



Welcome

We hope you all had a good Easter break. Spring is certainly blooming in the UK, but as it warms up here our members on the other side of the world are moving into autumn. On page 4 we travel to the paradise of New Zealand to meet our Special Penpal of the month – she tells us it's cold with temperatures plummeting to 20°C!

We're chatting about 'structure' this month – on page 2 you can read about how knitting helped a Psychology Researcher organise her life. But how important is structure to our wellbeing and do we need a bit of organisation to feel happy or secure? We'd like to hear your opinions on this, so turn to page 10 to find out more and how this links into the research kicked off at the Stitch and Craft Show.

A big thank you to everyone who came along to our stand to say hello and take part in the research. It was great to put faces to names and meet you.

Our Medical update on page 8 discusses using stitching to manage your moods to work towards achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Following the success of last month's leg exercises there are arm exercises to keep you supple on page 6. And with more mouthwatering products on page 11, we hope you'll enjoy.



Betsan xxx

4 step action plan for next month

- Cut your TV viewing by half and read or listen to music instead.
- Sit down and analyse your moods. Identify when you turn to the biscuit tin for comfort and only eat when you're hungry. See page 8 for more on controlling your moods.
- With a new season underway, clear out your wardrobe and get rid of anything you haven't worn or is worn out. Even old favourites!
- Learn to like yourself and appreciate the good things you've done.

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My story

This month we meet Jeni, the creative inspiration behind **Fyberspates**...

Some of you met up with Jeni at the Stitch and Craft Show last month and we know lots of you love the yarns she hand dyes for her company **Fyberspates**. This is the story of her life's passion ...

"Ever since I was a child I've been making clothes. I loved *The Clothes Show* on TV and was fascinated by textiles. I always wanted to recreate the beautiful things I'd seen. This included making shoes from fabric and cardboard; a favourite past-time of mine! My mum encouraged me

and loved my creations, so from an early age I knew making things made me happy. If I couldn't create I didn't feel fulfilled."

wall. It was amazing, huge walls of colour. That was it for me; I knew at that moment my life would never be the same again. I can't really describe it, but that yarn, the textures and colours just inspired me so much. Immediately I had wild ideas about what I would make, despite never having completed anything before. I sat and knitted that thick colourful jumper in the garden at 70° for three days. It was my own design, and it was beautiful, not perfect, but one of the most amazing



The skills Jeni has learnt through knitting have transferred across to other areas of her life.

turning point. I was so inspired, I absolutely had to learn to spin and dye. Thankfully my mum who is a creative goddess understood and bought me a spinning wheel for Christmas. So I started to spin.

I made lots of jumpers, socks and bags, and wanted feedback from people who knew about knitting. So, thinking there were no young knitters in Cardiff, I started my blog, '<http://fiberspates.blogspot.com/>' and the whole world of internet knitting opened up. As a result I started to really reflect on why I knitted and what benefits it had for me, I had a few thoughts about running psychology experiments but thought that no one would take me seriously.

A change of job to the one I'm doing now signified a massive decrease in stress, which enabled me to really focus on my knitting and start to develop my skills. I found the Stitch n' Bitch group in Cardiff and I remember my first meeting so well, I was so excited. In that meeting I fused bonds with people that I'm pretty sure I'll

and loved my creations, so from an early age I knew making things made me happy. If I couldn't create I didn't feel fulfilled."

I didn't start knitting until about six years ago, when I was inspired by some beautiful chunky scarves I saw in a shop. I sat amongst the yarn and pattern books and got so excited. I'd never seen anything like it and ended up buying £50 worth of lace weight mohair yarn for a jumper; I'm not quite sure how that happened! That jumper was torture; it didn't put me off knitting, but for a while it stayed something I thought I might like to do rather than something I loved.

About a year later my mum and I went shopping and wandered into a shop that had huge hanks of Colinette yarn hanging from every

things I'd ever completed.

From then on there was no stopping me, but I struggled to follow patterns because I got bored, and so often made 'Frankenstein jumpers' - weird and wonderful, containing string and all sorts of bits and pieces.

Around this time, I was studying for a research qualification, which I struggled with because I found out I was dyslexic. I delved deeper and deeper into knitting, often wishing I had more time. Knitting was so comforting, and when I felt upset, I longed for it.

As a student I was short of money but saved to go on a course to learn how to weave. Whilst there I was exposed to all sorts of spinning equipment, fleeces and hand dyed yarn. This was another



know forever. There's something very special about meeting up and knitting together with friends. My life started to blossom, and it was all centred around my knitting. I began to realise that my knitting often reflected my state of life and the way I behaved.

I'm naturally very disorganised and have a disregard for structure, hence my knitting without patterns and resulting wonderful garments that weren't always wearable. I saw the parallels in my knitting and the rest of my life. I made decisions in the moment without much thought and lacked confidence. I wouldn't take on any challenges at work, or do my own research because I was scared to put my neck on the line. Maybe that's why I didn't follow patterns because I was afraid of failure; at least I had plenty of excuses if I didn't use one. So much time was wasted because I was so disorganised, just like I wasted yarn because my jumpers weren't wearable. So I set about changing through my knitting!

I bought a pattern book and yarn for a very complicated lacy top. But after the ribbing things started to go wrong and I was just about to quit – something I had a tendency to do – when Anth, my partner, said to me, "You must put all your effort into every stitch, making it perfect, then you can't fail to make a wonderful jumper." It sounded like such a good idea!

So I did, and it just grew and grew and because I could see the results I started to apply it to my life. Do everything 100%. Gradually things started changing, getting better and better. My confidence just grew and grew. I continued to learn and tried to make sure I did everything correctly. I cared about what I was doing and taking on harder knitting challenges sort of seeped into my life choices as well.

I was surprised that changing my knitting behaviour transferred across into my life. I use my knitting as an outlet for my creativity, as way of self-development and improvement and as something that always makes me feel better. It worked for friends too, so there just had to be something in it! As a psychologist I was intrigued.

Every weekend I was dyeing, spinning and knitting, and had a surplus of wool. So I decided to sell it on eBay, and *Fyberspates* was born, which just shows how my confidence has grown. In the meantime, I met Betsan – what a wonderful coincidence that was! For the first time someone was going to put into practice things I knew, and I was so inspired that *Stitchlinks* was going to make what I consider to be such a huge



Jeni's fabulous socks make her feel happier when she wears them. We can see why they make her smile!

contribution to people's lives. I wanted to help and contribute. I had been waiting to do some research on this, so with Betsan's support I plucked up the courage to ask a colleague, Ulrich, if he would supervise some research. He loved the idea. Ulrich specialises in researching depression, so this seemed like a good place to start. Betsan came for a meeting and showed us the anecdotal evidence she'd collected and it was so exciting to see so many people confirming what I had believed.

So now I'm in a position where I have my own research projects and, thanks to knitting, I can fulfill my life's dream!

If you've been inspired by Jeni's story, drop us a line.

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 text 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?

Setting yourself a challenging goal and having something to aim for can make you happier. Most of us need a sense of purpose – having a mixture of short- and long-term goals will help you to look forward and enjoy life.

Use your stitching to learn goal setting skills and experience that sense of achievement when you reach your target!

Making friends

This paradise on New Zealand's South Island is home to Claire who shares a bit of her life and stitching loves with us this month...

This month's Special Penpal is Claire Buchanan. She sent us these fantastic pictures of the area she lives in New Zealand. It looks a bit like paradise to us especially as on the day they arrived it was cold and wet here in the UK. We were even more envious when she told us, "It's starting to get cold here, we've dropped to the low 20s."

It's always great to chat to our members in other countries so this is a little bit about Claire...

"Hello, I'm Claire and I live in a town called Blenheim, which is at the top of New Zealand's South Island. I'm 20 years old and I work full time as a kitchen and flooring consultant for a company called

Mitre 10 - it's a DIY/home improvement shop for tradesmen and the public. I'm also studying Architectural Design Technology part-time by correspondence and I already have a qualification in Interior Design. It took me a year of part-time study to complete."

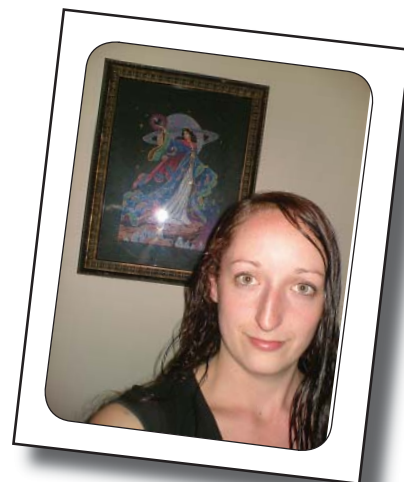
Claire told us that it's very hot, sunny and windy in the area of New Zealand where she lives and went on to say, "I spend a lot of time in the Marlborough Sounds which is about a 40 minute drive away from where we live. We have a property there, right on the edge of the water, as you can see from the pictures - its just gorgeous." It looks a fabulous place to escape to for some serious relaxation!

Claire tries to stay fit but like many of us lacks the motivation sometimes. She says, "There are lots of beautiful walking tracks around the area. It's a 15 minute drive to the sea and 10 minutes to the hills." Just perfect.

"I love cross stitch - particularly colourful things on black fabric - designing, cooking, gardening and I collect Me to You and Tatty Teddy bears.

I started cross stitching when I was only six years old, doing little bits and pieces. Then when I left school at 16 I got stuck into a big sampler for my nana. It took ages but she loved it and it still hangs in her lounge." The spectacular view has inspired Claire to design patterns of her own as well.

Claire spends a lot of time at home by



Claire loves cross stitching colourful designs on black fabric as you can see from these wonderful pictures.



Claire's house by the water looks just idyllic to us, so we weren't surprised to hear that it had inspired her to design her own cross stitch.



Claire stitched these pictures for her nana. The sampler was for her 80th birthday.

herself and says, "I find I get lonely, but I was so excited when I started reading about Stitchlinks and I'd love to hear from other members anywhere in the world."

You can contact Claire either by post or email, but she would also like to get chatting on the Forum, so why not leave her a message there as well?

email:

Post:

Don't forget to check your Stitchlinks email accounts!



Penpals - making new friends

• **Charlotte Retter** - I'm more of a crocheter than a knitter and love to make anything that is made quickly. At the moment I am making teddies for the local Special Care Baby Unit and also designing a set of angels for my children.

email:

Post:

• **Elaine Raven** - Elaine would love to hear from other Stitchlinks members and you can contact her in the following ways.

email:

Post:

• **Leela Nada** - Leela was one of the many visitors to our stand at the Stitch and Craft show last month, and we were able to have a good chat. She joined Stitchlinks at the show and would like to contact other members by post. Leela loves to cross stitch.

Post:

• **Patricia Brown** - I'm only just returning to knitting after 15 years, so I'm out of practise, but looking forward to being motivated again. I enjoy knitting children's garments.

email:

Post:

Drop us a line at Stitchlinks, PO Box 3679, Bath BA2 4WS

email betsan@stitchlinks.com.
or visit the [Stitchlinks website at www.stitchlinks.com](http://www.stitchlinks.com)

Did you know?

There is good evidence to show that there is a link between exercising and a decrease in depression. New research has shown that the link between exercise and depression is even stronger than originally thought.

This recent research has shown that you need to be doing a certain level of exercise to feel the benefits mentally. This doesn't mean, however, that you need to join a gym and do a hard workout. It showed that walking could have the same positive benefits as long as you walk for at least 30 minutes on most days. Alternatively you could walk briskly for 45 minutes on 3-4 days a week.

It's clear that exercise can have a positive effect on a person's mental state and if you chose to walk in interesting or beautiful areas with friends then the effect is enhanced. Use it to relax, manage stress after work and to control weight too!

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

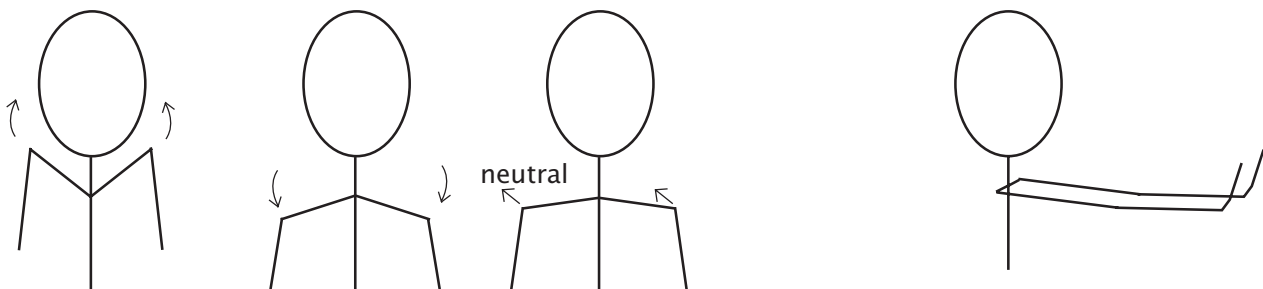
Message (include more if you need to!)

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

Something new...

As stitchers we all use our hands a lot, so it's vitally important that we keep them on top form. Let's take a look at how...

We received lots of great feedback from last month's exercises to keep your circulation healthy while you stitch and many of you asked us to follow it up with exercises for the arms. So we've devised this short program of movements and stretches to help you maintain good posture and to gently stretch your arms and hands at regular intervals while you stitch or sit at you computer. Ideally you should do them every 20 minutes alongside your leg exercises. Don't forget to have a walk around to stretch and focus your eyes on a distant object to prevent eye strain, too. These exercises should be done slowly and rhythmically and shouldn't be forced. Consult your GP first if you suffer from neck or upper limb pain or if you haven't exercised before.

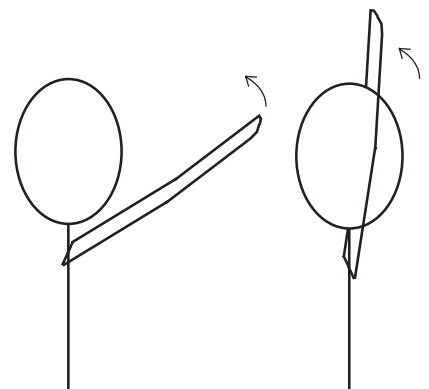
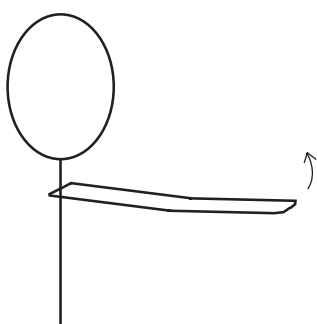


Exercise 1 – Raise your shoulders as fully as possible. Next gently lower them as much as possible. Now let them rise to the neutral position and then gently push them backwards into the chair. Repeat x5

Exercise 2 – Raise both arms in front of you to shoulder height. Lift you hands up as far as possible as if you are trying to push an object away, as shown. Lower your arms and repeat x5.

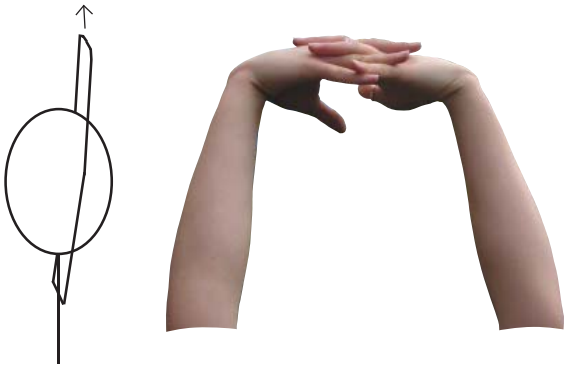


Exercise 3 – Stretch your hands out, spreading your fingers. Hold this position for a few moments then wiggle your straight fingers around as shown in the photos. Moving your fingers as much as possible whilst keeping the rest of your hand and wrist still. Count to five and relax. Repeat x5.

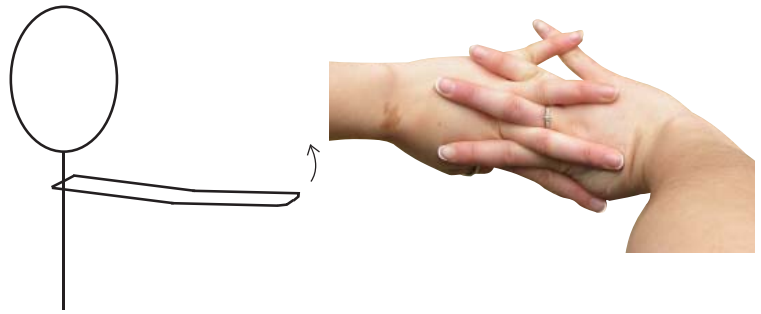


Exercise 4 – Stretch your arms out in front of you and entwine your fingers as shown in the photograph. Keeping your body still and shoulders down, gently stretch along the length of your arms and into your

hands. Hold this position for a few seconds then lift your straight arms as high as possible. Be careful not to arch your back or move your head forwards. Movement must come from the shoulders only. When



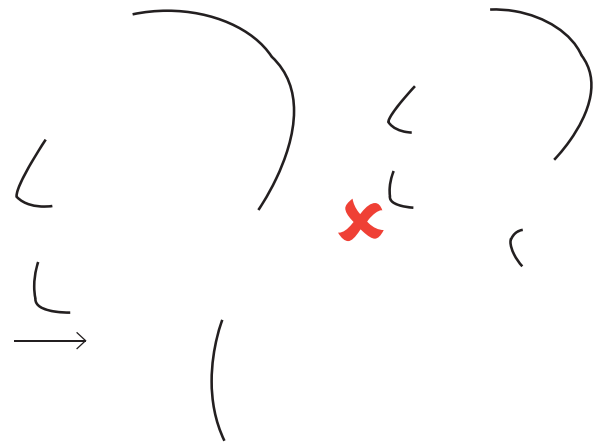
your arms are as high as you can get them - preferably with your hands above your head - gently stretch along your arms up towards the ceiling. Hold this stretch for a count of five. Repeat x5.



Exercise 5 - Hold your arms out in front with your hands entwined as before. This time keeping your arms outstretched, turn your hands so that the backs are facing you as in the photograph. Stretch down



towards your hands and hold for a count of five. Now lift your arms as before to as high a position as possible. Stretch along your arms up towards the ceiling as shown. Hold for five and then repeat x5.



Exercise 6 - To counteract poor neck posture sit up straight with your head in neutral as shown then without raising your chin gently push it backwards, tucking it in. Repeat x5.

These exercises shouldn't cause discomfort. Consult your GP before starting any exercise program.

4 tips to expand your horizon

- Make yourself think positive thoughts. This will strengthen those links in your brain making them stronger. Thinking negatively will strengthen negative links, so train your brain to be positive.
- Analyse the choices you have in life. Then make the decision to take charge of the areas you can control. Manage these choices, don't let them rise up and knock you back. Take control.
- Seek the valuable lesson in any setbacks. Don't let unavoidable difficulties affect your mood and emotions - Importantly don't seek consolation in the biscuit tin! See page 8 for more on mood and food.
- Ignore your inner critic. We're often our own worst enemy, so learn to become your own best friend. Be kind and nurture yourself. You are worth it and you've got lots to give and share with others.

Mind games

A water lily growing in a circular pond doubles in size every day. After thirty days it covers the whole pond. How long did it take to cover half the pond?

NB - keep an eye out for a new website launching at the end of April, www.mindtwisters.co.uk. You'll find a link on our website.

A: 29 days. It doubles the next day.

Medical update



In Part one we take a look at the issues surrounding food and how we can replace it with stitching to manage our moods...

Most of us will have eaten our fill of Easter eggs by now and we can hear you groan at the prospect of yet another weight loss article. But sit back and enjoy; we're not interested in lecturing you, or in weight loss for looks, although it is an added bonus, but in improving the health of your mind and body. The beauty of a healthy attitude to food is that you'll enjoy the taste of the occasional piece of chocolate even more and you won't feel guilty after you've indulged!

A large number of us behave irrationally when it comes to looking after and maintaining our

hungry. So many of us eat as a way of managing our feelings and this can become addictive because fats and sugar can make us feel temporarily better by causing a surge in serotonin and dopamine. However this 'high' is quickly replaced by a deeper low and a craving for more comfort food – and so the cycle begins.

Comfort eating and bingeing have more to do with emotions or boredom than hunger. As stitchers, however, you have the perfect tool to break this cycle. Next time you feel stressed, upset, angry or bored and you get the urge to binge, reach for the

provide you with good quality nutrition and fuel.

Don't be tempted by fad diets offering a quick fix. We all need carbohydrates for fuel, protein to build muscles and 'good' fats (unsaturated, such as olive oil and fish oil) for hormone production and a healthy nervous system. Also forbidding certain foods only leads to cravings. So stop using food to manage your emotions – turn to your stitching and the urge to binge will pass.

A bit about metabolism

Your metabolic rate is the rate at which your body burns calories. Calories are the fuel you need to stay alive. Around 70% of the calories you use every day are used to keep you warm, to keep your heart beating, circulation pumping, brain functioning, digestion, cell replacement, skin maintenance, nails and hair growing. Sitting still for example will burn about 100 calories per hour. The rest of the calories are burnt as you move around – a gentle walk burns 300 calories per hour, whilst digging the garden burns about 500 per hour. Metabolism slows down with age – your cells replace themselves more slowly and you become less active. It's important to combat this by maintaining activity levels as much as possible.

To lose weight you need to take in fewer calories than you use up. You can do this by eating less or being more active. Any increase in activity will help as long as you don't match it with an increase in calories. The good news is that your metabolic rate can be revved up. Take a look at our tips on the opposite page to find out how.

Next month we take a more detailed look at food as a fuel and how with the help of other Stitchlinks members you can maintain a healthy weight.

"Learning not to reach for the chocolate when you're emotionally hungry could be the key to weight loss!"

bodies. Most of us wouldn't put fuel into our cars that may clog the engine, but would happily fill our bodies with food that clogs our circulation. And the majority rarely, if ever, take our bodies for a check up or give them a run to charge those batteries. So here in Part One we're going to take a look at some of the issues behind the way we eat and how stitching can help.

Food and emotion

Our relationship with food develops from the moment we're born. It's complex and closely linked to our emotions. From birth we learn to associate food with love and comfort, so when we're feeling low the need for love and support can easily be confused with the need for food. Resolving these emotional issues and learning to recognise that you're reaching for the biscuit tin when you are emotionally hungry could be the key to losing weight permanently. So next time you are about to attack the doughnuts ask yourself whether you're truly

stitching not the stodge. It will distract you from the need to eat and help to raise your mood.

Try to identify your triggers by keeping a diary of your moods and food intake. Feelings are also tied to nutrition, so avoid stimulants such as caffeine and alcohol too. Those of us with children will know all too well the temptation to finish their food or to run to the chocolate biscuits after a sleepless night or if you've got a tantruming toddler (or teenager!). Learn to understand how you're using food to boost your mood and try to recall how you feel afterwards.

The next step is to start valuing yourself. You are worth looking after and your body deserves the best of fuels to function and renew itself. Stop thinking about losing weight, instead eat healthily to feel good about yourself, to care for your body and for health. Making healthy lifestyle changes will result in sustainable weight loss and control your blood sugar levels, to bring you better health. Start using food positively to

Did you know?

Over three quarters of people who eat breakfast every day manage to lose weight and keep it off.

Sleeping more and relaxing could help you to lose weight. Find out more about this next month!

50% of all journeys in the UK are less than two miles. Think how fit we'd all be if we walked instead!

The calorie burn of cycling is about 1/3 that of walking, so to burn the same number of calories you'd need to cycle three times further than you walk!

Alaska has the highest percentage of people who walk to work!

You're more likely to be hungry if you're cold!

Y our quick guide to revving up your metabolism...

- **Eat little and often** – Every time you eat your metabolic rate is raised, which is one reason why eating warms you up. It keeps blood sugar levels steady keeping your mood and hormone levels balanced. Any large meal will stimulate the production of insulin which lowers your body's ability to burn fat and causes sugar cravings. Be careful that these frequent SMALL meals don't grow.
 - lifting baked bean cans, bags of sugar or even better make yourself a set of home made weights by filling plastic bottles with water, sand or gravel. If you put on five pounds of extra muscle you'll burn 175 extra calories a day.
- **Eat breakfast** – While you are asleep your metabolism slows down so by eating a nutritious breakfast you kick start your metabolism.
- **Make your evening meal small** – The majority of obese people get at least half of their calories after 6pm at a time when activity levels and metabolic rate is at it's lowest.
- **Build up muscle** – Lifting weights replaces flab with muscle. This is not only good news appearance wise, but muscle burns up more calories. In 24 hours one pound of body fat burns about two calories, whereas one pound of lean muscle burns 35 calories. Muscle is the body's most metabolically active tissue even when you're not moving. People who weight train moderately burn 8% more calories than those who live a sedentary lifestyle. And you don't have to become a gym member – start by
 - **Exercise aerobically** – Exercise raises your metabolic rate and you carry on burning calories during your recovery period which can vary from 30mins to several hours. Weight bearing exercise will help to fight off Osteoporosis. And the good news is that lower paced exercise burns more fat, so a good walk should do the trick.
 - **Drink more water** – If you don't drink enough your body will retain water. Also water is essential for your body's chemical reactions so if you're not drinking enough, you'll burn less calories.
 - **Drink green tea** – some studies have shown it to raise metabolic rate by 35%.
 - **Laugh** – A good laugh gets your heart and circulation pumping faster. Research has shown that laughter can increase your metabolic rate by 20% in that period. It also showed that laughing out loud for 10-15 minutes every day burns 10-40 calories. Take a look at our Jokes section on the Forum!

Jargon

- **Calorie** – A calorie is a unit of energy. If an item of food contains 100 calories, it's a way of describing the amount of energy your body could get from eating or drinking it. We associate calories with food, but they apply to anything containing energy. For example a litre of petrol has about 7,000 Calories. Your body needs calories for energy, but eating too many and not burning enough off through activity can lead to weight gain.
- **Protein** – You need protein to build, maintain and repair essential parts of your body. Your muscles, organs, and immune system are made up mostly of protein. The best sources are beef, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
- **Carbohydrate** – These provide energy for every cell in your body. There are two major types: simple and complex. Simple provide quick energy, whilst complex carbohydrates give you energy more slowly. We'll cover these in more detail next time.
- **Fat** – The different fats in foods are saturated, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and trans fatty acids. We need some fat in our diet and it's best to obtain this through unsaturated fats which are obtained from plants and fish sources. More next month on this!

Your opinion

Your letters and emails have helped us to formulate a number of theories as to how and why stitching is so effective. We'd like to hear your opinions...

As you know the first of our research projects kicked off at the Stitch and Craft Show last month. It looked at the personalities of knitters and cross stitchers and



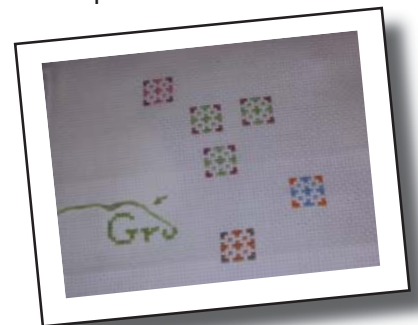
knitters. The people who knit are like the pianists who can play well but need sheet music to read, whilst knitters are like those who have real musicality; they can sit at the piano and not need music. I'm someone who knits and I have to have a pattern that I stick to religiously. Jeni is a knitter and happily knits without a pattern."

We can see from Jeni's story on page 2 that she began to find structure through her knitting and this increased organisation filtered through into other aspects of her life. So it got us thinking about structure...

There have been many studies into what constitutes happiness, but it's generally accepted that a form of structure and goal to aim for makes us happier. It gives a purpose and prevents aimless wondering which often results in low self esteem. Achieving goals raises self esteem and confidence making us feel good about ourselves and worthwhile in society. It puts us in control.

Many of you have written to us to say that when you become ill, suffer a bereavement, get divorced, made redundant, have a new baby or a stressful job, you feel out of control. Your life is controlled by the circumstances you find yourselves in. Those who suffer long-term illness invariably feel that their lives are controlled by their illness and the inefficient systems that exist in the NHS. It's frustrating to be bounced between GP and Consultant (with its inevitable waiting lists) and each time you build up new hope that you will be offered a cure - an opportunity to regain control of your life. Often you're told "Sorry Mrs Smith, there's nothing more we can do. You need to learn to manage your condition." And then

there's often no more help. With each visit self esteem is eroded further, you feel as if you are marking time with no purpose or structure in life. For people like Betsan who need structure even more, this can be devastating. Betsan says "Luckily I'm normally fit and healthy, but I vividly remember when I was eight months pregnant with our daughter I broke a rib, the pain was extreme and because of my pregnancy I couldn't take any pain relief. I can remember feeling totally overwhelmed, out of control of every aspect of my life and this state of panic made the



We gave cross stitchers a blank canvas and some of the stitching was beautifully structured!

pain much worse. I couldn't sit, stand or lie down - I needed something (like stitching) to focus on to control the panic I felt."

This is where your letters tie up with some of our theories and we'd like to hear more of your opinions on the subject. Knitting and cross stitching projects seem to be giving you structure, something to focus on, a goal for the day. They give you back control; you can plan them and be sure of the outcome. It may be the only thing you have control over. We'd like to hear from you. Do you think stitching gives you back structure and control? Does this then help you to manage your circumstances more effectively? Tell us what you think.

Cardiff University's research kicks off at the Show and Dr Anthony Brown gets well and truly hooked!

whether there is a difference between the two. Do cross stitchers have a more structured personality for example? Betsan says "I think you can split knitters into two different types as well - there are people who knit and

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Regia Jacquard Yarn plus FREE sock pattern

We think this yarn is just so clever – just knit and this amazing jacquard pattern appears by magic! It's so satisfying to watch it grow and it's definitely addictive. It's hard wearing with 75% wool and 25% Polyamide, non felting and can be machine washed, so great all round. This particular colourway is called 'Las Vegas' and it knits up in a similar way to the sock shown.

Each ball weighs 50g and you'll need 100g for a pair of socks. Buy it for £2.75 a ball, saving 24% on the RRP. Quote Code K-060501 when ordering and don't forget you need two for a pair of socks!



Bluetits Bookmark Kit

Save 20%



The quality of this Textile Heritage bookmark kit is superb and we were particularly struck by the vivid strength of the thread colours.

Each kit contains everything you need to stitch this eye-catching bookmark including rich blue felt backing to hide your stitching. Buy it for £4.40, saving 20%. Quote Code C-060501 on ordering. It will brighten your reading for years to come!

Omni massager

Save 23%



These were extremely popular at the shows last month as visitors to our stands massaged away their shopping weary muscles! A palm sized version of the mini massagers featured earlier, they cost £10, saving 23%. Code G-OMNG.

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.

Looking forward ...

We're looking forward to developing Stitchlinks further. These are just a few of our ideas so let us know what you'd like...

With the excitement and hard work of two shows on consecutive weekends over we can now concentrate on moving Stitchlinks forward and we've got lots of exciting ideas in the pipeline for you.

Those who keep in contact by email will already know that we have started an Internet Only membership for £25 a year. Many of you have already switched to this option, which means that you will receive all your newsletters on the day they come out. This will enable us to concentrate on the true meaning of Stitchlinks and not have to consume time battling with paper and printers!

In the future it will also enable us to send out more information to you without incurring huge postal

charges. Over the next few weeks we'd like to encourage more of you to chat to friends on the Forum, so please let us know if you have any ideas for new sections you'd like to see included. The Gallery section is popular and it's great to see the stitching projects you've posted.

One idea was to start up a 'Your Stitching Disasters' section. We've all made mistakes we can laugh at in our stitching lives and Betsan says she can start it off - one of her first knitting projects was very ambitious - a Christmas jumper for Steve - not quite in Bridget Jones mode, but embarrassing for him nonetheless! Betsan says "I thought tension squares were a waste of time and let's just say I overestimated the hunkyness, height and arm length of my

husband!" Other ideas include setting up a photography section on the website from where members can download copyrighted images free to make into original cards. We'll also be working on building links with other companies for your benefit.

For those who love Mind Games keep your eyes peeled for a link to a brand new website called www.mindtwisters.co.uk. It's set to launch soon and promises a plethora of Sudokus and other mind bending puzzles to enjoy.

For members without internet access, please tell us how you'd like the Newsletters to develop. So until next month - relax and enjoy!



Order form

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