

Your  
**Guide**  
to

stitchlinks



**“Wellbeing at your Fingertips”**

[www.stitchlinks.com](http://www.stitchlinks.com)

# Comments From Our Members

"Without all my friends on here I know I would find life just so much more difficult."

"Stitchlinks' friends have helped me open doors and look out of windows that I would have determinedly walked past all on my own."

"We've all become such a close knit (!) community, and I'd like to add my own thanks to you all for being such lovely friends. Life wouldn't be the same without Stitchlinks - thanks."

"I've made some wonderful friends, both online in the Forum and in person and it's been a Godsend to me. Thank you all for your warmth, your friendship and your uncritical help."

"I have made friends here and taken inspiration from others. It has certainly helped me work through certain things."

"My life has changed so much in two years - and it has been helped enormously by *Stitchlinks!* I have found inspiration from some of the many stories. I've learnt new things with worthwhile tips and my eyes have been opened wide by some of the many suggestions passed onto me by other members."

"Stitchlinks has definitely helped me and I've made new friends too. It's so nice to have support out there, for all my 'ailments' combined with a love of knitting."

## Contact us

Email – [Betsan@Stitchlinks.com](mailto:Betsan@Stitchlinks.com)

Post – PO Box 3679, Bath BA2 4WS, UK

or chat to us online at

[www.stitchlinks.com](http://www.stitchlinks.com)

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## Copyright

All Stitchlinks articles are Copyright protected. Readers may download one copy for personal use. If you wish to download or photocopy more than this for friends or doctors' surgeries, please ask us first.

In most circumstances we are happy to give permission providing full acknowledgement is given to Stitchlinks.

*Thank you*

# Hello

## Welcome to Stitchlinks.

My aim for Stitchlinks is that it will become a dynamic resource for all those people who –

- ✓ enjoy therapeutic knitting, stitching and crochet
- ✓ manage long-term medical conditions, their carers and healthcare workers
- ✓ use knitting and stitching as a preventative approach to healthcare
- ✓ use knitting to facilitate learning in Education
- ✓ use knitting and stitching as a means of stress management, team building and communication in the Business environment.

I hope Stitchlinks will be a place where you feel you belong. Somewhere to visit for information on health, knitting, stitching and other interesting 'stuff', but importantly, a familiar haven where you'll enjoy support and friendship. The heart of Stitchlinks will always be a friendship network with information and resources linking in to this central theme. We will grow and evolve as our knowledge of the therapeutic benefits of knitting, stitching and other creative activities develops, and we'd welcome continuing feedback and input from you.

The benefits of Stitchlinks are FREE which means we can reach more people and healthcare workers can recommend us without moral or ethical worries about cost. It also means any group you belong to can join in and chat to each other on our Forum, any time of night or day. So, if you belong to a knitting, stitching, pain management or other group, for example, please let other members know about us.

The following pages will take you on a step-by step journey through the website where you'll find lots of useful information, hints, tips and articles to read which will be added to on a regular basis. To keep you up-to-date there is a News page and you can sign up for regular Newsletters emailed to you, should you wish. Don't forget to sign up for these. Plus, you can always keep in daily touch through the Stitchlinks Forum.

We'd like to encourage the wonderful wealth of talent we have amongst our members. We hope our Patterns page will tempt you to start designing and trying out your skills through the Stitchlinks website. We also have a Team Projects page which we expect to develop further. It currently has photographs and details of our fabulous Stitchlinks wall hanging and ongoing Bunting Project, which is updated as we receive more.

There will be an increasing number of articles for you to download and enjoy as well as e-booklets and other items of interest. These are updated and added to, so please keep checking the website for new information.

It's vitally important to us that you feel part of the Stitchlinks family, so the friendship and support elements will remain at the core of our existence. Research has shown that supportive friends help people live healthier, longer, happier lives so we hope you'll take full advantage of our Forums. If you'd like a more secure place to talk we have that too – see our Members Plus Subscription Forum.

If, like many, you've felt alone in the world, you need never do so again. Our Forums, and the support of other members, will be there for you. In addition, our My Story page will bring you a growing number of personal tales you'll relate to in many ways.

A combination of support, friendship and information are the basic ingredients for successful self-management and development, so we hope you'll join in and let us know how you get on.

Betsan  
xxx

# What Can It Do For You?



The key features of Stitchlinks are –

**Support** – in managing change, learning new skills

**Friendship** – with those who understand and care

**Information** – to improve your quality of life

These are basic ingredients for successful self-management.

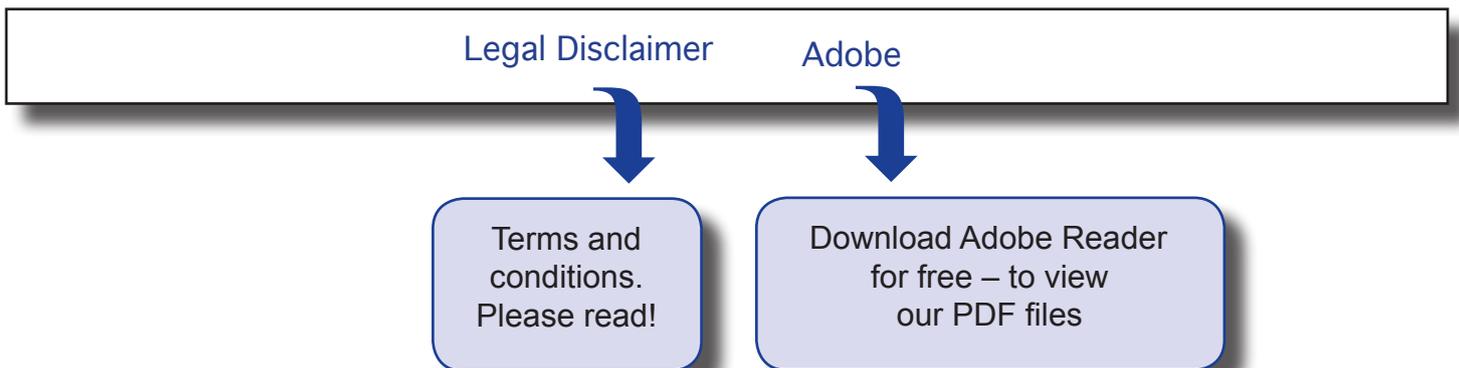
We all need to find balance and enjoyment in life in order to feel in control and valued.

**Stitchlinks can help you achieve this!**

# Finding Your Way Around

Take some time to browse around the site to accustom yourself and make time every day to visit, view updated pages and added information and, of course, to chat to your friends on the Forum.





# The Forums

Click on the Forum button on the left-hand side of the Stitchlinks Home page to reach our Forum page. This tells you a little about the benefits of joining the Stitchlinks Forum and contains links to the Forums. It also has a link to Betsan's blog which will give you a behind-the-scenes peek!



Click here for our **Stitchlinks Forum**

Click here for **Betsan's blog** to keep you updated with the behind-the-scenes activity at Stitchlinks

## Safety on the internet

We should all be taking basic steps to ensure our internet browsing and computers are safe and remain virus free. Here are some basic tips and suggestions –

- ✓ **Install a Firewall** – If you have one installed make sure it's turned on
- ✓ **Install anti-virus software** – Make sure you update it regularly
- ✓ **Install an anti-spyware program** – Run it regularly and keep it up to date
- ✓ **Beware of downloading from unknown websites** – They can harbour viruses
- ✓ **Never open email attachments from unknown sources** – Even if they appear OK
- ✓ **Don't respond** – To emails asking you to confirm financial details.
- ✓ **Check website addresses** – Don't click on links – type the URL in yourself instead
- ✓ **Install from a CD** – If you can, install software from a CD rather than a download
- ✓ **Take regular backups** – Keep a separate record of any settings you'll need if you have to re-install software that may have become corrupted. You won't lose data then
- ✓ **Check page security** – Any page that collects financial details needs to be secure and should advertise the fact with a padlock sign in the bottom right-hand corner
- ✓ **Beware of 'banks'** – Bonafide emails from your bank, ebay, PayPal will contain your name in the header and never ask for full sets of passwords. Never click on links

# Stitchlinks Forums

Forum	Stats	Last Post Info
Welcome If you're a newcomer to the forum, please introduce yourself here. We look forward to saying hello.	1 Topics 0 Replies	31 May 2011 - 05:13 PM By: Betsan
General Chit Chat This Forum is available for members to chat, inspire and share ideas. All comments can be read by non-members.	822 Topics 10,422 Replies	Today, 01:09 PM By: Off for a few days By: cranycatara
Discussion Point Every month we discuss a particular point in our newsletter. Let us know what you think here.	2 Topics 7 Replies	05 July 2011 - 08:20 AM By: July's discussion point By: Robyn
Events and Get Togethers If you're going to a knitting or stitching event, why not meet up with other Stitchlinks members? It's a great, safe way of meeting new people.	19 Topics 179 Replies	26 March 2011 - 08:38 PM By: nattyknitter
News from friends This section has been put here on request following our popular Newsletter section of the same name. Tell us what you've been up to.	23 Topics 273 Replies	01 July 2011 - 05:22 PM By: Away for 2 days By: Penny R
What would you do if you weren't afraid? This is the question that lead to Betsan changing career and ultimately to the birth of Stitchlinks. Tell us what you'd do if the fear of failure was taken away?	5 Topics 112 Replies	20 August 2010 - 05:37 AM By: Teeny tiny baby steps By: Robyn
Achieve your healthy weight Whether you need to lose or gain weight to be healthier the support of friends is vital for success. Use this Forum to support each other	10 Topics 120 Replies	01 September 2010 - 05:16 AM By: Interesting research By: Robyn
The Things I've Learnt Pass on tips and interesting info about everything!	7 Topics 61 Replies	Yesterday, 09:36 AM By: Protected Forum By: Betsan
Groups If you'd like to start a group or find a group linked to Stitchlinks this is the place to go.	8 Topics 35 Replies	25 June 2009 - 06:25 PM By: The Bear Knitting Group Bath By: Betsan
Gallery	87 Topics	19 June 2011 - 09:00 PM By: Sunnosed to be nursook!!!!

*"It's so nice to come onto the Forum and find people who actually UNDERSTAND! I don't have to make apologies for who I am."*



# Betsan's Blog



**Stitchlinks**  
The Friendship network Improving Quality of Life

[Previous 20](#)

JUL. 1ST, 2011

## Paper Presentation of knitting survey

Many of you will have helped us out by filling in our knitting survey last year. We received over 3,500 responses in 2 weeks so it was amazing! With 50 questions in the survey it has meant we have a lot of wonderful data to sift through and a big thank you goes to Prof Claire Griffel for helping us out with this.

Last Thursday we presented some preliminary results at the UK's annual conference for Occupational Therapists. Dr Jill Riley (my co-author) from Cardiff University presented the talk and we had a wonderful response. The next step is to submit a paper to a journal for publication, after which we will be free to disseminate the results so far to everyone else. Our plan is to write a lay version which we can email to forums and magazines to spread the word. Journal copyright rules prevent us from elaborating further on the data for now which is a bit frustrating.

I've done a few presentations recently to health professionals including hospital doctors and GPs and it is coming across loud and strong that the time is right for this type of new approach, so we're moving into a very exciting time for the research and Stitchlinks. So the hunt for funding to enable us to do a large scale project to look at a wide range of issues will go on.....

XXX  
Posted at 06:13 pm | [Link](#) | [Please leave a comment](#) | [1 comment](#) | [Add to Memories](#) | [Share](#)

**Recent Entries**

- [Archive](#)
- [Friends](#)
- [User info](#)

**\* July 2011**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**\* Links**

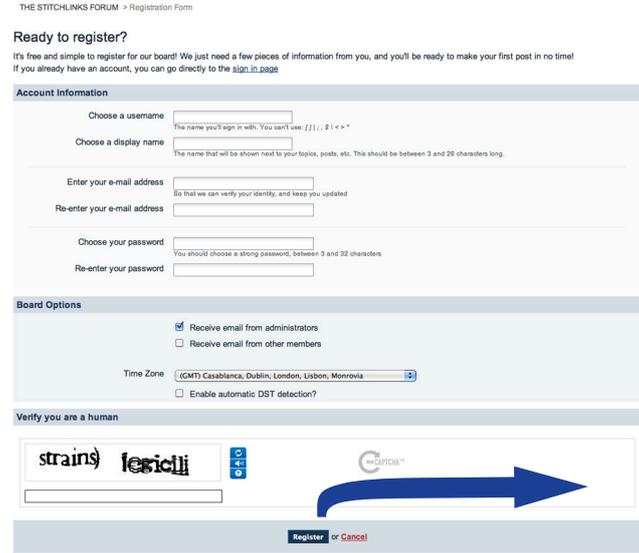
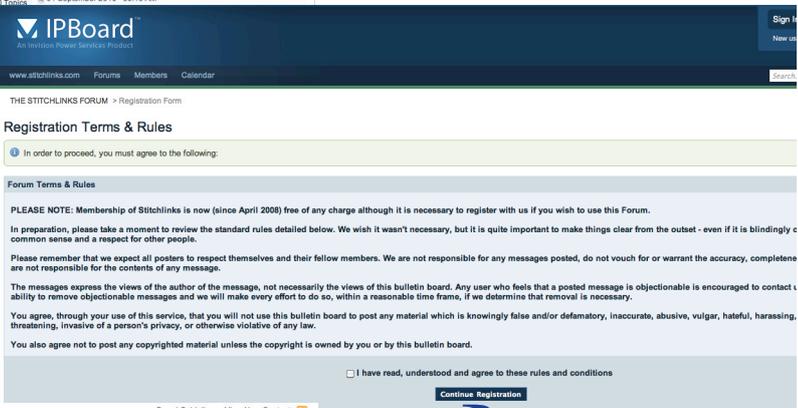
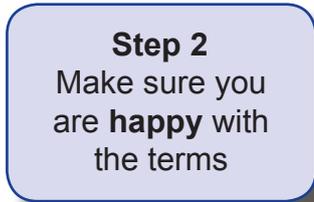
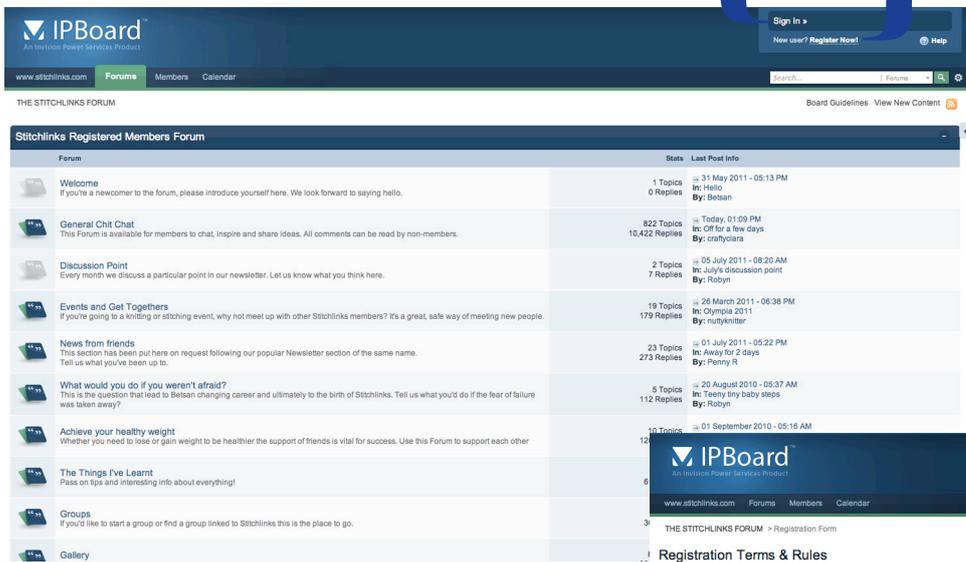
- [Stitchlinks.com](#)
- [Stitchlinks Forum](#)
- [Angora's Journal - Simply B-cause](#)



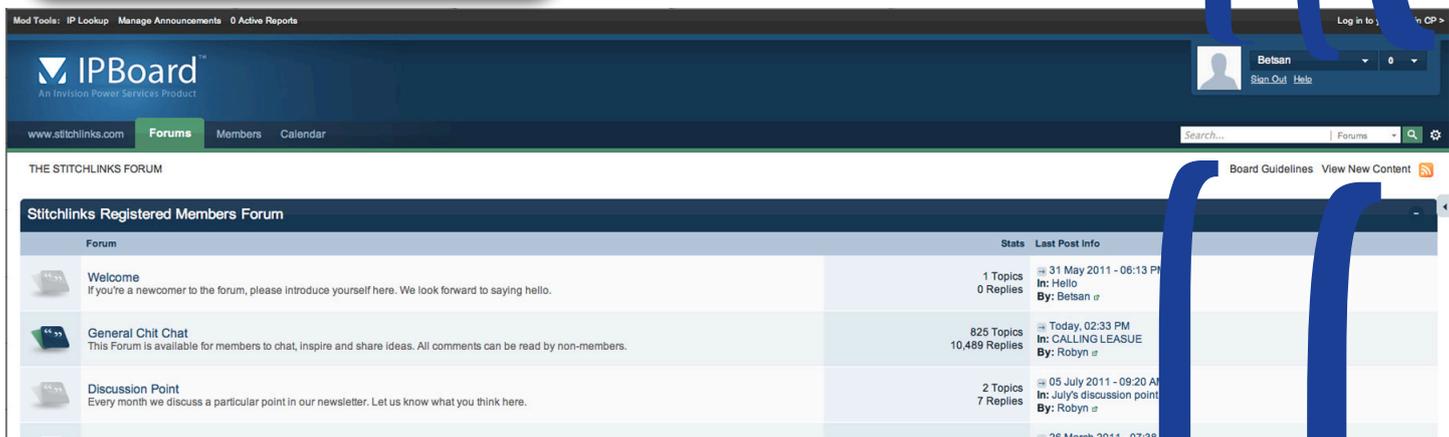
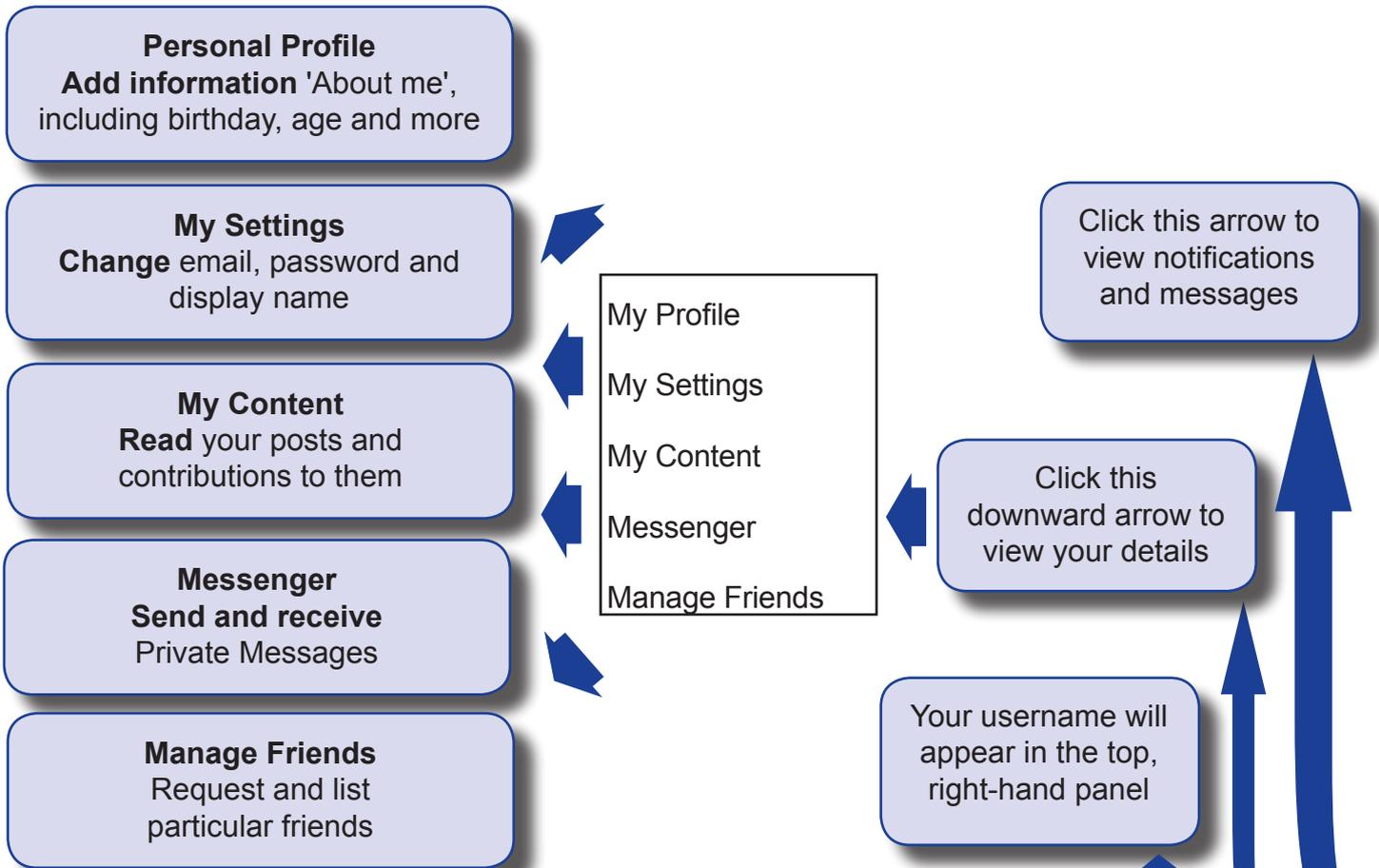
Feel free to **leave your comments** on Betsan's Blog

# Registered Members Forum

The Registered Members Forum is free to anyone who goes through the process of registration – simply follow the steps below. You'll receive an automated email in response. Click on this to confirm you wish to register. This is returned to us and will be approved manually for added security.



# Once Logged In



**Read our Forum rules**

**View new topics since your last visit**

# 'My Profile'

Expanding on the last page a little, you'll see that clicking on 'My Profile' takes you to a screen which will enable you to see your profile. Clicking the 'Edit My Profile' tab in the top right-hand corner will enable you to make changes. Don't forget to save any changes made!

Click here to Edit your Profile

Save changes

## Your Options

Settings Forums **Profile**

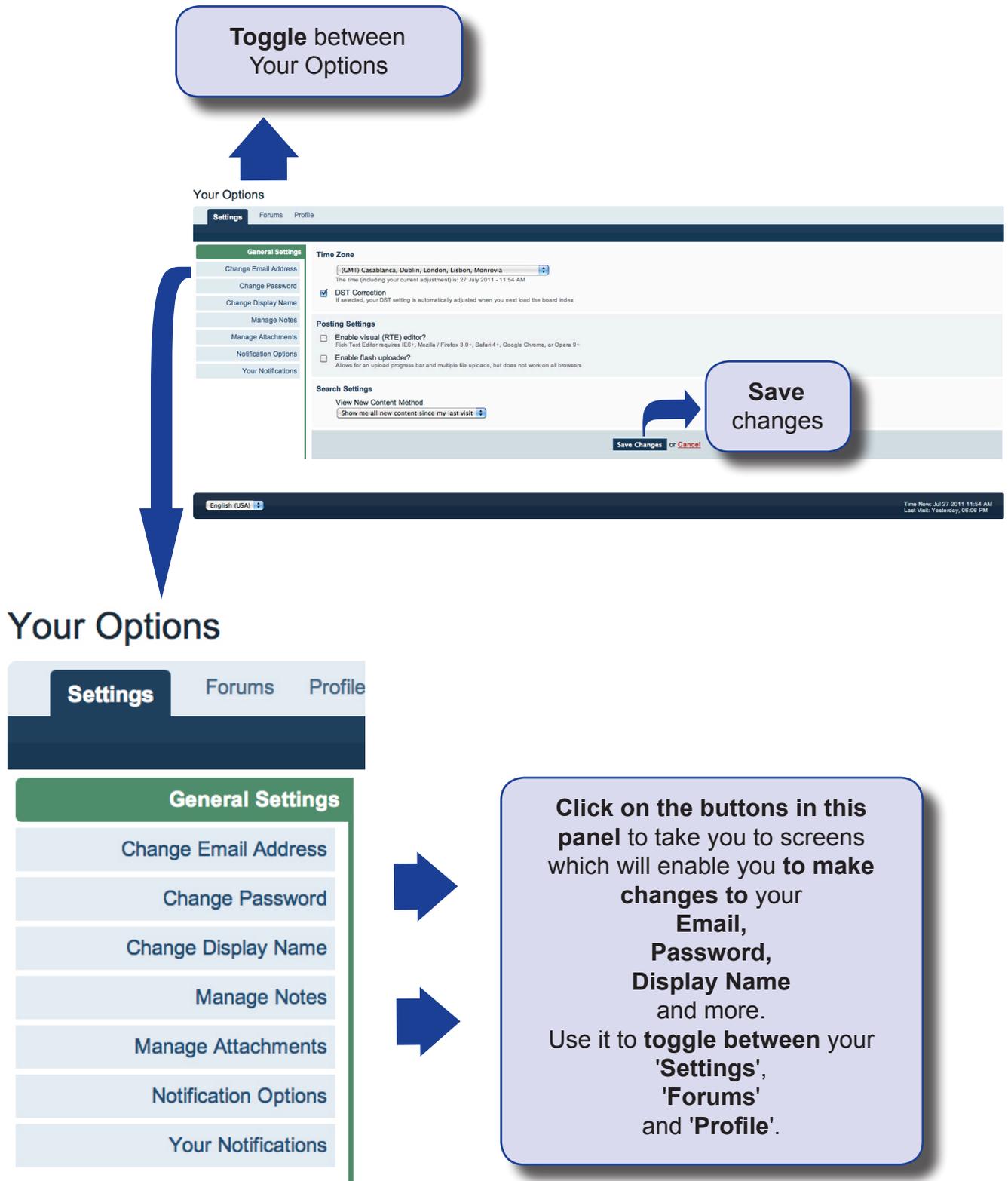
**Change Profile Information**

- Change About Me Page
- Change Signature
- Change Photo
- Change Avatar
- Manage Ignored Users
- IP Address Look-up Tool
- Member Look-up Tool

Click on the buttons in this panel to take you to screens which will enable you to make changes to your 'About Me', 'Signature', 'Photograph', 'Avatar' information. Use it to toggle between your 'Settings', 'Forums' and 'Profile'.

# 'My Settings'

In a similar way, clicking on 'My Settings' or clicking Settings on the 'Your Options' panel (see opposite) will take you to a screen where you can change your settings. These enable you to change your email address, password and display name (the name other users will see on your posts).



# Leaving Your Message

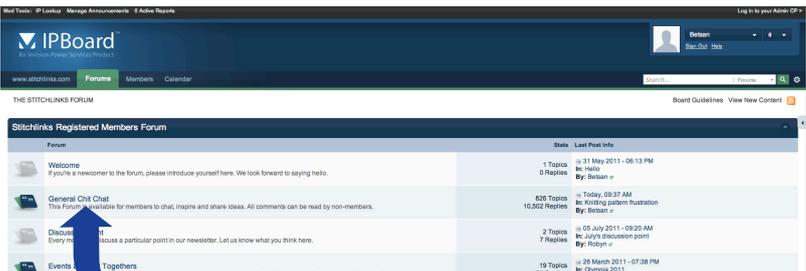
**View statistics** on this particular topic, who made the last contribution and when



**General Chit Chat**  
This Forum is available for members to chat, inspire and share ideas. All comments can be read by non-members.

826 Topics  
10,502 Replies

→ Today, 09:37 AM  
In: Knitting pattern frustration  
By: Betsan



IPBoard  
www.stitchlinks.com Forums Members Calendar

THE STITCHLINKS FORUM

Stitchlinks Registered Members Forum

Forum	State	Last Post Info
Welcome	1 Topics 0 Replies	31 May 2011 - 06:13 PM By: Hello
General Chit Chat	826 Topics 10,502 Replies	Today, 09:37 AM In: Knitting pattern frustration By: Betsan
Discuss	2 Topics 7 Replies	05 July 2011 - 09:20 AM In: July's discussion point By: Robyn
Events	19 Topics	28 March 2011 - 07:38 PM In: Olympia 2011

**Step 1**  
Click on a Forum of your choice, eg General Chit Chat. This opens up a series of conversations or Topics.

**Step 2**  
Click on the Topic you'd like to comment on or start your own Topic

Clicking on the Topic you'd like to comment on opens up the conversation showing you all the previous comments

**Step 3**  
Click  
Add Reply

THE STITCHLINKS FORUM > Stitchlinks Registered Members Forum > Research

Board Guidelines View New Content

Page 1 of 1

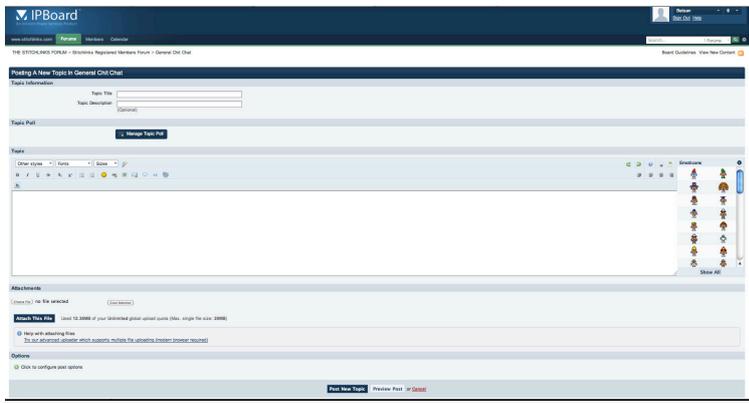
Watch Topic Add Reply Start New Topic

New Study

Betsan (IP: Private)

#1

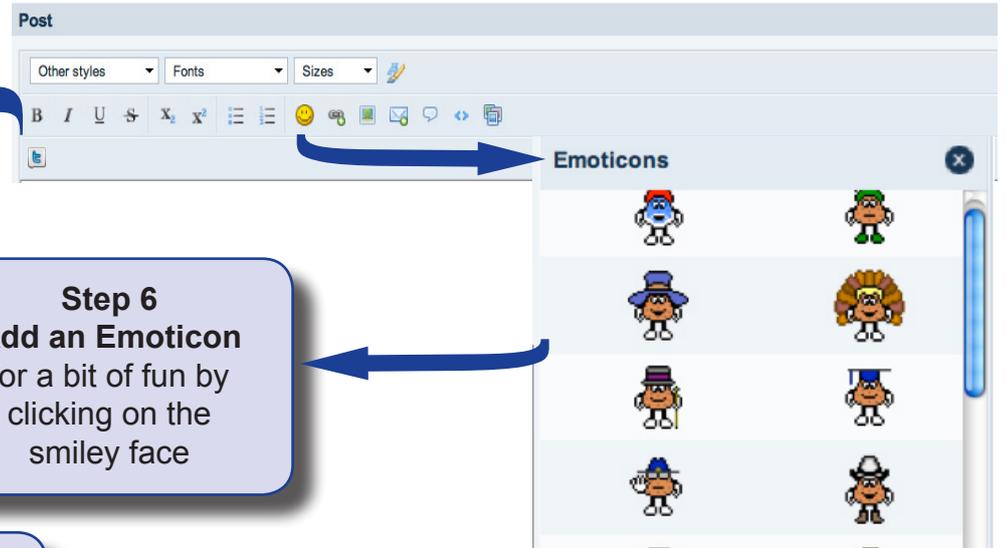
This opens up a blank window for typing in your message



**Step 4**  
Type your message into the empty dialogue box



**Step 5**  
Format your message if desired, using formatting bar



**Step 6**  
Add an Emoticon for a bit of fun by clicking on the smiley face

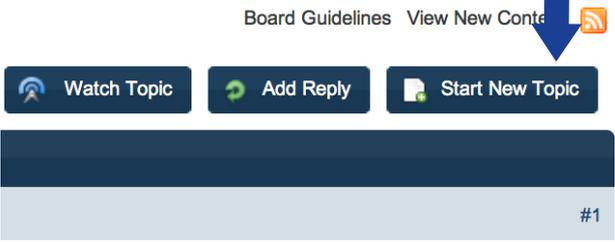
**Step 7**  
Scroll down and click on Add Reply



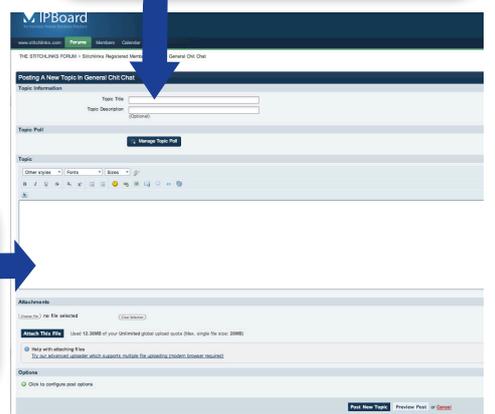
To start a new Topic of your own

**Step 1**  
Click on **Start New Topic**

**Step 2**  
Click mouse in **Topic Title** and type an appropriate title



**Step 3**  
Click mouse in **comments box** to **leave message** as before. Don't forget to click **Post New Topic**



# Attaching A Photograph

## Step 1

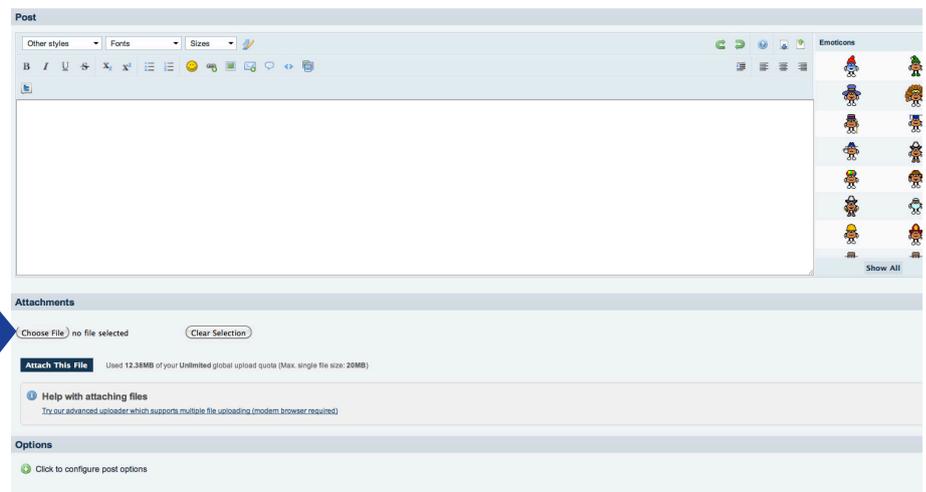
**Prepare your photograph.** Open your imaging software program and through the **Image Size** option change the size of your photograph to **4 x 3 inches** or slightly less and the resolution to **72 pixels per inch**. Click on **File** → **Save for Web** → **Save the medium size resolution** as a **jpeg** in a folder you can easily find

## Step 2

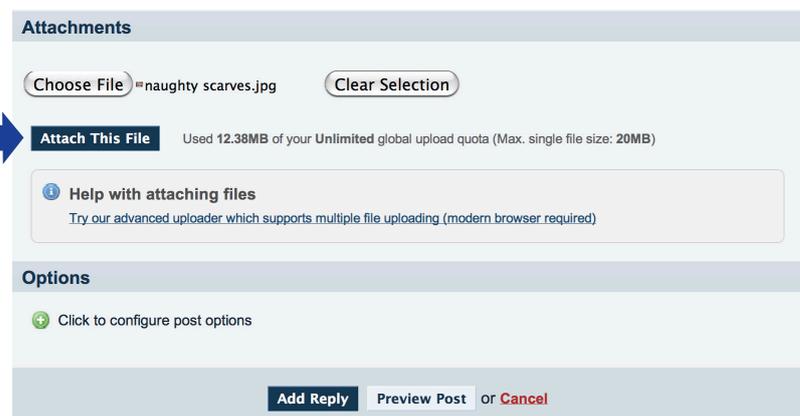
**Login to the Stitchlinks Forum** and follow the steps on the previous two pages to **leave your message**. **DO NOT** click on **Add Reply** at this stage

## Step 3

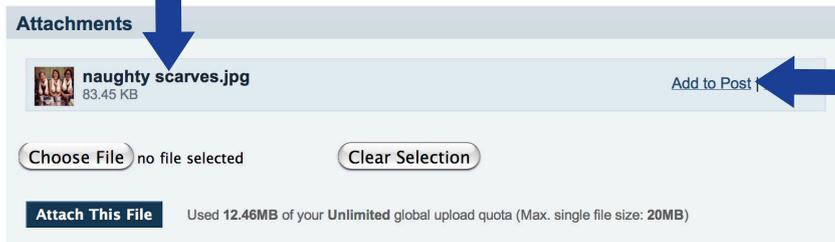
Click on **Choose File**. This will take you to your folders on your computer. Find the folder where you stored your photograph and **double click on the photograph** you wish to attach. The filename of the photograph will appear alongside the button **Choose File**



**Step 4**  
Click **Attach This File**

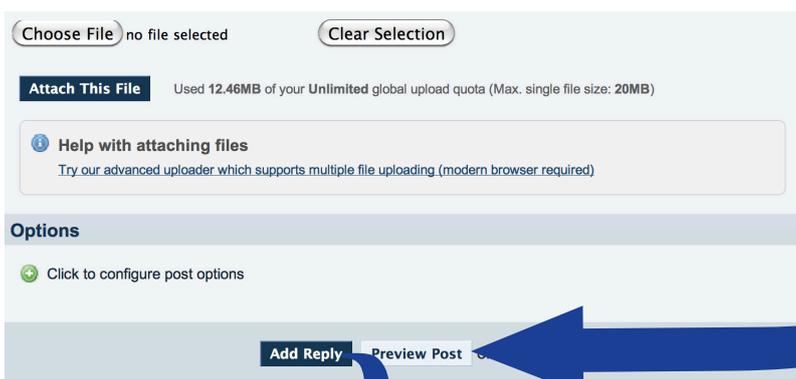
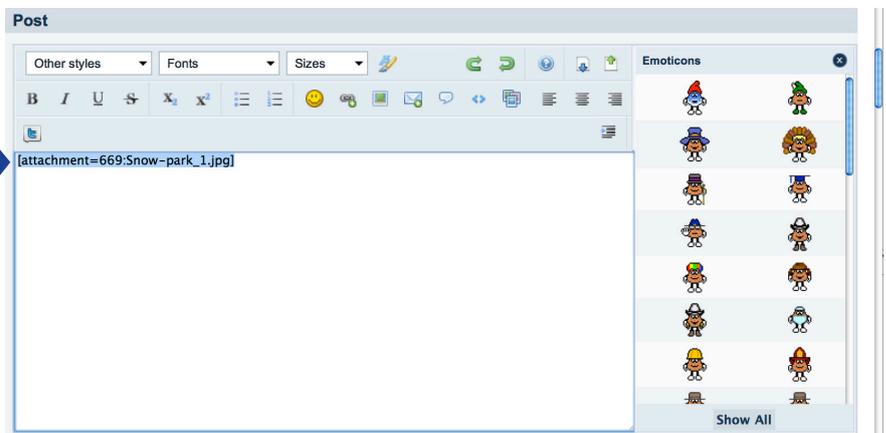


The file name and size of the attachment (your photograph) will appear above the Choose File button



**Step 5**  
Place your cursor and **click on the position** in your post where you would like your photograph to be displayed. **Click Add to Post.** There is an option to Delete the photograph from the post here should you change your mind

The file name of your attachment (your photograph) will appear in your post where you double-clicked your cursor. **Note the image does not appear at this stage, just the file name**



**Step 6**  
Click **Preview Post** to check whether your photograph is positioned within your post as you would wish. Make any changes by returning to the window above and placing the file name more appropriately by using your mouse

**Step 7**  
Click **Add Reply** when satisfied. Your photograph will now be displayed in your post. To add more photographs, repeat the procedure

# Members Plus Forum

Joining our **Members Plus Forum** requires a one off subscription of £5. This provides an added security barrier enabling members to talk more freely and openly about matters which may be more personal or difficult to talk about on a face-to-face level. It's a service which has helped many of our members to talk, to build social confidence and to discover that they are really not alone.

**To subscribe, contact Betsan at [Betsan@stitchlinks.com](mailto:Betsan@stitchlinks.com)**

## Other Forums

As Stitchlinks grows and evolves, other Forums will be added to our Registered Members and Members Plus Forums.

We aim to build a network of therapeutic knitting groups so, in time, Forums linked to these groups will be added to our communication network. These will enable members of groups, who meet on a face-to-face basis, to chat to each other between group meetings and for group leaders to share information and ideas across the globe.

The break down of supportive communities, loss of extended families and families living far apart has resulted in loneliness and isolation being major, growing problems in modern society. It is also a problem for those with long-term illness. Social confidence is quickly lost making it more difficult to venture into new environments, compounding the problem.

**Our aim is to build supportive local and global communities through 'safe' knitting groups and to provide a communication network for group leaders and participants.**

Groups will range from those in hospitals and GP surgeries to those in bars, shops and clubs. Although not primarily or specifically targeting those with long-term illness, these groups will provide a means by which people can maintain and enhance social contact and if necessary find a way back into society safely, to build safe social networks. We are planning and piloting projects in the UK and internationally.

Outside the healthcare arena we see knitting groups as being beneficial in education to facilitate learning and communication, and within the business environment as a means of stress management, team building and, through workplace groups, improving communication.

In everyday life, we see belonging to supportive communities as being crucial to wellness and positive living for everyone, so our network will extend to groups in pubs, clubs, cafés and shops.

Stitchlinks Forums will enable group members and leaders to communicate with each other and with other groups to share information, ideas and to expand their network of friends.

# Making The Most Of Stitchlinks

## Getting Involved

### Sign up

Don't forget to sign up for our monthly Newsletter. It will keep you up to date. You'll find a button along the top bar of every page of the Stitchlinks website.

### Join in

Register on our Forums to join in with the latest chat and to keep up to date on a daily basis. Discover you're not alone and find new friends who understand. Share news, tips, ideas and enjoy a chat. You can even have a good old moan in our 'Ranting Space' on the Members Plus Forum.

### Download

You'll find lots of interesting articles so why not download these to your computer to either save and read as desired from your screen or print them off to enjoy with a nice cup of tea. To download you will need a copy of Acrobat Reader. You can find a free copy of this on the bottom bar of every page of the website.

Once this is installed, click on the article link you wish to read. This will open up a new window containing the article in PDF (Portable Document Format). The document will have a tool bar across the top. Glide your mouse over each icon to obtain a description of its function. The tools will enable you to increase or decrease the size of the page on your screen, save and print. Holding down your spacebar will bring up a navigation 'hand' icon which you can drag across the screen to move the document as you read.

To save it to your computer, click on the 'save' icon (looks like a floppy disc) and save it to a folder of your choice. To print click on the 'printer' icon and print as normal. Alternatively, use your computer toolbar under File to Save and Print.

### Take part

Be a part of the research by contributing your story through our online questionnaire. You can find a link by clicking on the My Story button on the left-hand menu bar of the website. This is ongoing. We shall also be posting other surveys from time to time as part of our research. These will be found by clicking on the Surveys button in the menu bar and we will alert you to these through our Newsletters.

As our research develops we will also be putting calls out for volunteers who may be interested in helping with this work.

### Contact us

Don't forget to send us your news, feedback and ideas. This will enable us to better meet your needs.

# Comments From Our Members

*"Thank you again for caring, listening to me and thinking me a wonderful person."*

"Suddenly I found somewhere I could share the highs and lows of living with depression with people who didn't condemn me for feeling 'unhappy' or expect me to 'pull myself together'!"

"I love being a member of Stitchlinks - it brightens up my day!"

"The Forum gives me a great sense of freedom."

"This is the first time I've been able to talk openly to anyone."

"Discovering Stitchlinks has been a lifeline when I thought all hope was lost. I now feel hopeful that step by step (and stitch by stitch) I'll make it."

## .....And More

"I have absolutely no doubt that doing the knitting daily for over six months 'reset' my brain in some way and also that Stitchlinks allowed me to open up again after the long years of dealing with illness and disability on my own had just worn me down and closed me down. Thank you so very much for what you are doing."

"Through Stitchlinks I've learned more about myself and how to manage daily life with depression. Having shared experiences with others I've found myself feeling so much less alone and thus more able to cope. The support I've received from other Stitchlinks members has encouraged me to persevere with my CBT."

"Your network would have offered me somewhere I could talk about the one thing that seems to be helping me hold it together. Somewhere I could find an interested listening ear; somewhere when I got stuck I could go for inspiration or a laugh or a chat or a moan; or just listen to others chatting and be involved without disturbing the flow; or ask for help with real people who were also for one reason or another only able to access this kind of support on the net, when they could. Sometimes when life chucks you 'The Mushroom Principle' as my Dad calls it (you just get your head out into the light and someone throws a pile of \*\*it on top of you) I find you need to talk to people who don't know you, who can't see you but who listen and answer. It takes away that emotional chasm that so often stops you saying the stuff you need to say or hearing the stuff you need to hear from those who know you and love you."



## Contact Us

Email – [Betsan@Stitchlinks.com](mailto:Betsan@Stitchlinks.com)

Post – PO Box 3679, Bath BA2 4WS, UK

or chat to us online at

[www.stitchlinks.com](http://www.stitchlinks.com)