1 heaped tablespoon of maple syrup
- Final addition if you wish 2 handfuls of frozen peas or some spinach if desired
- Decoration (if entertaining) parsley and chopped nuts

You can use more or less spices to meet your taste requirements. The taste is no less impacting if you use water or coconut milk – coconut adds a little bit of luxury – because you are worth it!

Instructions

- Use a large pan or wok.
- Chop the garlic and onion and fry off lightly.
- Cut the sweet potato into cubes and add to the garlic and onion.
- Add in the cauliflower (I use frozen as it saves preparation).
- Add all the rest of the ingredients into the one pot.
- Keep stirring until all ingredients mixed in and cook for 15 minutes.
- Add an final vegetables for the final 3 minutes and serve.
- Garnish as you wish and serve.

Link to Wellbeing...

Warming, welcoming for others and gives you a well-being feel. Good for those who may be vegetarian or vegan. Great for those who are active and wish to replace with a protein packed bowl of goodness.

Option to create a low calorie version of this without losing the power of the taste. Quick and easy to put on the simmer as you get in from a shift, get changed, shower and relax with a big bowl to tuck into.

Good recovery meal if you have been for a run or to the gym or just need a bowl of comforting food that can give you a cuddle from the inside out.

- Add a rice dish to make a full meal or some poppadum's.
- Add some warm or toasted naan bread.
- Eat alone or share with friends and impress!

You can double the ingredients up and freeze (maximum for 4 weeks) in smaller portions to last you over some shifts.

Pavlova 'My Mum's'

Kirsten Willis BEM

Ingredients

- 200g caster sugar
- 4 egg whites
- 4 teaspoons of cornflour
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- ½ pint double cream
- Selection of fresh fruit of your choice

Instructions

- Set oven to 140°C.
- Beat egg whites and salt with a rotary whisk or electric mixer until soft peaks form.
- Add the sugar one tablespoon at a time, whisking until very stiff.
- Beat in the cornflour, vinegar and vanilla essence.
- Butter a shallow oven proof dish (glass fluted flan dish works well).
- Fill with the meringue mixture.
- Hollow out the centre of the meringue to make a well for the fruit and cream once cooked.
- Bake for 1¼ hours, then allow to cool.
- When cool, fill with whipped cream and top with fresh fruit.

Link to Wellbeing...

This recipe is my Mum's and never fails to make me feel good about life. It's soft, toffee like flavour and texture reminds me of my childhood and how, as an adult, it is so homely. You can always find members of my family at Sunday lunch at Mum and Dad's 'trimming the edges' off the pavlova before it gets served.

Such a feel good and indulgent recipe, which never fails to deliver the emotional lift you need.

Waist line NIL; calories ONE!

Hunters Chicken

Mike Roberts

Ingredients

- 2 chicken breasts
- 2 slices of bacon
- Grated cheese
- Jack Daniel's BBQ sauce (260g bottle)
- Potatoes or oven chips
- Carrots
- Peas
- Salt and pepper

This recipe is for two but you can increase the quantities to feed additional people.

Instructions

- Cut chicken breasts into strips and marinade in the BBQ sauce. Only a small amount is needed.
- Place chicken and bacon into an ovenproof dish. Pour half the bottle of BBQ sauce on top and mix in some cheese.
- Place in a pre-heated oven (180°C) for 30 minutes.
- Slice the chicken to ensure it is cooked thoroughly.
- If cooked correctly sprinkle some cheese over the top to create a cover.
- Place back in the oven into crisp and browning on top – approximately 10 minutes.
- Serve with potatoes or oven chips, carrots and peas.

Link to Wellbeing...

This is a recipe I was introduced to by friends and adapted to make it my own. It can be adapted with oven chips or potato wedges if you are feeling more decadent.

Cooking this helps relax and is a great one to do with friends. It is a great meal to chill with after a hard day, especially with a chilled beer!

Sweet Potato and Chorizo Soup

Mike Taylor

Ingredients

- 2kg sweet potatoes (peeled and roughly chopped)
- 125g chorizo (chopped bite size)
- 1 small onion (peeled and roughly chopped)
- 2 medium carrots (roughly chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 5 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

- In a large pot over high heat, add oil, garlic, and onions. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until onions are translucent. Add chorizo and cook for 2 minutes.
- Add all the chopped ingredients, broth and seasoning. Stir and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
- Blend the soup until smooth using a blender (you may have to do this in batches).
- Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Link to Wellbeing...

A hearty soup good on cold winters days. This is a simple recipe to put together and cook. Always makes me feel good. A simple healthy recipe.

Pav's Creamy Chicken

Pavel Klim

Ingredients

- Chicken breasts – depending how hungry you are!
- Single cream
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Garlic
- Seasoning mix powder
- Salt and pepper
- Rapeseed oil
- Mushrooms

Instructions

- Use a bit of oil and fry the washed and chopped slices of chicken in a pan. Wait until it goes golden brown. On the outside it remains juicy on the inside.
- Add seasoning and properly mix it.
- Fry the mushrooms, broccoli and spinach to soften them.
- Put the single cream in the pan with the chicken.
- Add the seasoned vegetables. Use salt and pepper as you like.

Link to Wellbeing...

This is very easy and quick to make. And the best thing is you don't need to measure the exact amounts of anything.

It is maybe not the most healthy meal but it is my favourite food. It always feels like a real treat.

Bacon, Mushroom and Chorizo Carbonara Pasta

Shane Finnegan

Ingredients

- Bacon cubes
- Chopped mushrooms
- Carbonara sauce
- Chorizo
- Pasta

Instructions

- Boil the pasta as per instruction on the packaging.
- Fry up the bacon, mushrooms and chorizo.
- Mix in the carbonara sauce with the bacon, mushrooms and chorizo.
- Add in the pasta.
- Serve and enjoy.

Link to Wellbeing...

I usually cook this recipe and make a few portions and freeze some to bring to work and eat one portion after cooking. Nothing breaks up a shift more than some home cooking. Everything may be crazy in the world but some familiar cooking brings in a moment of normality.

Steph's Spag Bolognese

Steph Meech

Ingredients

- 500g lean mince
- 350g spaghetti
- 90g sliced mushrooms
- 2 medium onions
- Dolmio spaghetti sauce
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Parmesan
- Tomato puree

A quick meal to make as little preparation needed.

Instructions

- Chop the onions up and put in a pan with the olive oil. Fry over high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the mince and fry until brown.
- Add the mushrooms and cook for a further couple of minutes.
- Stir in the Dolmio sauce and tomato puree.
- Meanwhile cook the spaghetti in a large pan of boiling salted water according to the packet instructions. Drain well and add a dash of olive oil.
- Stir in the meat sauce.
- Serve in hot bowls and add parmesan.

Link to Wellbeing...

This is a no fuss quick recipe. This is a memory from my childhood and in particular when my Dad used to cook. This was a family attempt with everyone taking part. At times the amount of ingredients would vary but the laughter and fun we all had trying to make this brings back very happy memories.

Rice and Easy

Stephen Harrison

Ingredients

- Large onion
- Mushrooms
- Garlic
- Mixed seafood (frozen works best)
- Soy sauce
- Dried ginger
- Broccoli
- Brown rice

Enough for two people.

Instructions

- Slice the onion, quarter the mushrooms and dice the broccoli into small chunks.
- Steam the brown rice and broccoli.
- Add oil and garlic to a pan and fry the onions and mushrooms for 5 minutes.
- Add the mixed seafood and soy sauce to the pan (just enough soy sauce to cover the bottom of the pan) and then cook for 10 minutes on medium heat.
- Add steamed rice, broccoli and some dried ginger to the pan and simmer on low heat for 5 minutes (or until all the soy sauce is absorbed).

Link to Wellbeing...

Quick, easy and very tasty. Reminds me of great holidays in Asia and relaxing on the beach with good food and great friends.

Welsh Cakes

Tom Wing

Ingredients

- 500g sifted self-raising flour
- 250g salted butter
- 150g fruit (dried raisins / currents)
- 75g sugar
- Mixed Spice (heaped tea spoon)
- 1 egg
- Splash of Milk

Instructions

- Add flour, sugar and spice, thumb in the butter to make breadcrumbs.
- Add the dried fruit and mix,
- Add the egg and milk and bind it together. The mixture should be a little crumbly.
- Roll out to around a centimetre thick and cut.
- Place on a heavy flat pan over a medium heat for 3 minutes on each side.
- Remove and cover with sugar.

Link to Wellbeing...

This recipe reminds me of my childhood where I would spend hours with my grandparents and in an effort to keep me entertained (the years before tablets and smart phones) my grandmother and I would spend time together.

Now following a challenging run of shifts I find nothing better than spending time in the kitchen reminiscing over my youth. It's a way that I feel enables me to 'switch' off. I find nothing more therapeutic than getting my hands dirty kneading and mixing the ingredients.

Tony's Thai

Tony Faraway

Ingredients

- Coconut milk
- Coriander
- Lemongrass powder
- Garlic
- Chilli sauce
- Chicken or vegetable alternative
- Chicken or vegetable stock cube
- Random vegetables
- A little butter / oil

Serve with rice. I never measure the quantities and like diversity even in the ingredients. Why follow a recipe when you can see where serendipity takes you!

Instructions

- Fry the chicken or veggie equivalent in a little butter or oil (coconut if you have got it).
- Chuck in the vegetables, times how long it takes to cook.
- Make up the stock and add coconut milk, garlic, lemongrass and chilli sauce.
- Simmer for a bit whilst you have a glass of wine... or even throw some in as well!
- Add the coriander towards the end.
- Serve with rice and any wine that is left!

Link to Wellbeing...

I tried to create the taste of Thailand years before you could find this easily in this country. Oli, my husband, loved it so much, having never tasted anything quite like it, that we ate it every evening for a week. We made it for his Mum who passed this on to several friends where she lived in Paris. One of my fifteen minutes of fame!

It takes me back to several points in my past. And it's tasty. Something that's tasty is always good for your wellbeing isn't it?!

Potato Chicken Nuggets

Vince McClusky

Ingredients

- Diced chicken
- Smash potato
- 1 egg
- Chilli flakes
- Garlic salt

For taste you can use anything to season but I prefer to use the chilli flakes and the garlic salt to give it a bit of a kick.

Instructions

- Mix the smash potato and the seasoning that you use on a plate.
- Crack the egg into a bowl and beat.
- Dip the chicken pieces into the egg so that it is covered and then dip into the potato / seasoning mix till coated.
- Place onto oven prove dish (I normally use foil as well for ease of cleaning!).
- Cook until the chicken is cooked through.

Link to Wellbeing...

It can be a little messy to make but it's a healthier alternative to chicken nuggets.

I eating love this recipe as when I have friends around and they're ordering food in I can make this in the same time that the order is delivered but I'm still watching what I'm and controlling my weight.

Lemon Cake

Asmina Islam Chowdhury

Ingredients

- 100g caster sugar (keep 2 tablespoons of this for the topping)
- 115g soft margarine
- 150g self-raising flour
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons of lemon curd
- Grated rind of 1 large lemon – again keep some back for the topping

Topping:

- Sugar you kept back earlier
- Juice of the grated lemon – warm the lemon for a few second in the microwave first to get more out of it

Also required:

- Loaf tin, greased and lined with foil (I don't know why but it works!)
- For taste you can use anything to season but I prefer to use the chilli flakes and the garlic salt to give it a bit of a kick.

Instructions

- Mix all the cake ingredients together and then beat for 1 minute. Pour into the foil lined tin and bake in the centre of a preheated oven for approx. 45 minutes (until cake is firm / skewer comes out clean).
- Remove from the oven but don't turn out of the tin. Whilst the cake is still hot, in a pan, dissolve the 2 tablespoons of sugar in the lemon juice and then pour over your cake.
- Leave it to cool, decorate with the lemon rind (but doesn't matter if you don't) and then carefully turn out onto a plate and serve.

Link to Wellbeing...

If you're anything like me, you're forever entertaining and often need something quick, and lovely.

This cake has saved me on many occasions as it's made of store cupboard staples, takes next to no time and is amazingly soft. Only problem is making sure I don't eat it before the guests arrive! Even if you're not entertaining, there is nothing that beats a cup of tea – and this is the perfect partner.

Oh come on – it's tea and cake!

Chilli, Mint and Lemon Chicken

Pamela Brown

Ingredients

- 400g organic chicken breast off the bone
- 1 medium-sized red-hot chilli, seeded and chopped
- 1 heaped teaspoon crushed dried red chillies
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 2 pinches of saffron stamens (yes, I know it's expensive but worth it!)
- a handful of mint leaves (no stalks)
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- juice of 2 medium sized lemons

The recipe serves two people. If you don't like spicy food you can use plain cheddar cheese and mild salsa.

Instructions

- Cut the chicken into thick strips roughly the size of a little finger and put them in a glass basin.
- Whizz the fresh and dried chillies, the garlic, saffron, most of the mint, olive oil and most of the lemon juice in a blender or food processor till you have a thick, speckled, bright red, orange and green slush. Pour it over the chicken and toss gently. Set aside for at least an hour for the chicken to absorb the flavours of the marinade.
- Heat a ridged grill pan and lightly oil it. When it is hot, add the strips of chicken, and any marinade, and fry for three or four minutes on each side, till they are golden brown in patches. The chicken will be firm to the touch and sticky. Watch that the chili does not burn; if it shows any sign of singeing, then turn down the heat.
- Season with a little salt and the remaining lemon juice and mint. Serve with hunks of lemon and crusty bread.

Link to Wellbeing...

Photos of the Marrakech Medina rarely do the atmosphere justice, because you really have to hear, see and smell the city for the full impact. Marrakech is one of Morocco's imperial cities. The *Medina* is the old, walled part of town where life continues much as it has for hundreds of years. Mopeds battle for the right of way with donkeys in the narrow alleyways filled with shops selling steel, wool and live chickens. The main thoroughfares are crammed with shoppers, tourists and kids going to school.

The main square houses snake charmers, people selling false teeth and even eyeballs! But my personal prevailing memory is the smell of fresh spices, food and mint tea. For me this recipe takes my taste buds back to Morocco and brings alive all those lovely hot and sour flavours.

Three Ingredient Mexican Chicken

Josh Barraclough

Ingredients

- 4 Chicken Breasts
- 400g Mexicana Chilli Cheese Slices
- 2 pots of Doritos Salsa (mild or hot)

You can use plain cheddar cheese and mild salsa if you don't like spicy food.

Instructions

- Get a baking dish and cover the bottom of the dish with one pot of salsa. Slice each chicken breast at an angle to create a pocket in the middle of the chicken. Add a slice of cheese into each pocket and then lay each breast on top of the salsa in your baking dish.
- Add the other pot of salsa on top of your chicken, making sure to cover all of it. Then breakup or grate the rest of the cheese on top of the salsa.
- Bake in the oven for approximately 35 minutes at 180°C (160°C fan).
- Before eating, make sure the chicken is cooked through, looks white and the juices run clear - it should be, but nobody likes medium rare chicken! If its still a bit pink leave it in a few more minutes until it's cooked.
- I usually have some rice and steamed veg on the side with it.

Link to Wellbeing...

When I first moved out my parents and started living alone, I could not cook at all. In fact, cooking made me anxious. One day whilst watching rubbish videos on YouTube I came across a British guy called Barry Lewis who taught himself to cook. He has hundreds of recipes but a series called 4,3,2,1 really appealed to me; 4 recipes using only 3 ingredients to (2) try once (1) in your life.

I started making a few of these simple recipes because they seemed less intimidating with only three ingredients. This is one of my favourites and started me on the path to cooking for myself and not relying on ready meals so much! If you don't have much confidence in the kitchen you can start small with easy recipes like this until you gain more experience.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves making an effort to notice what's happening in the present moment, around you, in your mind, body and surroundings, without judgement.

The roots of mindfulness comes from the Buddhist and Meditation movement. You do not have to be spiritual, or have any particular beliefs to try it, just an open mind and some free time.

How could it help me?

It can allow you to become more self-aware, feel calmer, less stressed. It allows you to feel more able to choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings. It can help you cope with difficult situations and contribute to you being kinder towards yourself.

How long does it take?

There is no time limit, however a recommendation of ten minutes per day is a great place to start and you can decide to build on that.

Benefits for me?

- ✓ feel less overwhelmed
- ✓ improve your sleep quality
- ✓ positively change the way you think and feel
- ✓ increase your ability to manage difficult situations
- ✓ reduce levels of anxiety
- ✓ reduce levels of depression
- ✓ reduce levels of stress
- ✓ reduce the amount you overthink situations
- ✓ have greater self-compassion

Useful Resources

Mindfulness / Meditation Websites

- Headspace
www.headspace.com
- Calm
www.calm.com
- Mental Health Foundation
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/mindfulness
- Be Mindful.co.uk
www.bemindful.co.uk

Recipe for Mindfulness Breathing

Jules Lockett

This exercise can be done standing up or sitting down and anywhere at any time, just make yourself comfortable.

All you have to do is be still and focus on your breathing for just one minute.

1. Start by breathing in and out slowly. One breath cycle should last for approximately six seconds.
2. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body.
3. Let go of your thoughts. Let go of things you have to do later today or thing that need your attention.
4. Simply let thoughts rise and fall of their own accord and be at one with your breath.
5. Purposefully focus on your breath, focusing your sense of awareness on how your chest rises.
6. Then feel any worries, concerns, stresses leave your body as you breathe out and relax.

If you are someone who thought they'd never be able to meditate, guess what? You are half way there already!

If you enjoyed one minute of this exercise, why not try to increase it each day.



For more information about the National Ambulance LGBT Network visit:

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