



welcome



The next couple of months are going to be very exciting as we kick off our first research programs and get a chance to meet some of you at the Stitch and Craft Show and Vitality Show in London.

This month's newsletter is bursting with lots for you to read, digest and do. There's Anne's truly uplifting story of how she manages life with ME, which is an inspiration to us all. We meet our first Spanish member, who shows us some of her stitching projects and we have added some more penpals, too.

On page 6 you'll find a step-by-step checklist for a healthier lifestyle to cut out and keep, so start planning a special stitching treat for when you've ticked off ten of those little boxes. This month's health update looks at your circulation and blood with some great facts and tips to boost this vital life force while you stitch!

We've got some fab products, too, from threads and yarn to Margaret Sherry's Knit Chicks and gorgeous sock kits from Fiberspates. Yes we're getting socksy this month and you've only got to look at the delicious sock yarn on the left to realise why so many of you are addicted to knitting socks. Not only do they give you hours of pleasure and therapy in their creation, they make you smile, raise your spirits and cheer everyone else up when you wear them. According to Anne they make good compost when they wear out, too. Sounds good to us!...



Betsan xxx

4

step action plan for next month

Treat yourself

- Come and meet us at our Stitchlinks stand - March 23rd-26th, Stitch and Craft Show Olympia, 30th March-2nd April, Vitality Show Olympia.
- Wear brightly coloured socks and see how they boost your mood and make you smile! They cheer everyone else up, too.
- Find something to laugh about every day. It will boost your circulation and flood your body with feel-good hormones.
- Go out into the garden and watch nature change, whether you're moving into spring or autumn it's a beautiful time of year. Listen, smell, touch and even taste that new season.

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My story

Anne's story is truly uplifting and an inspiration to all of us to live life to the full and enjoy the bits we can...

When we read Anne's story, we thought 'Wow, what a wonderful lady.' It's a fantastic example of how a positive attitude can change your outlook on life. Her story is full of tips on how to manage life and is just as applicable to those who are too busy and stressed to enjoy life as to those with a longterm illness. These are her words and we hope you'll be just as inspired as we were...

"When I was 29 I had glandular fever and was at home for three months during which time I managed to keep my moral up by listening to Radio 4 and attempting a cross stitch panel with a Christmas theme. I still look at that cross stitch project and remember the achievement I felt at that time.

Then two years ago, after a chest infection, I simply didn't recover and after six months of battling on, I ended up bedbound for six months. I was frightened as I had no idea what was the matter

"My blog is a creative journey of projects and musings about how I can still hope and dream with ME"

with me. When my GP diagnosed ME it was a relief to have a label but I found it very difficult to accept ME and its effects on my life. Rest and pacing seemed the answer as well as positive thinking.

My job had been to recruit, train and support volunteers and I had



Anne still remembers the sense of achievement she felt when she finished this project years ago.

plenty of optimism, just no energy at all to do anything. My friend gave me a knitted scarf, a sort of hug to hold when I needed it and that set me back on the idea of knitting. I could knit in my sleep, it was a sort of automatic movement, but I found whatever I picked up to knit was too heavy for my muscles to cope with.

This gave me the idea of knitting in miniature. I've always liked a challenge and socks seemed to fit the bill. They're small, don't require a lot of yarn, can be as simple or colourful as you want, portable and can be done in bed a couple of stitches at a time. PLUS the end result are wearable garments that keep my cold feet warm. Perfect!

Pacing didn't come easily. As a highly motivated woman who was whizzing about, any sudden rush of energy resulted in using it to the max. ME is very unpredictable. I hated the way the house looked

and the way nothing seemed to get done at all. My daughter pointed me to www.flylady.net, an online cleaning and decluttering advice service that gives you tips on eventually getting your house to look the way you want it to. All their activities are done in 15 minute slots which is great for me.

I manage my ME by dividing my day into 15 minute slots too, and alternate between activities. I have a list of priorities to do and work my way through them in these time slots. Preparing dinner for my family is a day long activity but following the motto 'How do you eat an elephant...one bite at a time' I have found that everything is possible; it simply takes small steps and plenty of time to get



Anne loves knitting socks as they're small and portable. They're also highly addictive!

there. There is a current focus in the health service to establish a baseline of what you can do and then to use Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to get the patient motivated and focused on progress which can then be charted with evidence. I do believe we are actually personally capable of doing that for ourselves and Stitchlinks provides information on how this can be achieved.

As a result of having ME, I lost my job, social life, any financial security and my self esteem took a big dive. Knitting has kept me sane. I have a variety of projects on the go, from the mindless stocking stitch knitting in the round to cable patterns. Knitting has given me hope. By doing something I enjoy every day and seeing results I have gained courage in exploring how I can manage living with ME.

Progress is slow but at the beginning I started writing my thoughts in a journal and looking back now, I can see that I have progressed. There's still a long way to go, but from being bed bound all day, I am now up for eight hours and the rest is spent

sleeping and resting. I have severe mobility difficulties and can't walk very far without severe muscle pain so spend a lot of time sitting on various chairs, knitting and listening to podcasts. I can't concentrate on reading for long periods of time and I can only watch DVD's a chapter at a time as long as my concentration holds.

I started writing a blog because my friends and family wanted to know how I was doing. For me, a phonecall took a lot of energy. My concentration wasn't up to a conversation, holding the phone was painful and I'd be embarrassed when my mind would mix up words or simply come out with a different one. The blog enabled people to find out how I was doing without direct contact and it enabled me to share what I was doing and hoping to do. My blog, called *Angora's Journal*, is now a creative journey of my knitting projects, photographs and musings about how I can still hope and dream, with ME. You can visit it on <http://homepage.mac.com/berrycottage/iblog/B771876354/index.html>.

Saving energy

My focus on saving energy and living on a much reduced budget has resulted in me looking at how to live with less so I started writing a second blog on downshifting (<http://downshiftingpath.blogspot.com/>). I'm not well or

mobile enough to work yet, but knitting, stitching, writing and using technology enables me to speak with others and stay connected as well as maintaining and developing personal skills which will hopefully be useful in the future. I tried quilting locally but found that the concentration needed to stitch was just too much at the moment, so I'm exploring doing patchwork using the sewing machine instead.

Writing the blog and charting what increases and drains my energy has enabled me to make changes. I hope that by sharing what I'm doing will encourage others with ME to take courage and use the energy they have available to live life to the full.

Winter time is very difficult as my circulation decreases, but knitting keeps those fingers flexible and warm and I feel I'm doing something useful. As a result, we took a family holiday in February to have some fun together. It required a lot of planning and there was a lot of uncertainty but all in all, we made our choices based on evidence.

It is my hope that the health service will understand that



Anne's photographs form part of Angora's Journal which keeps her in touch with family and friends.

supporting people in taking care of themselves and keeping their motivation and moral up, will have lasting effects in enabling them to cope better with the day to day management of illness. I am taking steps to do my diploma in counselling to support other people in the future. I may not be able to walk but I have time to listen and encourage others.

What I like about Stitchlinks is that it not only provides me with information about knitting and stitching but it encourages me to look at health issues, make small changes that will reap rewards in the future, and provides me with the possibility to meet with others who are in similar situations so we can learn from each other."

If you've been touched by Anne's words, then drop us a line with your comments.

Contact us

- *Writing down your story can help you and many other people, so please write in to tell us about yourself and don't forget to include a photograph. You can do it anonymously too if you have a story that will help others. Send it to us in one of the following ways -*
- **Email - Betsan@stitchlinks.com** *It's easy to attach a digital photograph. Simply click on attach, find your photo and double click on the file. A word processing document containing your story can be attached in the same way.*
- **Post - PO Box 3679, BATH, BA2 4WS, UK.** *Send your story and photo by post and we can scan in the image. Unfortunately we won't be able to return the photos, though.*

Did you know?

A blog is an online journal or weblog. The writer is known as a blogger.

Online magazine, *The Blog Herald*, estimated that by October 2005 there were 100 million blogs in existence. And it's thought that on MSN-based blogs alone, 1.9 million photographs are uploaded every day!

Making friends

This month we say hello to Gillian who lives in northern Spain. She tells us a bit about her life, her family and her hobbies...

Gillian is our first member from Spain and sent us some great pictures of herself and daughters plus photos of her most recent exquisite needlework projects.

Gillian has lived in Pamplona in northern Spain for 30 years. She says "It's not far from the Pyrenees which can be very, very cold in winter with quite a bit of snow and very hot in the summer at around 40°C." She has two daughters, Victoria, who is studying a Masters in Biology in Tromso, Norway and Jessica, who is studying in Madrid.

Gillian teaches English privately. She says "It keeps me busy and out of mischief and in my small

amount of free time I love cross stitching." She adds "I have been

cross stitching for about 25 years and I've stitched many different projects, but my masterpiece was the wedding photo of my parents for their 50th wedding anniversary."

When Gillian's husband died she decided to fulfil her ambition to learn new embroidery skills, so she enrolled in the Certificate course at the Royal School of Needlework. She says "I have completed two of the four different skills - gold work and silk shading, both of which I enjoyed immensely. This year I am returning to do the Jacobean course."

She also enjoys reading, gardening and dining out with her English/foreign group of friends. "We meet once a month for dinner to keep in touch. Anyone is welcome but they have to speak English. We are quite an international group." Living in the country Gillian loves walking the dog up in the hills at the weekend. "All this keeps me busy and I visit my daughters and family when I can."

Gillian sent us these photos of her most recent stitching tasks and



This is a great family photo of Gillian and her daughters who are both away at University.

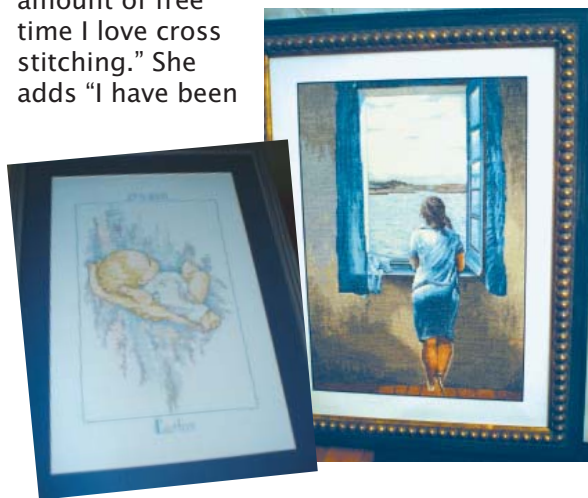
comments, "The 'Figure at a window' is a piece I did for my eldest daughter as she has always admired this picture. It is taken from a painting by Salvador Dalí. The other one is for my husband's nephew. His first son was born in May. It is by Maria van Scharrenburg and I've done a few of her birth samples as presents. I like most of her work and it is very different from the normal birth samples that you find."

Contact:

Email:

Post:

If you'd like to feature as our



This beautiful birth sampler and piece taken from one of Dali's paintings are superb examples of Gillian's needlework talent.

Penpals - making new friends couldn't be easier

• **Mel Corkill** - I've knitted since I was very small. When I was diagnosed with ME 5½ yrs ago I decided to pick my bamboos up again. I have a fantastic supportive partner, a stepson (15) and 10 (yes 10!!) cats as well as a dog! The cats love playing with my wool!!!

I'm a keen knitter of socks; they're so easy and quick to knit as well as very portable! I also knit items for charity so I feel I'm helping others at the same time."

email:

Post:

• **Kelly Darke** - Kelly's an artist from Michigan in the United States. She is researching knitting and stitch work in Art Therapy.

email:

Post:

Between friends

Don't forget to write and email with your news, views and opinions

Over the last few months Occupational Therapists and other therapists from America, Australia and the UK have been contacting us. These are just a few of their letters and emails.

Dear Betsan - I'm a social worker living in New York and have recently been involved in a project with disadvantaged teenagers who have a lot of problems. I have started a knitting group with them and have been stunned by the enthusiasm. Teaching these kids to knit has made me very interested in the research out there that addresses the actual physical and emotional effects of knitting and how it might be applied to client populations in a purposeful manner. I also think that the recent knitting boom is suggestive that it fills very tangible needs in people's lives. I'd be grateful for any advice.

Betsan says The effect that knitting and cross stitching have on the behaviour of 'difficult' teenagers is fascinating. I've spoken with teachers who use stitching to successfully change the violent behaviour of their pupils. They describe the calming effect as "instantaneous and dramatic". Surprisingly boys are just as keen as girls. Many of these children live with constant criticism so the boost to their self esteem and confidence plays a big part too. As you point out there is a need in peoples' lives, and I think that this is for community. Knitting groups provide that sense of community so missing in modern society. Only this week I was made aware of an article about prisons in the States that are using knitting to change the behaviour of their inmates. The article echoes a lot of what teachers here have told us. We've made it available on the Forum for you to read. It's important that we find out what is happening both behaviourally and chemically so that more people can benefit.

Dear Betsan - I'm a senior Occupational Therapist working on an Acute Admissions Mental Health ward and I'd be very interested to hear more about your research. I already use cross stitch with some of the patients.

Betsan says Many people have told us how beneficial stitching is for mental health problems, for a variety of reasons, some of which are mentioned above. It seems to enable people to enter a quiet state of mind giving a rest from any trauma. Stitching encourages people to look and plan forward. The calming effect described by many is also significant.

Drop me a line at [Stitchlinks, PO Box 3679, Bath BA2 4WS](mailto:betsan@stitchlinks.com); email betsan@stitchlinks.com. or visit the [Stitchlinks website at www.stitchlinks.com](http://www.stitchlinks.com)

Contact us

Please include the enclosed information in the following sections

- The Stitchlinks penpal list
- Special message board
- My story
- Between friends - letters
- Making friends - special penpals
- Swap shop
- Ideas for Something new
- I include a photo of myself*

Name

Address

Town

Post code

Country

Email

Phone

Membership

Message (include more if you need to!)

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* We're sorry we won't be able to return any photographs.

Step-by-step...

Taking things step-by-step in small manageable portions is a good way to start making changes towards a healthier lifestyle...

We've devised this weekly checklist for you to cut out, make photocopies of and keep. Stick it to your fridge door and tick off the achievements you've made in a week. When you've ticked off any ten boxes across the whole sheet in a week, reward yourself with a small stitching treat. Let us know how you get on...

My checklist for my healthier lifestyle

Aerobic exercise. 30 mins x5 a week. These can be done in 10 min slots to start.

Day 3

Day 1

Day 2

Day 4

Day 5

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I exercised to boost circulation (shown opposite)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I cut down on saturated fat (see page 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read labels for hydrogenated fats or trans fats and cut them out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had no takeaways or ready meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ate no processed meats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ate five portions of fruit and veg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I cut my salt intake to one teaspoon a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I cut down on sugar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ate more fibre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I drank 2 litres of water (approx 4 pints)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I didn't smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I stitched to manage my stress levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

Mind games

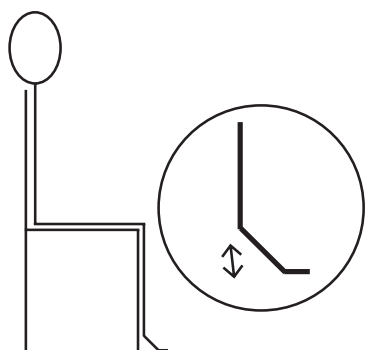
What is the main colour of a peacock's egg?

A: Peacocks don't lay eggs!

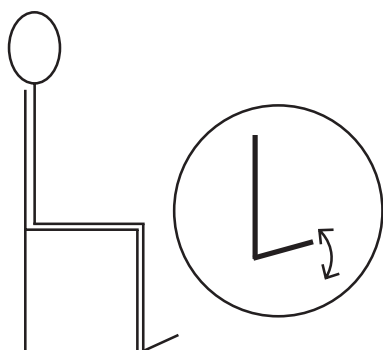
Something new...

A healthy circulation carries oxygen and nutrients to every cell. Practise these simple exercises to boost yours while you stitch...

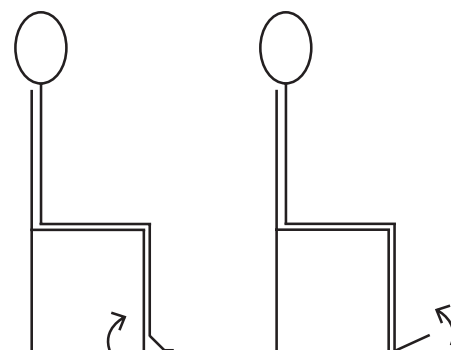
As we mentioned in our Stitchlinks Posture Advice, it's important to stretch and move around every 20 minutes when you're stitching. This will help to prevent aches and pains and give your circulation a good boost making you less tired and more alert. The exercises shown below are specifically designed to help your circulation and should be done smoothly, but quickly so as to have a pumping effect on your blood. If you're able to get up and walk around then do this as well. They're easy to learn and will soon be second nature.



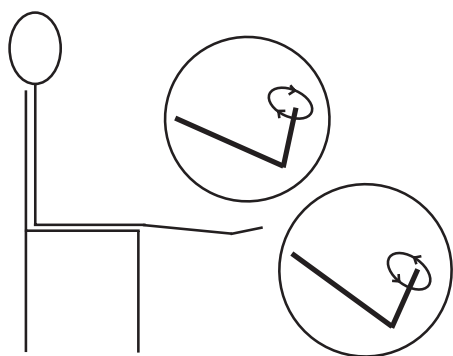
Keeping your **toes** on the floor, lift your heels as high as possible then lower and repeat 10 times quickly. Feel it pumping those calf muscles!



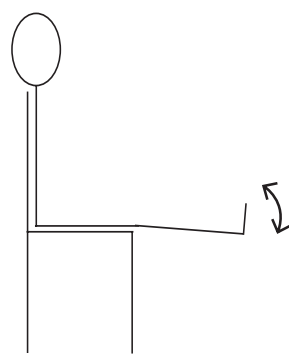
Keeping your **heels** on the floor, lift your toes as high as possible. Lower and repeat 10 times quickly. Do both feet at the same time.



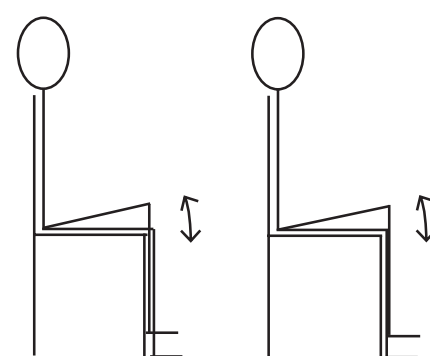
Now combine these two exercises by raising and lowering your heels, followed by your toes. x10 heels and x10 toes. Feel that pump!



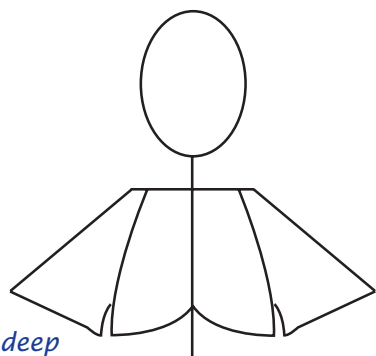
Lift your lower leg and **keeping your knee straight** circle your foot clockwise x10, then anticlockwise x 10. Repeat with the other leg.



Lift your lower leg and **keeping your knee straight** pull your foot up towards you and hold for a count of five. Do this x5 each leg.



Whilst sitting lift one knee as shown in the diagram. Lower it then lift the other as if you were marching. Ten times each leg.



Take deep breaths using your lower chest.

Breathe well

Many of us breathe using only the upper portions of our lungs, so when you've done your exercises finish off with four deep breaths to get fresh air down to where the mucus collects due to gravity. To do this place your hands on the lower sides of your rib cage as shown. As you breathe in feel this area expand, outwards. It may take a bit of practise and you can try one side at a time if it's easier.

Posture

Sitting for long periods, maybe stitching, working in an office or travelling can cause problems, so it's important to keep moving and stretching. Take time out to check out your posture on a regular basis and be careful not to hunch over your work. Get into the habit of gently pushing your shoulders back into the chair. Use a copy holder for your charts and it'll soon all slot into place!

Medical update

What are the facts about circulation and how can singing and a good 'hearty' laugh reach every fibre of your body. Find out...

Every one of the trillions of cells in your body needs a constant supply of oxygen and a way of eliminating waste. Your blood, carried in up to 100,000 miles of tubing, is the transport system that provides this function. With your heart as the pump, blood reaches every part of your body including your bones, skin, brain and heart itself. Your largest blood vessels even have blood vessels of their own.

There are two circuits that each blood cell travels around. The first takes blood from the heart to the lungs to drop off carbon dioxide and collect oxygen. This oxygen-

They have thinner walls than arteries because the pressure of the blood flow is less.


Getting blood back to the heart is more difficult as the system has to work against gravity. For this reason veins have valves which prevent the back flow of blood. Also each time you move, muscle contractions squeeze against the veins to pump the blood upwards. This is why it's important to carry out the specific exercises shown on page 7 if you're in the same position for some time.

Your body can control blood flow to the areas where it's most

millimetre! That's a lot of little cells working to keep you healthy.

Each type of cell has a specific job: red cells transport oxygen via the haemoglobin within them. White cells are part of the immune system and help fight infection whilst platelets help with clotting.

Your circulatory system is also responsible for regulating and balancing your temperature by taking heat away from deeper organs to the skin and lungs. When you're too hot blood vessels in the skin dilate to lose heat and when you're cold they constrict to prevent heat loss.

Your circulation is a vital life force that pervades every cell in your body, so try incorporating as many of the tips on the opposite page as you can to keep it flowing freely. Start with a few and tick them off as you go. 

"Your circulation is the vital life force that pervades every cell, so you need to keep it flowing freely!"

rich blood returns to the opposite side of the heart to be pumped out via the aorta and arteries through the capillaries in your tissues then back to the heart via the veins. A blood cell can cover this journey 2-3 times per minute!

There are three types of blood vessel. **Arteries** carry blood rich in oxygen from the heart. These are large vessels that have to cope with high pressures, so their walls are thick and flexible. The biggest artery - the aorta - is almost the diameter of a hose pipe.

As they get further from the heart, arteries become smaller, eventually becoming **capillaries**, with the diameter of one tenth of a human hair. It's these thin walled vessels that carry blood to the individual cells in your body. Oxygen and nutrients move freely through their thin walls and waste products are collected to be transported to the lungs and kidneys for elimination.

The 50,000 million capillaries connect arteries to **veins** which appear blue because the blood within them carries no oxygen.

needed by contracting or relaxing the small vessels. For example if you're exercising, blood flow is diverted from the stomach and digestive tract to the muscles in order to supply them with increased oxygen and glucose for fuel and also to the skin to enable excessive heat to be lost.

A bit about blood

Blood is a mixture of plasma and cells and makes up 7-8% of your body weight. You'll have about 5.6 litres of blood in your body of which 2.5-3 litres will be plasma and the rest cellular. Plasma, which is 90% water is the liquid in which your blood cells float and in which other substances, such as hormones, nutrients and vitamins essential to health are dissolved. Your blood cells, which are made in your bone marrow consist of red and white cells and platelets. Women have an average of 4,600,000 red cells per cubic millimetre, whilst men may have up to a million more. On average you'll have 7,000 white cells and 250,000 platelets per cubic

Did you know?

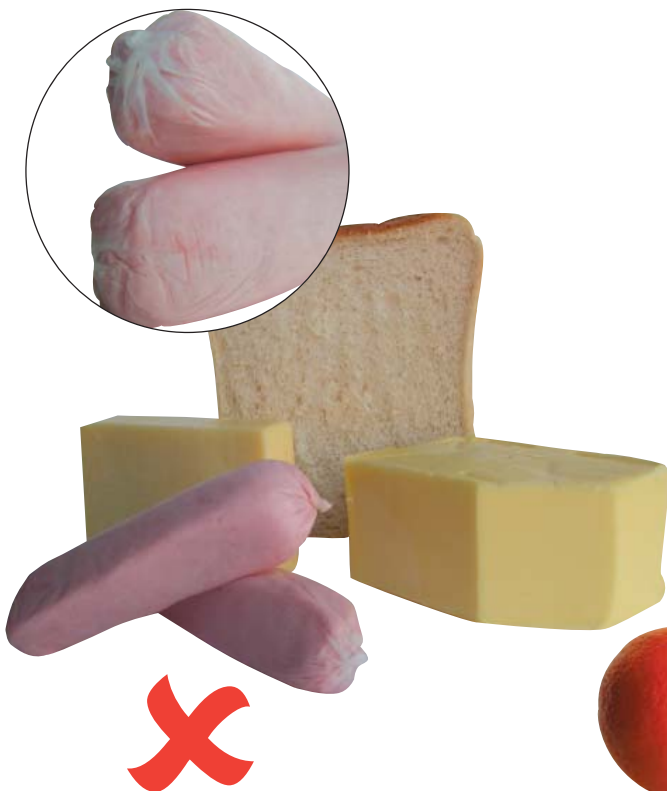
Soldiers on guard duty in situations where they aren't allowed to move have a problem maintaining an adequate blood flow and we would see many more of them fainting if it wasn't for a clever trick they learn.

As they stand they are taught to tightly clench and relax the muscles of their legs, thighs and buttocks. This has the effect of pumping the blood against the pull of gravity aiding its progress to the heart and brain. You can't tell they're clenching unless you look very closely!

As laughter is good medicine for a healthy circulation, so is singing. A good singsong will improve your oxygen supply and stimulate your circulation.

Y our quick guide to a healthier circulation...

- **Exercise regularly** – find an aerobic activity you enjoy and join up with a friend or group to keep you motivated. Talk to your GP first but you should aim for 30 minutes, five times a week. Walking, dancing, swimming are good options PLUS the exercises on page 7 will boost your circulation whilst stitching.
- **Eat a healthy diet** – to recap
 - cut down on saturated fats and switch to ‘good’ fats found in olive oil sunflower oils and fish oils.
 - cut down on transfats – these are hidden dangers often labelled as Hydrogenated vegetable oil.
 - eat more fibre.
 - eat five portions of fruit and veg a day.
 - cut down on your salt and sodium intake.
 - cut down on sugar.
 - eat naturally colourful food (see picture).
- **Drink plenty of water** – blood is 75% water. Dehydration effects health and circulation. Aim for 2 litres a day, more in hot weather and after exercise.
- **Get your blood pressure tested** – high blood pressure can damage your blood vessels, resulting in the build up of plaque or causing them to burst with dangerous results.
- **Get your cholesterol tested** – high levels will clog up your arteries impeding the free flow of blood, decreasing the nutrients reaching your cells, the amount of waste transported out, reducing the temperature of the skin and affecting the healing and disease fighting potential of your body.
- **Stop smoking** – nicotine encourages the build up of plaque and constricts blood vessels, which can decrease or even prevent blood flow.
- **Manage stress** – it’s a significant cause of high blood pressure and muscle tension, which can also decrease blood flow. So use your knitting and cross stitching to manage your stress levels effectively.
- **Have a good laugh** – a good ‘hearty’ belly laugh can boost your circulation as effectively as aerobic exercise. It also reduces stress and is relaxing, triggering the release of endorphins – the body’s natural pain killers and feel-good hormones!



We're going to finish off with this powerful image, because we think it says more than any words can. Check out our tick list on page 6.

What's new in store

Save money on products and kits every month with Stitchlinks



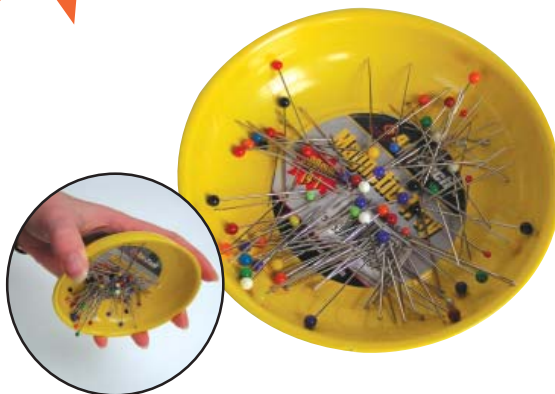
Anchor Threads



The beautiful colours of these Anchor threads are just calling out to be included in your next project! We have a range of the most popular colours for **50p** per skein **saving 23%** on the RRP. Quote **Code C-ANTHR** when ordering and don't forget to include the Anchor colour code.



Magnetic Dish



There's nothing more annoying than knocking your pins to the floor, then having to scabble around, picking every last one up! This bright, magnetic dish is the answer - you'll never have to pick up those pins again. It's only **£2.40** **saving 20%**. Quote **Code G-MAG02**.

Knit Chicks



Margaret Sherry's Knit Chicks will appeal to knitters and cross stitchers. They certainly look as if they're having a fun time, knitting and chatting! The kit measures 16 x 22.5cms (6¼ x 9in) and the threads are pre-sorted for a quick start. **£13.00** **saving 20%**. Quote **Code C-06041**.



Always Friends



This cuddly little chap measures 11 x 8cm (4¼ x 3in) when finished. Why not stitch him for a special friend - he looks great as a framed picture and speaks volumes as a card. Buy him for **£8.00**, **saving 14%** on the RRP. Quote **Code C-06042** when ordering.



Please fill in the order form on page 12 and make cheques payable to **Stitchlinks Limited**. Post with completed order form to **Stitchlinks, PO Box 3679, Bath, BA2 4WS** or alternatively visit our shop at www.stitchlinks.com to buy online or download an order form. We've taken a lot of care to ensure that our products are safe and of good quality, but we cannot accept responsibility for the misuse of goods.

What's new in store

Discover the whole new addictive pleasure of knitting socks!



Those socksy urges

There aren't many things in life that are highly pleasurable and addictive but good for you.

Knitting socks may seem a bit daunting at first, but they'll soon have you hooked. They're light and quick and you can knit them in your favourite multi-coloured yarn and still appear in public and feel proud! In fact the brighter the better – we even reckon wearing bright socks makes you smile! It certainly worked for us – catching a glimpse of multi-coloured feet makes you feel a bit rebellious, too!

We've got sock solutions to suit all skill levels this month. There's Regia, self patterning yarn for those sock addict experts among you and two fab Fyberspates kits suitable for complete beginners and experts too.

And we've given you even more choice by making these kits available with or without needles, just in case you already have a set. So treat those feet and indulge in a bit of multi-colour pleasure!



Regia Sock Yarn



This self patterning 'Clown' yarn from Regia's Ringlets range is not only fun to knit with, but is hard wearing with 75% wool, 25% Polyamide. 100gms (two balls) knits one pair of socks. Buy it for **£2.75** a ball, **saving 25%** on the RRP. Quote **Code K-06044** when ordering.

Treat yourself

Fyberspates Sock kit

Blue & Turquoise



Heather Mist

Pink & Plum

A touch of luxury. This Fyberspates hand-dyed wool, sock kit comes in three colourways with or without needles. Choose from Blue and Turquoise (K-06041), Pink and Plum (K-06042), Heather Mist (plum and cream, K-06043). With needles **£8.25** saving 28%. Without needles **£7.25**.



Fyberspates Sock kit



Rose Pink

Raspberry

Denim

Great for the first time sock knitter, this kit contains everything you need. The yarn is 75% wool, 25% Polyamide and comes in a choice of three colours, Denim K-06045, Rose Pink K-06046 and Raspberry K-06047. **£5.50** for the kit **saving 27%**. Without needles for **£4.50**.



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Looking forward ...

From the new season's kits to sumptuous modern crochet, and the start of research we're anticipating exciting events ahead...!

We've got a very busy month ahead of us with two big shows to attend and the launch of our first research projects with Cardiff University Psychology department, which is so exciting.

On the knitting and cross stitching front the show we attended earlier this month was full of new kits and ideas that would keep most of us busy for a lifetime. The new yarns and colours available are just gorgeous - in fact you'd get just as much enjoyment from stroking them as stitching with them!

Crochet has very definitely shed its 'granny squares' image and there were some fabulous modern designs and sumptuous shawls and shrugs crocheted in every type of yarn imaginable. Following

suggestions from many, crochet will now be formally included in the Stitchlinks therapies. One lady described the rhythm of crochet as musical and we believe it could be an effective therapeutic alternative for those who perhaps find knitting too physically demanding or heavy. And for everyone else it provides an alternative which is always stimulating. Members will find a basic guide to crochet on the website at the end of the knitting guide and if you have any request for specific kits, please tell us.

We are unearthing more and more evidence about the power of stitching. Recently we were sent an article from the States which looked at the effect of knitting on hardened criminals. Knitting for

charities was not only developing a sense of community and improving the communication skills of these burly, violent men, but also changing their behaviour. The article also echoes what we've been told by therapists and school teachers in the UK using stitching with disruptive teenagers.

It goes without saying that we're really looking forward to meeting some of you at the Stitch and Craft Show at Olympia from 23rd-26th March and at the Vitality Show the following week, also at Olympia. We plan on taking lots of photographs to show you but until then enjoy your Easter break and have a happy month ahead!



Order form

I would like to order the following

Anchor Threads, Code C-ANTHR 50p per skein. Quote colour code/colour

Magnetic Dish Code G-MAG02 £2.40

Margaret Sherry's Knit Chicks kit Code C-06041 £13.00

Always Friends kit, Code C-06042 £8.00

'Clown' Ringlets Regia sock yarn Code K-06044 £2.75 per ball. Order two balls to knit one pair of socks

Fyberspates sock kit hand-dyed wool Blue and Turquoise (K-06041)

- Pink and Plum (K-06042)
- Heather Mist (K-06043)
- Kit with needles £8.25
- Without needles £7.25

- Fyberspates sock kit plain yarn**
- Denim (K-06045)
- Rose Pink (K-06046)
- Raspberry (K-06047)
- Kit with needles £5.50
- Without needles £4.50

If you'd like to order products from other newsletters or website, please include them below.

- Code £ _____
- Code £ _____

Total £ _____

I enclose a cheque made payable to Stitchlinks Limited for £ _____

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