

The Northern Echo

# ne HEALTH

JANUARY 2005

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# Have you got the big H?

Are you worried about being excessively worried about your health? Try our quiz and find out if you're suffering from hypochondria

**O**NE classic definition of hypochondria is that it is "an irrational fear of disease so great that it disrupts normal living". Of course, that is clinically serious hypochondria rather than the lifestyle-level of daily health obsession we are nowadays all encouraged to feel. But you can find out your fear-factor by trying this Whiteley Index questionnaire.

The Whiteley Index is the standard self-test for hypochondria. For each question, circle the number that best describes how you feel.

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = A little
- 3 = Moderately
- 4 = Quite a bit
- 5 = A great deal

1 Do you worry a lot about your health?

1 2 3 4 5

2 Do you think there is something seriously wrong with your body?

1 2 3 4 5

3 Is it hard for you to forget about yourself and to think about all sorts of other things?

1 2 3 4 5

4 If you feel ill and someone tells you that you are looking better, do you become annoyed?

1 2 3 4 5

5 Do you find that you are often aware of various things happening in your body?

1 2 3 4 5

6 Are you bothered by many aches and pains?

1 2 3 4 5

7 Are you afraid of illness?

1 2 3 4 5

8 Do you worry about your health more than most people?

1 2 3 4 5

9 Do you get the feeling that people are not taking your illnesses seriously?

1 2 3 4 5

10 Is it hard for you to believe your doctor when he tells you there is nothing to worry about?

1 2 3 4 5

11 Do you often worry about the possibility that you have a serious illness?

1 2 3 4 5



12 If a disease is brought to your attention (through radio, TV or newspapers or someone you know) do you worry about getting it yourself?

1 2 3 4 5

13 Do you find that you are bothered by many different symptoms?

1 2 3 4 5

14 Do you often have the symptoms of a very serious illness?

1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers. The higher your total the higher your chance of being excessively worried about your health. There are no definite parameters in the Whiteley Index but if you score between 32 and 55 (or even more than that) you are generally considered to be a hypochondriac. If you score between 14 and 28, you are generally thought to be normal. These numbers are merely indications, however, and people suffering from depression can also often score highly.

Even if you don't score highly, though, you were concerned enough to complete the questionnaire, which must say something. The rampant popularity of questionnaires in modern media is in itself a symptom of our hypo-maniac society. Magazine readers in particular are mugs for quick self-test diagnosis for trivially devastating afflictions. Are you a sex addict? Do you suffer low self-esteem? What's your neurosis rating? Check your gullibility quotient! Are you addicted to questionnaires?

● From The Hypochondriac's Handbook (HarperCollins, £10), a treasure trove of wild, daft, strange, scary and hitherto obscure medical research which Times journalist John Naish has gathered from respected research journals and hospital libraries over the past decade.

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magazine

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**Boss on a bike:** PCT chief executive Colin Morris finds spinning helps him to leave the stresses and strains of work behind

IAN LAMMING talks to a chief executive who is leading by example in the fight to keep North-East people fit and healthy

**R**UNNING a £120m health trust would have most people's heads in a spin, but for one North-East chief executive it's his feet that are a blur of activity. After a day in and out of the office and attending a string of meetings, Colin Morris can normally be found at his desk in Dr Piper House catching up on a mountain of paperwork and emails, the daily grind of life at the top of Darlington Primary Care Trust.

But on a Monday and a Wednesday he's on his bike just after 6pm and heading towards the gym, sports bag in hand, gleam of anticipation in his eyes. Once there he's the boss again, not of NHS staff this time, but fitness fanatics taking part in his exercise class.

Lycra shorts in place, sports top replacing the corporate shirt and tie and there's an hour on the exercise bike to look forward to as a spinning instructor at Darlington's Dolphin Centre.

The music blares, and Colin talks through the kind of natty headset any popstar doing a live gig would be proud to wear. A line of spinning exercise bikes stretches out before him on the third floor balcony which has become a tiny gym. Each one is occupied by a man or a woman, in some cases a honed athlete, a mountain biker or cyclist topping up fitness levels during the dark winter months, at other times a cardiac patient determined to live life to the full.

"It's the closest thing to riding a bike but in an exercise environment," says Colin, 48, of Yarm. "It is low impact and cuts across gender lines. You don't need to have any level of fitness to start and you can go at your own pace, so it can be as hard or as easy as you wish."

"In just an hour you can see your levels of fitness increasing every week. You can travel the equivalent of ten to 18 miles in an hour, which for many people is a phenomenal achievement."

For Colin the spinning is part of an exercise regime he has enjoyed most of his life. He recently took part in the Darlington 10K road race, helping to raise more than £1,000 for St Teresa's Hospice, and he is a very keen skier.

"As a teenager I used to take part in cycling and mountain bike races and the spinning classes offer me the opportunity to have a really good workout twice a week. It also means that at least two days a week I have to leave the office on time."

"Being a chief executive can be quite stressful and spinning is a great way to relax. It's a good visualisation sport; you can close your eyes and imagine you are riding along a country road or through the hills – and you can only do that if you clear your mind of work."

When the Dolphin Centre started spinning classes about three years ago, Colin was delighted to volunteer to train to become an unpaid instructor. "It just seemed like a good thing to do," he recalls. "It seems only right to try and put something back. I also think as chief executive of the local health trust, I should be setting a good example."

"We are working very hard on the preventative side of health. Better to stop people becoming ill in the first place rather than have to cure them once they are ill and exercise is one of the crucial elements for people of all ages. If you are young and have the distractions of computer games and TV, you need to do something more active to stave off the risks of obesity. If you are working hard and have to cope with stress, then there's no better answer than exercise. And if you are older, staying active is essential to sustaining your quality of life."

Then the hour's over and so is the spin as Colin heads home revitalised and ready for the rigours of the next working day, safe in the knowledge he will soon be back in the saddle.

● Dolphin Centre: (01325) 388 406



# The health boss who loves being in a spin

## EXERCISE SPINNING

SPINNING is an all round, low-impact, cardiovascular exercise regime that originated in America. Based in the gym, and usually done to music, it involves structured use of exercise bikes using a trained instructor. It recreates the speed of riding on the flat and the strenuous nature of hill climbing without the luxury of freewheeling downhill. The intensive sessions last for about an hour, including a 45-minute workout and 15-minute warm up and cool down. Spinning is ideal for all abilities from the beginner to the fitness fanatic.

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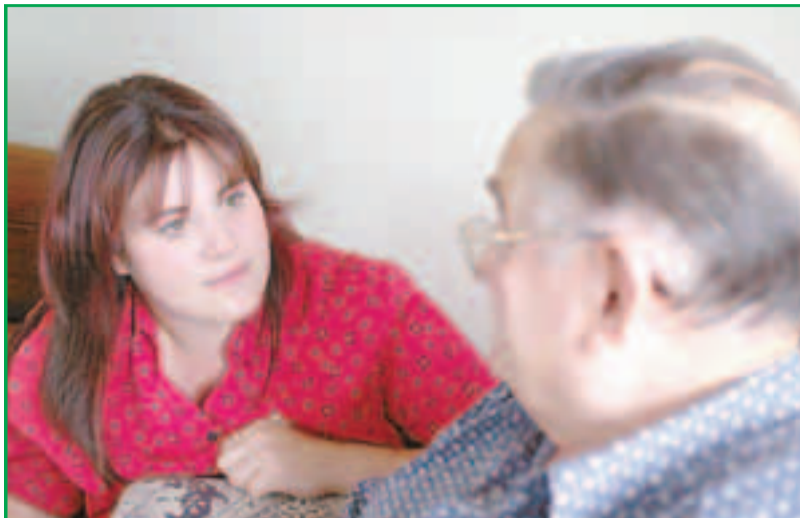
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"If you can't come to us, we'll come to you"



## Independent Living in North Yorkshire



In Stokesley this spring, Broadacres Housing Association will open their latest Extra Care housing scheme built in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council and Hambleton District Council. It forms part of the development in North Road which houses a new library, community facility and Hambleton District Council's office. It comprises 40 flats designed to enable people to live in their own homes within an environment that encourages independence.



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Other facilities include a high level of security with a door entry system linked with CCTV, communal lounges, launderette, and a hairdressing service.

Preference will be given to those living in Stokesley area who meet the Extra Care allocation criteria.

If you would like an application form or would like to talk to us, please phone our Customer Services Centre 01609 767900 or write to:



Broadacres Housing Association, York Vale House, East Road, Northallerton DL6 1RP

## NE health



A night out dancing is great exercise – as long as you don't drink!

# Dancing in the dark

The summer may be a great time to develop an exercise regime but winter's the hardest season to maintain it.

RACHEL ARMSTRONG reports

**D**ARK evenings, rain and an icy wind don't exactly encourage you to keep up your jogging round the park and snuggling up in front of the telly with a pizza becomes a much more appealing alternative to braving the elements.

So rather than trying and then failing to continue pounding the streets, use the change in season to find a fun, indoor form of exercise.

Personal trainer Matt Roberts, who trained the stars on Channel 4's *The Games*, says a change in exercise in the colder, darker months can be used to your advantage.

"If you don't fancy keeping up your usual outdoor activity, changing to a different activity can be used to your advantage. If you usually jog, try swimming instead. Different types of exercise mean you can work on different muscles in your body and may, in the short run, mean you burn calories quicker as your body adapts to the new activity."

"I think you have to view exercise in winter as being part of a cycle of exercise and getting yourself ready for summer. "Think of it as being the base-building for summer, to create a really good lean body. It's much easier to stay in shape if you maintain a good body all year round."

"While walking short distances instead of taking the car is a start, you should make sure that a specific part of time in your daily routine is dedicated to exercise all year round."

Joining a gym may be the obvious solution but if they're out of your price range or just plain boring then try one of these alternatives.

### HOME EXERCISE

IF you don't want to leave the house then good news – you don't have to. Nor do you

have to invest in expensive gym equipment or designer sportswear. A few dumb bells and maybe an exercise ball are as much as you'll need.

Matt suggests using his PHA approach to exercise at home – peripheral heart action. "You need to alternate between working the upper and lower halves of your body. So mix up steps, press-ups and lunges, then try some tricep dips. This is great because you can do it in a small space and the effect of alternating between the upper and lower body is a high blood flow, which means you burn significantly more calories."

For a range of different exercise plans check out Matt's *Fitness for Life* manual (Dorling Kindersley, £15.99) or go to his website: [www.personaltrainer.uk.com](http://www.personaltrainer.uk.com)

### CLUBBING

STRUTTING your stuff for a few hours to your favourite music is a great way for party animals to squeeze in some exercise while you socialise – as long as you retain a degree of control.

The continuous movement can be a good aerobic workout, improving your lung and heart capacity as well as muscular endurance. However, a few key points need to be noted: drinking lots of booze at the same time will destroy all possible benefit so stay off the alcohol. Drink lots of water, try and avoid very smoky clubs and don't run yourself down by burning the candle at both ends too often. Oh, and skip that kebab on the way home too!

### DANCE

THE fitness benefits of dance have been extolled for years but while it's loved by some – mainly women, other people – mainly men, would rather run a mile, protesting they've got two left feet.



### INDOOR CLIMBING

**FOR** toning up your muscles, climbing's unbeatable. Indoor climbing walls can be found all over the UK and beginners needn't be afraid. Most climbing walls will have easy and harder routes to the top so start with the easiest ascent and you'll be up at the top as quick as the pros taking the harder routes. You can either try your hand at bouldering – climbing short walls with no ropes (don't worry, there are crash mats to break any falls) or full-on climbing, where you're attached to ropes.

There are indoor climbing walls nationwide – go to [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) to find your nearest one. Most walls will provide all the equipment you need. Visits to climbing walls usually cost between £3 and £8 a time but beginners need to start off with a five-hour introductory course, which costs approximately £50.

Check out [www.learntodance.co.uk](http://www.learntodance.co.uk) though, and you'll be amazed by the variety of different dance techniques on offer.

Dance teacher Richard Colley says: "While dancing, not only are you using muscles that you may not use normally, you are also burning a similar amount of calories to running or swimming. It's not only great exercise, it's great fun too – imagine exercising without realising you're doing it."

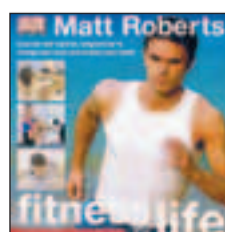
Latin dance, especially Salsa, has soared in popularity in recent years but if you prefer something a little more modern, street dance and disco dancing lessons are also becoming more widely available. Check out the timetable in your local gym, as classes are often available to non-members on a pay-per-class basis.

### BIKRAM YOGA

YOGA'S a great form of exercise for the body and mind. It's loved by people who'd prefer not to spend 40 minutes pumping iron or jogging but instead want to approach exercise in an altogether calmer fashion. The latest

form of yoga to gain popularity is Bikram yoga, which aims to give an intense workout while making you feel relaxed at the same time. It's practised in a room heated to 43C, making it a safer environment to stretch your muscles in while raising your heart-beat, making it a good cardiovascular workout too. It takes you through 26 different yoga stretches, aiming to deal with every muscle and organ in the body.

If you can't find a Bikram yoga class in your area, try the more mainstream Hatha yoga instead. Bikram Choudhury, founder of Bikram yoga, based his stretches on classic Hatha poses.



**Fitness for Life**  
by Matt Roberts  
(Dorling Kindersley,  
£15.99)

## INBRIEF

### A passion for pomegranate

**POMEGRANATE** juice is the latest 'in' drink favoured by health conscious stars in Hollywood such as Cameron Diaz. The fruit is reputed to be good for the heart, because it contains polyphenols, which protect against heart disease, and libido-boosting vitamins A, C and E.

A new juice, Pomegreat, free of colours, preservatives or sweeteners and with very few calories, could be an easy way to enjoy the fruit.

It's available in cartons from Sainsbury's, priced £1.39 and in bottles from Boots, priced 99p. (visit [www.pomegreat.com](http://www.pomegreat.com)).

### Cough medicine

CHOCOLATES could help cure for a ticklish cough, according to research. Scientists say a chemical found in cocoa called theobromine is a third more effective than codeine, the main ingredient in many cough mixtures. Experts say

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Four in 10 school children have at least one allergic condition.
- One in five children has asthma and 85 per cent of these are allergic to house dust mites.
- An estimated six million people have eczema.
- More than nine million people have hayfever.
- More than one million people have a food allergy.

the theobromine works by suppressing activity in the vagus nerve, which links the brain and the chest.

### Psoriasis soothers

**THERE** are many creams, lotions and hair products which are suitable for those with sensitive skin and psoriasis. Guy Kremer's hair range, available from Asda, includes a Soothing Scalp Gentle Cleansing Shampoo, £3.95, which

features French olive oil extract. The Soothing Scalp Deep Moisture Seal Conditioner is £4.25. (Fashion designer Maria Grachvogel is said to be a fan.) Boots also has a wide range of products, including E45 Cream, £9.69; Exorex Lotion for skin and scalp, £14.99; Polytar Liquid Scalp Treatment, £3.99. (08450) 708 090/[www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com)

### Pick-me-up tonic

IF winter is getting the better of you, Bio-Strath Elixir may be able to restore flagging energy. It is a Swiss herbal yeast formula, clinically proven to work as a pick-me-up, restoring energy lost through stress or illness. The honey and malt-flavoured tonic is rich in nutrients, and contains herbal extracts such as angelica, balm, basil, camomile, liquorice and sage. £11.45 for 250ml from Holland & Barrett, Tesco, health food stores and independent pharmacies, or order from 0161-483 1235/[www.bio-strath.co.uk](http://www.bio-strath.co.uk)

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## HEALTHSHORTS

### BANISH COUCH POTATOES

IF you hate the thought of your child turning into a couch potato, here's a video that might help. YogaBugs features two adventures incorporating traditional yoga postures as well as breathing and relaxation techniques, and is suitable for three to seven-year-olds. YogaBugs, from Firefly Entertainment, costs £14.99 (DVD) or £12.99 (VHS) and is available from leading supermarkets and video stores. 020 7659 0844/[www.yogabugs.com](http://www.yogabugs.com)

### FLOSS EASY

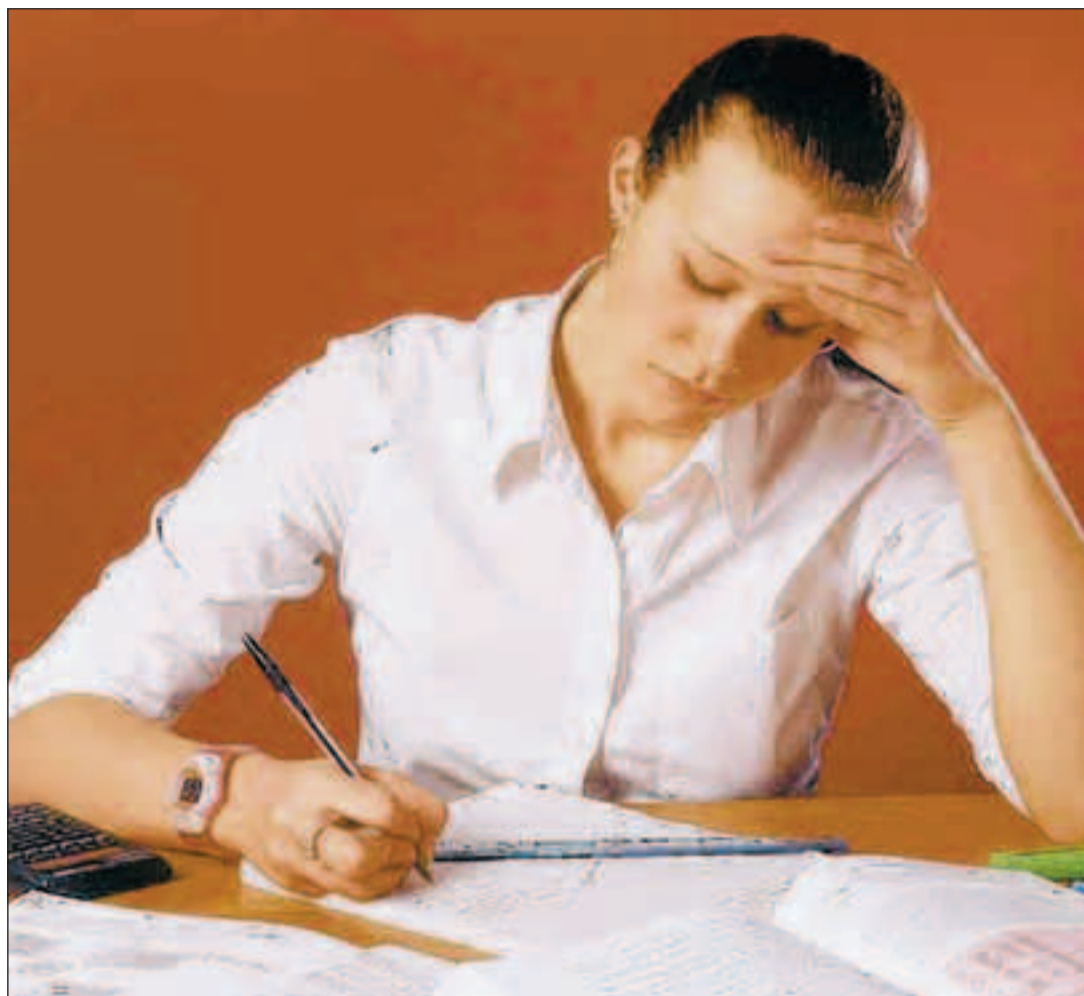
AT last, a brilliant gadget makes flossing easy and doesn't require you to have double-jointed fingers. (It passed with flying colours when tested by our panel.) Oral-B's battery-powered Hummingbird gently vibrates at the touch of a button and dislodges debris and plaque as it slides easily into those tricky areas between your teeth. Priced £4.99 for the Starter Kit (£2.49 for refills), it's available in all major supermarkets and chemists.

### QUITTING SMOKING

THOSE who have resolved to give up smoking may need some help. The NHS Quit Smoking Hotline is on 0800 169 0169 or you can contact QUIT, the stop smoking charity, on 0800 002 200, visit [www.quit.org.uk](http://www.quit.org.uk) or email [stopsmokingquit.org.uk](mailto:stopsmokingquit.org.uk)

A survey has revealed that the nation is suffering from an epidemic of T.A.T.T. – Tired All The Time syndrome. GABRIELLE FAGAN discovers that the solution may lie in our diets

Everyone gets tired from time to time, but you shouldn't be tired *all* the time



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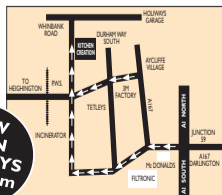
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# Do you feel tired all the time?

IF you feel persistently tired, struggle to get out of bed every morning and can barely drag yourself through the day, you may be suffering from chronic tiredness. A survey on behalf of Spatone, a natural liquid iron supplement, has found that a staggering 83 per cent of us feel exhausted in the morning, even after a full eight hours sleep. The condition has been dubbed Tired All The Time syndrome.

Nutritionist Suzannah Olivier who has extensively researched the issue says: "It's a huge problem in today's stressful times. It's so widespread that many people actually believe it is normal to feel washed out most of the time. They rationalise that with the frenetic pace of life that burnout is inevitable and that exhaustion is just something they have to put up with, but it is not normal to feel this way and there is a lot you can do."

If the tiredness has gone on for more than six months, and cannot be obviously linked to overworking, a stressful situation or disturbed nights, due to something like illness or a new baby, you should seek advice from a doctor.

There can be an underlying medical cause such as anaemia due to lack of iron, diabetes, glandular fever, a thyroid problem or even depression.

However, if a doctor can't find anything wrong, people can sometimes feel worse because they start thinking the tiredness is all in the mind.

They then begin to push themselves even harder, resulting in even more lethargy and demotivation.

Instead, Olivier says, it is possible to break the cycle and get energy into your life with lifestyle and diet changes.

Many of us in desperation constantly try to perk ourselves up with sweet snacks, fizzy drinks and cups of coffee and alcohol in the evening.

Says Olivier: "Excess sugar in sweet snacks depletes energy and adds to fatigue instead of helping conquer it. These affect blood sugar levels so you get instant 'highs' but these are followed by great drops in energy as the effect wears off and will make you feel even more tired."

To remedy blood sugar fluctuations – other symptoms can include mood swings, difficulty in concentrating and a 'spaced out' feeling – she recommends eating up to five smaller meals a day, including protein and carbohydrates. It takes less energy to digest smaller quantities more often than larger meals.

"There is a tendency now for people who are weight conscious to avoid snacks but as long as the snacks are fresh or dried fruit, vegetables or nuts and salads they won't be fattening and, crucially, will prolong energy."

Foods with fibre such as pulses, beans and lentils, will slow down the release of sugar from carbohydrates, such as bread, pasta

# 6 OF THE BEST

## FUN FITNESS GADGETS

We are all aware of the benefits of exercise, but not everyone can find the time to get down to the gym. The alternative is to do it at home, with a little help from one of this week's fun fitness

gadgets, it might be the kickstart you've been waiting for!



### I FEEL NO PAIN

**Slam Man (£279) from [www.boysstuff.co.uk](http://www.boysstuff.co.uk) or call 0870 745 2000**

THIS scary chap has 15 in-built programs or you simply set your own and punch him in sequence to the flashing lights.

Sounds easy? Think again.

A fantastic all-round workout and the perfect way to de-stress!

### GO NOWHERE FAST

**Reebok CyberRider (£149) from**

**[www.jbbfitnessstore.co.uk](http://www.jbbfitnessstore.co.uk) or call 01908 512 244**

YOUR home computer could become the centre of your fitness regime with one of these, or you might end up stealing the kids' playstation.

Plug the bike in and you control all the gaming action from the seat of your bike, steering, braking and, of course, speed.

Works with bikes, boat and car games.



### STEP BY STEP

**Pedometer with radio (£14.95) from**

**[www.girlsstuff.co.uk](http://www.girlsstuff.co.uk) or call 0870 745 2000**



THE idea that anyone walking 10,000 steps in a day could seriously improve a person's fitness levels was developed in Japan around 40 years ago, but walking is dull isn't it? Not with one of these gadgets, which will count your steps while you listen to your favourite radio station. You could end up anywhere.

### NOT JUST FOR LAUGHS

**Wobble Board (£16.95) from [www.girlsstuff.co.uk](http://www.girlsstuff.co.uk) or call 0870 7452000**

YOU will look a little daft until you get the hang of it, but this take-anywhere wobble board will improve your fitness in no time. Great for an overall exercise as it increases strength, flexibility and of course stability.

### UPS AND DOWNS

**Ten foot trampoline (£129.99) from**



**[www.argos.co.uk](http://www.argos.co.uk)**

THIS is a real bargain, a super-strong trampoline this size which can be used by all the family – although not at the same time. Bouncing on this great toy is a superb way to keep overall fitness levels up. And, of course, you never know what you might see over the garden fence, adding to the excitement.



### SPIN IT AROUND

**Power Ball (£24.95 from [www.firebox.com](http://www.firebox.com) or call 0870 241 4289**

THIS simple sphere has been getting rave reviews across the UK because of its ultra-addictive nature, set the inner ball spinning and with your wrist try and achieve the highest count you can on the LCD counter. Great exercise for a vulnerable part of the body, fantastic fun too.

and potatoes, which are one of our main sources of energy and assist blood sugar to stay in balance.

Dehydration is also tiring and Olivier advises drinking between one and a half and two litres of water a day.

If you're constantly tired, getting a good night's sleep is obviously key, but often the more overtired we become, frustratingly, the harder it is to enjoy a peaceful night. Cutting down on coffee and alcohol are crucial and Olivier debunks the myth that as long as coffee is not drunk in the evening it won't affect sleep.

"That's not a golden rule – people's reactions to caffeine are highly individual and some people are sensitive to it whenever it is drunk. Alcohol also means you will go to sleep quickly but wake up in the early hours, because it prevents deep sleep occurring. People then wake exhausted and the vicious cycle continues."

However, Olivier believes that for many people the fundamental problem lies in a nutritionally poor diet, often low in iron, which is vital for energy.

Recent Government research highlighted the fact that women consume only two-thirds of the recommended daily quantity of iron and that their bodies only absorb 15 per cent of that.

Olivier says: "When people are already suffering from a nutritionally poor diet, low in iron, and then they experience stress or even a bout of flu, they can quickly slide into suffering from chronic tiredness. "Women, particularly, can be prone to lack of iron if they smoke, don't eat much red meat and have heavy periods."

She suggests: "You should avoid processed foods, white bread and rice, and substitute wholegrains and brown rice. Also, try to eat foods containing Vitamin C with your meals as it helps double the absorption of iron."

She recommends increasing the amount of

iron-rich foods, such as fortified cereals and dark meat, slow-releasing energy foods including brown rice, oats, barley, lentils and fresh fish, and Vitamin C rich foods, especially dark greens, kiwis and berries. And she suggests taking an easily absorbed iron supplement in addition.

Finally Olivier says: "Don't ignore extreme tiredness – or you may find you tip over into serious depression or chronic fatigue with only a little push from a stressful event such as moving house or changing job."

"Look at common sense ways to improve your lifestyle and make more time for relaxation. Finally, exercise, which is key and will help you feel more energised and less overwhelmed by the hectic pace of life."

### TIPS FOR BEATING T.A.T.T.

- The best results are achieved by using a combination of diet, nutritional supplements, stress management or counselling, massage or gentle exercise.
- If you consistently stay up late catching up on domestic or work-related jobs, or stay out clubbing until the early hours and then push yourself in between, you need to take a long hard look at your lifestyle.
- If you're not inspired by what you are doing and find life a drudge, that can be as tiring as having too much to do. Set aside time to analyse what you enjoy, consider career changes or increasing leisure activities. People who enjoy life are less likely to feel tired.
- Having eliminated medical complications with your GP, consider consulting a nutritionist who can investigate pressure on the immune system from pollution, allergies and food intolerances.

● If you begin to feel better, don't try to do too much, too soon. It takes time to build up reserves, so progress slowly to avoid another setback.

**500 Of The Most Stress-Busting Tips You'll Ever Need by Suzannah Olivier (Cico Books, £10.99)**

Spatone iron supplement is available from Boots, Holland and Barrett and independent health food stores and pharmacies. For mail order call: 01492 640 057

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# Give your heart an MOT

CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE, who has a poor family history when it comes to heart disease, puts her mind at rest with a free health assessment at a high street chemist

Gillian Bickley at Moss Pharmacy

To find out your nearest Moss Pharmacy, visit [www.mosspharmacy.co.uk](http://www.mosspharmacy.co.uk). For healthy heart leaflets telephone 0207 761 1705.



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**G**ETTING your health checked out can be a daunting experience. Even if you feel healthy, you can't ever be sure what's going on inside your body. But with heart disease killing 120,000 people in the UK each year, healthy heart checks are becoming essential.

My own family history didn't bode well. My mother suffered cardiovascular disease so severely she had to have a leg amputated. Three years later, she suffered a series of strokes until, finally, a massive stroke killed her. With my permanently cold hands and feet and the need for a hot water bottle in bed, winter and summer, I wasn't confident about my heart health.

Moss Pharmacy now offer free Healthy Heart Assessments in most of their branches throughout the UK. While some check blood pressure and give advice on weight, diet and exercise, as well as stopping smoking, others go one step further and measure the amount of cholesterol in your blood.

I was tested at Moss Pharmacy in Cheapside, Spennymoor, County Durham, by supervisor Gillian Bickley. We started with a questionnaire on general health – patients are asked if they suffer from diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure or liver disease.

Gillian also needed to know if the patient has had heart or chest pain during or after exercise, how much alcohol they drink and if they are taking cholesterol-lowering medication already.

Gillian then examined family history – people whose father or brother had heart disease (heart attack, stroke or angina) before the age of 55, or mother or sister before 65, are more at risk. (My mother was in her 70s when she was affected.)

Gillian also needed to know if I smoked – I don't – or if I exercised for at least 30 minutes twice weekly, which I do. She needed my height and weight to calculate my Body Mass Index, which was 21. BMI needs to be between 20 and 25 for good health as being overweight can contribute to high cholesterol. Blood pressure is also

checked – mine was 107/66, which was fine. Small samples of blood are taken from fingertips to test cholesterol. The procedure was painless, though Gillian had to use both hands as I was so cold. The sample is then put into a machine, which gives results within minutes.

My reading came back as 3.84mmol/l – 5.0mmol/l is the upper safe limit. The test for good cholesterol showed I have 1.46mmol/l, which is also a safe amount. For good cholesterol, 1.55mmol/l is an excellent amount and would provide a certain level of protection against heart disease. A reading of below 1.00mmol/l would mean a greater risk of heart disease.

At the end of the test, Gillian gives advice on lifestyle improvements. Anyone needing to lose weight can join the weight management programme, where they are given a diet sheet and are weighed in private regularly. Smokers can also go to sessions aimed at helping them quit.

Healthy eating can bring blood cholesterol down by 10 per cent and patients are encouraged to turn their own health around by introducing new eating habits.

For a healthy heart, experts advise we:

- eat fruit, vegetables, beans and oats for plenty of soluble fibre, thought to lower cholesterol;

- eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day;
- eat oily fish – they contain omega-3 oils, which protect from heart disease;
- eat margarine spreads and other foods which contain plant sterols or plant stanols;

- exercise for at least 30 minutes, five times a week, even if it's just a walk;
- give up smoking – it doubles our chance of suffering from coronary heart disease.

The whole test took about 20 minutes and, in my case, it was reassuring. But if the readings had been in the risk category, there would have been enough advice, support and, hopefully, time to make a lifestyle change for the better.

Water: health experts say we should all try to drink 1.5 litres a day

We all take water for granted but the benefits of drinking more of it are gradually being taken more seriously. Health Correspondent BARRY NELSON reports

# The eau zone



**N**OT surprisingly, most of the water we use in our homes is for washing and cleaning. But water companies are increasingly promoting the health benefits of drinking tap water.

And while many image-conscious young people are willing to spend a small fortune on branded bottled water, the big water companies point out that the stuff that comes out of your tap is just as healthy and immeasurably cheaper.

Northumbrian Water, which is one of the region's main water supply companies, reckons that customers in the North-East enjoy some of the highest quality tap water in the country.

Supplying 2.6m customers from Berwick down to North Yorkshire and across the Pennines, Northumbrian Water is so keen to see more people – particularly families – drinking tap water that it has embarked on a multi-million water improvement programme. The progress of that improvement programme is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate, which carries out more than 350,000 tests every year to ensure tap water quality is maintained.

While we take access to clean drinking water for granted in the developed Western world, many of us do not realise just how good for us it is.

According to Dr John Marsden and Ali-

son Dillon, authors of the BBC book *Live Well... Be Healthy: The Ultimate Guide*, we should all try to drink around 1.5 litres (2.5 pints), or about eight tall glasses of water every day just to keep the cells of our body functioning properly.

And if you drink alcohol or drinks containing caffeine like coffee and tea, you should increase your water intake, as these drinks make you pass water more frequently.

The book's authors say: "If you make a concerted effort to drink more water, you'll probably notice you have to urinate a bit more frequently at first, but your kidneys will adjust so you won't have to keep running off to the bathroom. Keeping your body hydrated is the number one way to fight toxins and keep everything inside you working smoothly."

That is certainly a message that Northumbrian Water is keen to promote.

A spokeswoman for the water company points out that our bodies lose up to two litres of water on a cool day, either through sweating, through urinating and – believe it or not – through breathing out.

Research has shown that children who drink enough water are able to concentrate more easily. "Children should be encouraged to drink water from an early age, so hopefully, this will become a good habit as they grow up," says the spokeswoman.

To try to encourage children to drink more tap water, Northumbrian Water is working with a North-East company called Hepscott Water Systems to install mains-fed water coolers into schools across the region.

● For more information about water coolers ring 0870 850 0219.

*Keeping your body hydrated is the number one way to fight toxins and keep everything inside you working*

## WATER THE FACTS

● We need to drink eight tall glasses of water every day to stay healthy.

● Two litres of water are lost from our bodies every day through sweating, urination and breathing.

● As the brain is 75 per cent water, even moderate dehydration can cause headaches and dizziness.

● Water carries nutrients and oxygen to all the cells in the body.

● Blood is 92 per cent water.

● Water is essential for our kidneys to work properly and drinking enough helps prevent urine infections, kidney stones and bladder cancer.

Kathryn Orange: believes homeopathy can succeed where conventional medicine sometimes fails



It's favoured by the Royals and Tony Blair, but what exactly is homeopathy – and more importantly, does it work? SARAH FOSTER meets practitioner Kathryn Orange

**A**s a student at the London College of Practical Homeopathy, Kathryn Orange saw something amazing. An Indian family, desperate after being turned away by doctors, brought their daughter to the college clinic. She was terminally ill with a nerve condition, and her father had to carry her up the stairs. A homeopathic remedy was prescribed and, a year on, the transformation was incredible.

"She was walking up the stairs on her own, eating crisps, back at school, talking properly... You would never have thought there had been anything wrong with her," says Kathryn, 46. "It was amazing – if you believe in miracles, that was definitely one."

The incident confirmed what experience had taught her – that homeopathy could work where conventional medicine failed. She first encountered it when her son James, now 13, was a toddler. "He started having lots of earaches and every time I took him to the doctor, they gave him antibiotics. Then he started getting lots of sore throats, then chest infections and he was really very poorly. He wasn't very old and he had had something like seven lots of antibiotics in a year," she says.

Frustrated that the treatment didn't seem to be working, Kathryn, then living in The Chilterns, near London, sought advice from her local pharmacy. By chance the pharmacist, a helpful Asian man, believed in homeopathy.

"In India, homeopathy is very big, so most Asians have come across it. When James used to get tonsillitis he got raging fevers. I gave him belladonna, which is what the Druids used to put in their eyes to make them brighter," she says.

It worked brilliantly, and other homeopathic remedies were just as effective. Kathryn found they also worked for her daughter Eloise, now ten. "She caught measles within a week of having the MMR vaccine. When I took her to the GP and said, 'I think she might have measles,' I was told, 'She can't – she's just been vaccinated'.

"So I took her back to my Asian pharmacist and his comment was, 'Poor little mite, she's got measles'. He gave her pulsatilla and she sailed through it," she says.

Convinced of its value and wanting to learn more, Kathryn enrolled on the four-year homeopathy course. She worked at the college clinic and at other clinics then three years ago, when she and her family



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## HOMEOPATHY AT A GLANCE

- Homeopathy, taken from the Greek homeo (meaning similar) and pathos (meaning suffering) is a system of medicine based on treating like with like, as with antidotes and vaccines.
- It has been established as a method of treatment for more than 200 years.
- It is holistic (it aims to treat the whole person) and no matter how many symptoms are experienced, only one remedy is taken.
- The remedy is taken in an extremely dilute form – normally one part to around 1,000,000,000,000 parts of water.



## SOME ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

**CHIROPRACTIC** is based on the belief that the health of the spine and the nervous system running through it can influence the health of the whole body.

**OSTEOPATHY** works with the body's musculo-skeletal system – the bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and connective tissue. Treatments involve muscle and joint manipulation.

**ACUPUNCTURE** is the insertion of very fine needles into the skin at particular points. This is thought to stimulate the body's ability to heal. There are about 7,000 acupuncturists practising in Britain.

**HERBAL** medicine makes use of the assumed healing properties of plants and herbs.

**AROMATHERAPY** uses the assumed healing properties of essential oils, extracted from plants.

**CRANIOSACRAL** therapy involves a practitioner applying a very light touch to the body. The craniosacral system consists of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. It extends from the bones of the skull, face and mouth that make up the cranium, down the spine to the sacrum and tailbone area.

**HEALING**, sometimes referred to as the laying-on of hands, claims to promote better health by channelling "energy" through the healer

to the patient. Healers may put their hands near patients or sometimes on them.

**HOMEOPATHY** involves giving patients remedies made from very diluted substances. The principle of homeopathy is "like cures like". A substance that would produce certain symptoms in a healthy person would be used to treat a sick person with similar symptoms.

**HYPNOTHERAPY** invokes the state of hypnosis – in which a patient is so relaxed as to be open to suggestion – to help people with health problems.

**REFLEXOLOGY** assumes that certain points on the feet and hands, called reflex points, correspond to various parts of the body and that by applying pressure to these points, tensions can be released and natural healing processes encouraged.

**REIKI** is a Japanese word for universal life energy. A reiki practitioner claims to use this energy, through massage, to encourage the body to heal.

**SHIATSU** is a Japanese therapy, based on the notion that "vital energy", or "Ki", flows throughout the body in channels called meridians, which can cause ill health if blocked. Shiatsu practitioners use pressure to restore the flow.

**YOGA** comprises mental and physical exercises that combine postural and physical discipline with meditative breathing routines.



Acupuncture: thought to stimulate the body's ability to heal

# Something in the water

moved to Yarm, she set up her own practice.

"When I first moved up here I rented clinic rooms, then the premises closed down and I moved my patients to home. I never got round to sorting anything else out," says Kathryn. "People seem to feel much more relaxed coming into a home environment – there's no white coat syndrome."

The conditions she treats are widely varied – "thyroid problems, high blood pressure, infertility, asthma, various acnes, all the menstrual problems... I've had hair loss, glandular fever, irritable bowel syndrome, bed wetting – oh, there are lots of children with bed wetting problems," she says.

Her first contact with the patient is an hour-long session when she tries to pinpoint the exact nature of the illness. "You are looking at what their problem is, what their health history is, their family history of illness and the unique features to them – for example, how they are affected by temperature or environment," says Kathryn.

From there a remedy is selected, which varies in potency depending on the patient's strength. Kathryn also uses herbal tinctures to support weak organs.

Homeopathic medication can be in tablet or liquid form, and is mainly plant or animal-derived. What makes it unusual is that it is always greatly diluted. "The more diluted it is, the more potent it becomes," says Kathryn. "It's giving a remedy that in a healthy person, would produce symptoms that are similar to the symptoms that your

patient is presenting. The body then cures itself."

Kathryn believes homeopathic remedies can treat most ailments and that, over time, they boost immunity – although she admits they have their limits. "If someone had meningitis, I wouldn't think twice about sending them down to their local A&E for a huge dose of antibiotics," says Kathryn.

She doesn't see homeopathy as replacing conventional medicine but as a valuable partner, preventing instead of fire fighting. "Down South, I would often get unofficial referrals from GPs and there's a move towards GPs' surgeries having homeopaths and other alternative therapists working out of them. That hasn't really hit here yet," she says. "Homeopathy and conventional medicine should be working hand in hand. Our aim is the same – to get people better."

● To book an appointment with Kathryn, ring (01642) 781270 or 07973 891688. More information is available from [www.practicalhealing.co.uk](http://www.practicalhealing.co.uk).

*People seem to feel much more relaxed coming into a home environment – there's no white coat syndrome*

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# All-action hero

**A**THLETE Tanni Grey-Thompson clearly likes being honest and open with people. That's why, after a few minutes into an interview about her health, she apologises for a) her untypical heavy cold and b) her frank admission that she craves beef-and-onion crisps.

"It's true, beef-and-onion crisps are my weakness. I'd live on them if I could," she laughs, in between coughs.

Tanni reckons she has a healthy lifestyle and, as an elite athlete, values her health above all else, but she freely admits that she is only human and will occasionally snack on naughty foods like biscuits, especially after a particularly gruelling training session.

"You try to eat well all of the time but there are occasions when it does go out of the window," says Tanni, who at the tender age of 35 was recently recognised in the New Year's Honours List and became Dame Tanni in recognition of her 11 Paralympic gold medals.

Despite being born with spina bifida and paralysed from the waist down, Tanni has become a household name because of her sporting exploits.

"Ian (her husband) and I train very hard and there are times, especially if you have come in from a huge

training session on a Sunday, you do come in and eat two chocolate bars and half a packet of biscuits. But that is OK because we will have just been out on the road for an hour and a half," she says.

But, occasional lapses aside, Tanni – who is very active in the sports promotion body Sport England – is very careful about her day to day diet, ensuring that her food intake gives her the energy and stamina she needs to be one of the world's top Paralympic athletes.

"It is really very sensible with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables," she says. "As athletes, we also probably eat more pasta and carbohydrates than most people would do."

Tanni is scathing about certain unconventional diet regimes like the Atkins diet, which urge people to ditch carbohydrates in favour of protein. "I just know that there is no way I could train and follow that diet," she says.

Temporary winter sniffles aside, Tanni enjoys pretty good health. She and her husband train on the roads around their Redcar home nine or ten times a week, as well as building up muscle strength through weight training.

"The trouble with being an athlete is that you are more likely to get injured," she says. "You are putting yourself through quite a lot of hard work so



Health Editor  
BARRY NELSON  
talks to gold  
medallist Tanni  
Grey-Thompson  
about her health  
and fitness  
regime... and her  
occasional all-too  
human lapses

*I just  
know I  
couldn't  
train and  
follow that  
diet...*

**Tanni, from Redcar, in gold medal winning form at the Paralympics in Athens last year, and below, with her daughter Carys**



you want to make sure that you stay healthy as well."

Tanni reckons she manages to stay cold free for most of the year and can usually shrug off an illness through hard training, not something she would recommend for the less committed.

"I probably get at least one bad cold through the winter, but having a good background level of fitness means that it usually doesn't affect me much. If I have a cold I still train hard because it seems to get rid of a lot of stuff as you go along."

While Tanni believes in working off a cold, she would be more cautious if it turned out to be some kind of virus. That's why she monitors her heart rate on a daily basis – "a good indication of how healthy you are and whether you might have a virus".

If her heart rate is up by more than ten beats per minute, Tanni might even consider cancelling training on that day, though because of the level that she operates at, just a few days of missed training can make a huge difference. "Every week you are off training sets you back a month," she says.

But while many people would be daunted by Tanni's training schedule, she wouldn't have it any other way. "Whatever your level of sport or exercise, there is always a sense of achievement when you go out and do something physical," says Tanni.

It is well known that the human body releases pleasure giving chemicals during exercise and Tanni certainly recommends that everybody should try to be more active. Apart from being good for you, it actually gives a pleasurable buzz. "Exercise does make you feel good. If you do go out and do something physical, the secret is to gradually do a little more each time."

Another vital tip is to ensure that if you are taking vigorous exercise you should take in enough fluid, especially water. Tanni prefers to mix her own DIY sports drinks.

"I drink either juice and water mixed together or squash and water. Depending how strong or weak you make it, it does different things," says Tanni, who always adds a pinch of salt to aid hydration.

Tanni also likes to drink coffee, particularly before training. "I'm a big latte fan because it gives you a bit of an adrenaline boost. It is handy for training because it really perks you up."

Tanni now has someone else's health to worry about. Her little girl, Carys, is now nearly three and already taking a keen interest in sport.

"It will be nice if she does become a sportswoman but if she doesn't, that's fine. If it was a lucrative activity such as tennis or golf, I could retire early," she laughs.

## Sleep deeper, sleep longer...

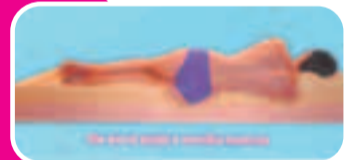
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Top: a patient is wheeled in to be assessed; above: patients can access the surgery via their GP



Health facilities in Darlington received a major boost as Darlington Primary Care Trust opened its £2m walk-in centre, one of only three in the region. IAN LAMMING reports

# Walk this way...

(you'll feel much better for it)

**W**ALK in feeling ill or suffering from an injury, walk out on the mend. No fuss, no appointments, no problem.

That's the primary aim of a new concept in health care surrounding the opening last week of Darlington Primary Care Trust's cutting edge walk-in centre.

Staffed by specially trained nurses, the new facility occupies the ground floor of Doctor Piper House, in King Street, the £1m headquarters of Darlington PCT.

Upstairs, PCT staff administer local health services for Darlington's 102,000 population while the offices are also home to the town's small army of district nurses and health visitors.

But since January 22, the ground floor has become a sophisticated clinic offering an array of services, many on a walk-in, walk-out basis.

The centre is state-of-the-art and one of just three such facilities in the North of England, the others being at Newcastle and York. It is designed to increase public access to health services and is providing invaluable support for Darlington's 11 GP practices, the new Out of Hours service and the hospital's accident and emergency unit.

The hi-tech walk-in centre provides an innovative approach to servicing health needs and is expected to treat up to 100 patients a day in nurse-led clinics from 7am to 10pm weekdays, 9am to 10pm weekends.

Staffed by a modern matron, senior sister, six nurses, three healthcare assistants, three emergency care practitioners and ten reception staff, it offers the public a variety of services for minor ailments, injuries and public health issues without the need for an appointment.

The facility also deals with booked appointments for chronic disease management including ailments such as asthma, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and offers retinal and foot screening.

Complementary therapies, health pro-

motion and a variety of counselling services are also located in the centre, as are the Primary Care Trust's successful stop smoking services.

The centre features operating suites for minor surgery and skin services which the PCT has been running since last year, employing two former GPs with specialist interests. Patients access this service via their GP.

Chairman of Darlington PCT Sandra Pollard says: "I am so pleased that we have been able to open the walk-in centre, one of only three in the North, which is adding greatly to the opportunities for quick and accessible treatment for everyone in Darlington."

Darlington PCT chief executive Colin Morris adds: "This is an extremely exciting project, which is putting Darlington on the health care map. It is right in the heart of Darlington making it accessible to everyone."

**The hi-tech walk-in centre provides an innovative approach to servicing health needs and is expected to treat up to 100 patients a day in nurse-led clinics from 7am to 10pm weekdays, 9am to 10pm weekends**



Nurses outside Doctor Piper House, ready to offer advice and treatment. Below: a patient is assessed and others are called for treatment

# A whistle-stop tour round the £2m walk-in centre



**W**ALK through Entrance A of the new centre and patients are greeted by trained receptionists at the desk, which is fitted with a closed loop system for people with hearing impairment.

Anyone with sensory impairment is encouraged to make it known and is given extra help. Those who feel they need more privacy to talk to the receptionist can go into a consulting room on the right.

Also in the reception area, in a glass office, is the Patient and Liaison Advice Service where the PALS manager works, answering queries and pointing people in the right direction. The office is teeming with pamphlets and leaflets on all manner of health issues.

There is a baby room for mothers wanting to breastfeed their children while they are waiting, and spacious toilets accessible for people with disabilities, along with changing facilities for babies and adults.

The seating area is designed to cope with about 100 people a day. An illuminated message board displays the names of patients and the number of the room they are to attend when called. A wide screen TV displays health promotion DVDs and videos and there's the capacity to play background music too.

Patients are asked a variety of questions by the receptionists and given priority depending on their answers. Chest pain, for instance, is given a high priority and nurses attend to those

patients first. Patients, when called, proceed to the nurse-led clinics which deal with a variety of minor ailments and injuries.

The rooms are all fitted to a high standard and have individual climate control. Any given shift in the walk-in centre is staffed by three nurses, an emergency care practitioner and a health care assistant. One of the rooms is equipped especially for children with small, brightly coloured tables and chairs. There's also a phlebotomy service (for the taking of blood) between 7am and 9am.

A health promotion suite is designed to be flexible and can be divided into two smaller rooms by pulling across a soundproof door. This is used for group education sessions such as stopping smoking, clinical education and other talks.

Other treatment rooms are used for complementary therapies, wound care and continence and the management of long-term conditions. There is retinal screening and diabetic foot screening, a diabetic specialist nurse and nurses who specialise in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Says PCT Chief Executive Colin Morris: "The walk-in centre is something we can all be proud of."

"It is relieving some of the pressure on the town's GPs and A&E department and provides the base for a raft of new primary care services which cannot fail to boost health care in Darlington."

► **OVERLEAF:** A THOROUGHLY MODERN MATRON



**The walk-in centre, one of only three in the North, is adding greatly to the opportunities for quick and accessible treatment for everyone in Darlington**

– chairman of Darlington PCT  
Sandra Pollard



The nurse-led clinic shows just how far the profession has come and gives nurses a chance to use all their skills

# A thoroughly modern matron

A modern approach to medicine also pays homage to the past when standards were set by a matron. IAN LAMMING talks to the walk-in centre's new modern matron

**W**HEN matron was on the ward even the patients sat up straight in bed as she ruled with a rod of iron and a tongue as sharp as a scalpel.

Things have changed since then, but when the public were asked what they would like to see in the NHS, they asked for return to the standards which were the hallmark of the service's most authoritative and respected figure.

The concept of modern matron was born as a result – wearing the uniform of the nursing profession and the suit of the health service manager. With a foot firmly in both camps, she – or in some cases, he – is ideally placed to bridge the gap between clinician and manager.

Doctor Piper House's new walk-in centre is being run by just such a post with matron Nicola Wharton in charge of the ground floor but with easy access to the Darlington PCT's headquarters on the floors above.

"I'm definitely no Hattie Jacques, hence the term 'modern'," says Bishop Auckland-born Miss Wharton, who now lives in Bedale. "The public wanted to see the return of an authoritative figure with presence, expertise and authority, who can cut through the bureaucracy. They also wanted that person to be a clinician."

"I think it's an excellent idea and a necessary role and I like to think it is a role where I will be the link between management and

clinicians. If staff and patients want to talk to me, I am here for them."

Miss Wharton is well qualified for the job, with 22 years in the service. She trained as a nurse from the age of 18 at Darlington Memorial Hospital, specialising in orthopaedics and trauma.

Even when she worked in the pub trade for a number of years, she kept her hand in as an agency nurse, later returning to the profession full-time as a theatre nurse specialising in anaesthetics.

Her job then took her into the community and she was a district nursing sister in Middleton-in-Teesdale before becoming modern matron at the Richardson Hospital in Barnard Castle.

Her qualifications range from her nursing diploma, RGN and degree in nursing to her being a specialist practitioner in community nursing and nurse prescribing, with a masters in leadership. Her next challenge is managing Darlington's walk-in centre, a task she relishes.

"It is an innovation of the moment," she says. "It is a new way forward which will give patients more choice, reducing waiting times and sharing the workload of A&E and GP surgeries."

"It is a health promotion centre as well and the public really will be able to just walk in and ask us any health-related questions. I also see it as the focal point of the community and about giving people the flexibility



Nicola Wharton, who runs the new Darlington Primary Care Trust walk-in centre

to fit health issues around their busy lives."

She says the fact the walk-in centre is a nurse-led clinic shows just how far the profession has come.

"Nurses are autonomous practitioners, a fact which in the past has not been recognised. We are now challenging traditional boundaries with a wealth of knowledge which is giving nurses the chance to use all of their skills."

"I think the walk-in centre is going to be a massive success in Darlington because I think the need is there."

And even in a modern health service, what matron says goes.

## WHAT THE WALK-IN CENTRE WILL TREAT

**The walk-in centre will concentrate on minor ailments and injuries including the following:**

Sore throats, coughs, colds, fevers, flu-like symptoms, impetigo, rashes, skin infections, insect bites, allergies, conjunctivitis, ear infections, diarrhoea and vomiting, headaches, sinus problems, urine infections, mouth ulcers, sprains and strains, superficial burns, minor head injuries, lacerations requiring closure with staples and glue and cuts and bruises, emergency hormonal contraception and tetanus.

**Health promotion and public health activities will include:**

Stop smoking services, healthy living advice, flu vaccinations, C Card contraceptives, screening for hypertension, screening for diabetes, mental health promotion, health checks for vulnerable patients, phlebotomy (blood taking), retinal and foot screening.



A patient's blood pressure is taken as part of his health assessment

## The name behind the building

**Stephen Edward Piper, FRCS, LCA Born Ipswich, April 12, 1813 Died Darlington, August 24, 1894, aged 81**

**S**TEPHEN Piper was articled to a surgeon in Ipswich, before studying at University College, London

In 1836, aged 23, he joined a British Lancer regiment and served in Spain in the campaign against Don Carlos (the Carlist War of 1834-39) and was wounded

In 1839, he was junior partner in a medical practice in Connaught Square, London

Dr Piper came to Darlington in 1841 and was appointed Medical Officer to the Board of Guardians in 1842. (His uncle was the Rev D Piper, vicar of Sadberge.)

On the passing of the Public Health Act of 1848, he was appointed the first Medical Officer to the Local Board of Health in 1851, with a salary of 20 guineas per year. When Darlington achieved borough status in 1867, he served as its Medical Officer until his retirement in 1882.

In 1851, he married Maria Theresa, the daughter of A T Steavenson and sister of F T Steavenson, solicitor, who later became Town Clerk to Darlington Borough Council. They had two sons, one of whom died from blood poisoning as a result of an infected cut, received in the dissecting room. The other became a solicitor in Barnard Castle. Of their two daughters, one married a Mr van Bergen of Harewood Hill, Darlington, the other, Dr Barrow, who had been Dr Piper's assistant.

The family first lived in Northgate (opposite where Woolworths now stands) and, from 1867, in Orwell House which stood at the top of



**Dr Stephen Piper: medical officer for Darlington in the 1800s**

Victoria Road, next to the Baptist church. Orwell House was demolished in 1976, when Victoria Road was widened as part of the ring road system and the roundabout created.

When William Ranger, the superintending inspector of the General Board of Health conducted an "Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of the town of Darlington" in February 1850, Dr Piper gave evidence and provided "voluminous and highly significant statements".

Mainly as a result of Dr Piper's reports, Darlington's first hospital was established, public baths were opened, the cattle market was removed from the centre of the town, a public park was laid out, the river Skeme was straightened and cleansed and a municipal cemetery was opened.

● The building's energy efficient air conditioning system can heat some areas while simultaneously cooling others by redistributing the air.

● Consultant/treatment rooms have individual temperature controls which can also be controlled from reception.

● The system can be connected to the internet and be controlled through cyberspace from anywhere in the world.

● The operating theatre has full air conditioning and humidity control, along with positive air pressure to keep infections at bay.

● The power unit for the theatre could power three houses for half an hour.

● Fluorescent tubes in the centre laid end to end would stretch more than ½km.

● Lighting in the building emits 1.4 million lumens – the equivalent of 2,500 60W bulbs.

● The theatre light illuminates to 80,000 lux, about 1,000 times lighter than the average living room.

● Each reception counter offers amplified speech and an induction system for people with hearing impairment.

● More than 1,200m of steel tube and almost 1,500m of copper has been used in the centre.



Patients can walk in off the streets and be assessed and treated by the nurses at the centre

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Venomous spider or firework accident, the odds are the same

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Riding a motorbike	one in 1,295
Fatal air accident	one in 4,608
Being accidentally shot	one in 4,613
Tripping over on level ground	one in 6,336
Falling off a ladder	one in 8,689
Choking on your own vomit	one in 9,372
Driving in a heavy truck	one in 9,702
Drowning in the bath	one in 10,948
Suffocating in bed	one in 10,948
Scalded by hot tap water	one in 65,092
Hornet, wasp or bee stings	one in 66,297
In a three-wheeled vehicle	one in 155,654
On foot	one in 610
Firework accident	one in 716,010
Venomous spiders	one in 716,010

From The  
Hypochondriac's  
Handbook  
by John Naish  
(HarperCollins,  
£10)



# Why men need help... ...and where they can get it

A recent survey showed that British men still believe mother knows best when it comes to health. The experts tell SHEREEN LOW where they *should* be turning for advice on their common concerns

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**T**HEY may have grown up and even started families of their own, but British men still believe mother knows best when it comes to health, with a quarter turning to their beloved mums for health tips.

Young men in particular (55 per cent) – aged 18 to 24 – were most likely to go to their mother, but even 30 per cent of those aged 35 to 44 were still seeking maternal support with their concerns, according to research for the Pop Down Your Local campaign, aimed to encourage men to make greater use of pharmacies.

The survey of almost 500 men found that 48 per cent would turn to their partner or wife for health advice and 15 per cent would even prefer to speak to their mother-in-law, compared to less than three per cent who would head to a pharmacy.

## MEN AND ADVICE

PETER Baker, Director of Men's Health Forum which supports the campaign, says: "In many ways, what comes as a surprise is that men will actually ask anybody for advice and help regarding their health. We know that men are generally very reluctant to ask for help, and that's even more the case as far as doctors and other health professionals are concerned. Men also tend to delay going to the doctor far longer than is good for their health."

Men who find symptoms of testicular cancer generally wait around 14 weeks before going to the doctor, he points out, and men who have erectile dysfunction – or impotence – wait two years.

The reason why they prefer to go to their mothers is deeply rooted.

Dr Ian Banks, spokesman on men's health for the British Medical Association, says: "From a young age, men are brought up to think that health is a women's issue. It is usually the mother who takes them to the doctor, and we have found that men don't ask their dads for advice, especially on sexual health."

## WHO TO ASK?

DR Banks insists that pharmacies are doing more to become male-friendly. "The pharmacist is the best first port of call, because

they can deal with most health problems there and then," he explains.

"Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals in the community, and they have medical training so they can do further tests if necessary. They can carry out basic health checks like blood pressure and cholesterol, and can give advice."

But it's not just pharmacies that you can get health advice from. Baker also recommends NHS Walk-In centres ([www.nhs.co.uk](http://www.nhs.co.uk)), helplines such as NHS Direct (0845 46 47) and specialist websites like [www.malehealth.co.uk](http://www.malehealth.co.uk) or [www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk).

"It is important men believe that the health services are there for them," he says. "They have become more interested in their health and will respond favourably to health initiatives in the workplace, their local pub or sports venue. But as soon as he spots a symptom he can't treat himself – for example a lump on the skin, a change in his moles – if he's in persistent pain or he's depressed, he should get professional advice."

## COMMON CONCERNS – AND WHO TO TURN TO WEIGHT

SIXTY per cent of men in the UK are medically defined as overweight, and one in six as obese. The greatest increase in obesity has been amongst men, and the number has tripled in the past 18 years.

Weight loss could also be a symptom of diabetes, which could become more serious if unchecked.

"If you are overweight, have a family history of heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes, it's wise to have a general check-up – which can be done at your local pharmacist or GP. Ask for a fasting blood glucose test, cholesterol test and blood pressure check," says Baker.

**GO TO: Your doctor or pharmacist for tests and referral to support groups like Slimming World and Weight Watchers.**

## SEXUAL PROBLEMS

MOST men will experience an Erectile Dysfunction (ED) problem at least once in their life, with the risk increasing as they get older. 18 per cent of 50 to 59-year-olds have

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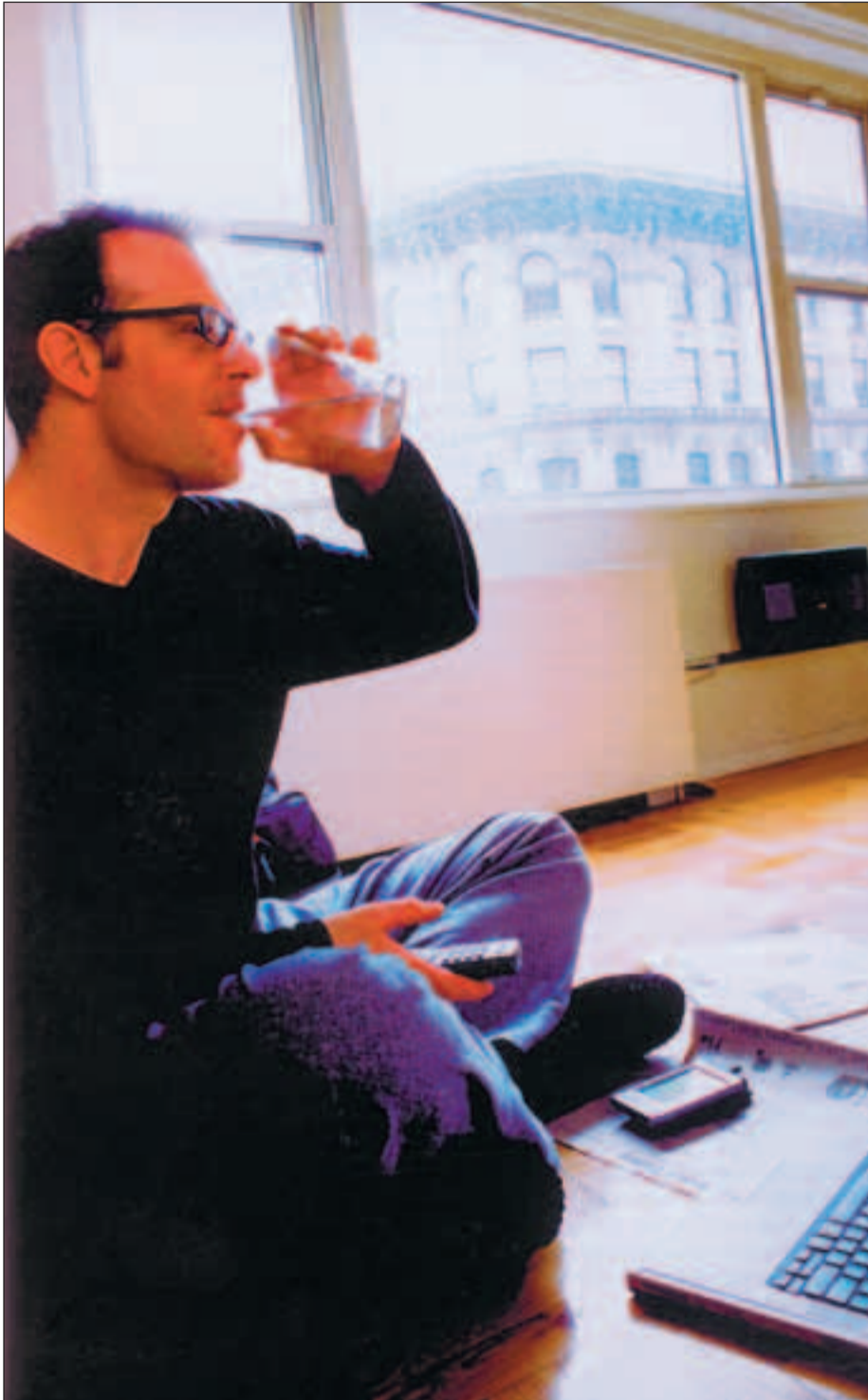
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**Men are gradually becoming more aware of health issues, but still dislike asking for advice or going to see the doctor**

trouble with their erections, compared to seven per cent of 18 to 29-year-olds.

"Seek help and advice as soon as you notice a problem," suggests Baker. "This isn't only important in terms of getting treatment for your ED, it could also be a symptom of other potentially serious conditions like diabetes or heart disease, if not treated early enough."

**GO TO:** Your doctor or the Sexual Dysfunction Association (0870 774 3571 or [www.sda.uk.net](http://www.sda.uk.net)) for information and advice on all sexual problems.

## HAIR LOSS

TWO-thirds of men will eventually be affected by male pattern baldness, the most common form of hair loss. It cannot be prevented, but there are ways of slowing down the process or disguising the problem.

"Get advice and treatment for your hair loss from your GP or a professionally qualified trichologist," recommends Baker. "You may find your doctor to be neither sympathetic nor helpful because male pattern balding used to be seen as a natural process. But an increasing number of doctors now realise that hair loss can have psychological consequences and will take the problem seriously."

**GO TO:** Your GP or consult the Institute Of Trichologists (08706 070 602 or [www.trichologists.org.uk](http://www.trichologists.org.uk)).

## DEPRESSION

SUICIDE is the single highest killer of young men in the UK, causing even more deaths than testicular cancer.

"GPs need to be more alert to the risk of suicide in their patients," explains Dr Banks. "It's well known that two out of three people who kill themselves will have seen their doctor in the previous four weeks, and nearly 50 per cent will have done so in the week before they kill themselves – presumably in a last desperate bid to get some help."

**GO TO:** The Samaritans (08457 909 090 or [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)) or Depression Alliance (020 7633 0557 or [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)) if your GP is unhelpful.

*"We know that men are generally very reluctant to ask for help... Men also tend to delay going to the doctor far longer than is good for their health"*

# ME&MYHEALTH RICKY GERVAIS

**RICKY** Gervais, 40, was born in Reading. Early dreams of being a scientist led to him to university to study biology. But when he got there, he had second thoughts and did philosophy instead. He also wanted to be a popstar but put that on hold when he found he "couldn't squeeze into the leather trousers". Ricky is best known as the cringe-making office manager David Brent in the multi-award winning comedy series *The Office*.

## How do you feel first thing in the morning?

"Not too bad. Slightly drowsy. Then I wonder, 'Why did I have that last pint?' I'm not a morning person. I hate it when I have to have a 9am meeting. I think, 'Don't be stupid. Let's have it at 1pm. What are you going to lose in those four hours?'"

## What exercise do you take?

"I go jogging about three times a week. Just enough to break into a sweat and make my heart remember what it's meant to do."

## Are you or have you



## ever been overweight?

"I could lose a stone. I'm 13 stone and I'm 5ft 8. At the age of 30, I was 10 stone."

## Do you take vitamin and mineral pills?

"Yeah, I take that Barrocca stuff. Stops me getting flu."

## Do you drink or smoke too much?

"No, I don't smoke at all. I like lager. The standard stuff. I like red but if I'm a bit thirsty then a chilled white. I'm losing all credibility here aren't I?"

## Does your job affect your health?

"No. When we do a programme I have to have a medical. I suppose they want to know if I'm going to live till the end of the series."

## How often do you consult your doctor?

"When I think I'm going to die. If my arm was hanging off I might go."

## Do you catch a cold most winters?

"I usually get it when I've finished a project. My body says – you can be ill now. I'm ill when I can be."

## Do you think you suffer from stress?

"I get stressed. Little things wind me up, like a noisy neighbour. We haven't got any but that sort of thing, or someone with an annoying voice down the pub. Or if they chew their food too loudly."

## Do you look after your skin?

"I don't go to sleep in guacamole or anything but I'll have a facial scrub and then the odd bit of moisturiser after a shave."

## Do you take more care of yourself as the years go by?

"Well I don't smoke any more. When I was younger I did a lot more exercise, smoke and have hamburgers for breakfast and not put on weight. Now I'm older I suppose I should put a lot more effort in."

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## PAYING FOR LONG TERM CARE

As you are probably aware, the government recently made a promise to pay some of the costs relating to Long Term Care. Yet what exactly does that mean in real cash terms and how will it affect you?

In fact, the government has only agreed to pay certain costs relating to nursing care, for example, the time spent by a nurse with the patient etc, whilst the individual is still liable for the residential and personal care costs. This can amount to £18,000 - £30,000 per year, which you would have to pay.

Over the whole of the UK, nearly half a million people are living in residential care and the cost of caring for the growing army of pensioners is predicted to soar to nearly £30 billion by the year 2030.

Women have a one-in-four chance of needing long term care and men a one-in-six chance. Under the Community Care Act 1990, the local council have the right by law to seize the family home, put it up for sale and use the proceeds to support long term care costs. Your home could be under real threat.

At least 70,000 homes were taken last year (200 per day) with £4.3 billion worth of your hard-earned money being used to pay care costs.

How can we avoid these costs? It is illegal to deliberately transfer your own property away to relatives or trusts if your prime motive is to avoid paying for Long Term Care costs. However, it is not illegal for your partner or spouse to make a provision in his or her Will that states upon death their own half share of the family home can be placed in trust for your children or other loved ones instead of passing directly to you. The difference is that you don't own your spouse's or partner's half share in your property, so you cannot be said to be reducing your estate illegally!

THE PROTECTIVE PROPERTY TRUST WILL has been specifically designed for this purpose, allowing the surviving partner to continue living in the home within the trust and allowing your home to be passed on to your loved ones in the fullness of time.

## ENDURING POWERS OF ATTORNEY

Imagine your aged mother was not keeping well and she asked you to go to her bank on her behalf to withdraw a relatively small amount for her shopping requirements. Given this scenario, people just like ourselves are constantly annoyed by banks refusing to make such withdrawals.

Nowadays the bank will require a letter of authorisation from your mother for the transaction. With all the money laundering legislation these days, this will happen more frequently in the future - much more than we can imagine.

Now, consider how your adult son or daughter would get you to sign such a letter to the bank, authorising each financial transaction, if you became physically or mentally unable to manage your own affairs or understand what you were doing? How would your funds and assets be dealt with if you were completely unable to deal with things on a long term basis?

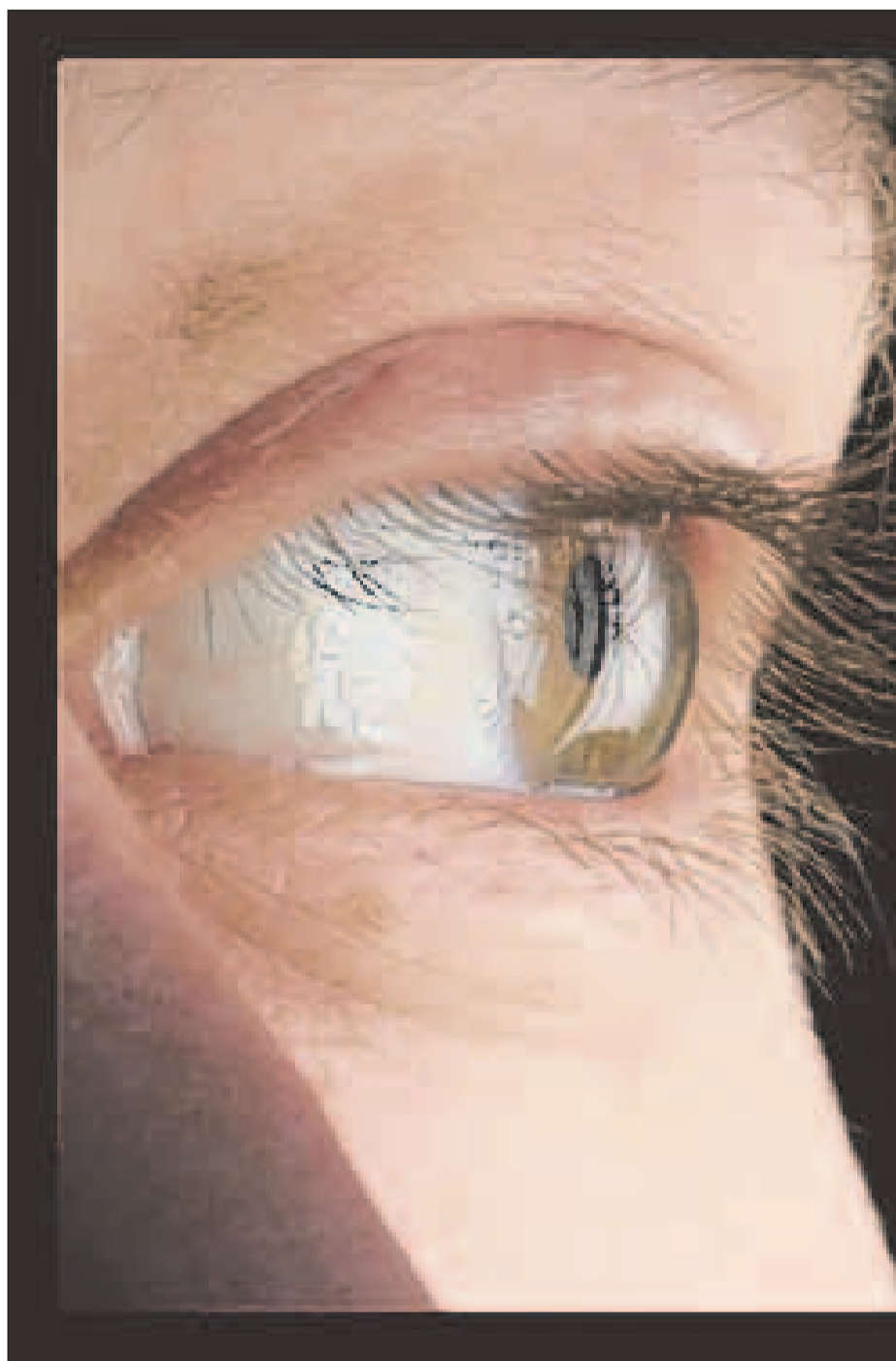
The Enduring Powers of Attorney Act (1985) allows you while capable, to determine who can intervene in your property and financial affairs in the event of your incapacity.

A power of attorney which is to continue in the event of incapacity may be used before capacity is lost, provided that you, the granter, specify that the power is to continue.

As the law relating to Powers of Attorney can seem somewhat confusing, in our opinion, it is in your best interests to discuss these issues with our trained consultants and thereafter, have professional advice and assistance from a suitably qualified member of our legal team in preparing such an important legal document.

# I can see clearly now...

Despite recent criticism of the use of lasers to correct eye conditions, there are thousands of satisfied customers across the North-East. Health Correspondent BARRY NELSON talks to one of them



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**W**ITH sporting stars such as Jonathan Edwards and Sharron Davies endorsing laser eye surgery, and thousands of satisfied customers, there would seem to be no stopping this growing industry.

But many potential customers will have been given food for thought by a recent report by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The independent body, which makes recommendations on whether new health care innovations should be made available through the National Health Service, has decided there is still too little evidence to show its long-term safety for laser eye surgery to be widely used on the NHS.

However, the eye laser industry has taken comfort from the fact that NICE believes that eye laser surgery is effective for people with mild to moderate short-sightedness.

Surgeons who use the state-of-the-art laser technology to correct people's vision said they were "disappointed" by the recommendations by NICE.

NICE made the point that since short-sightedness can be corrected by wearing glasses or contact lenses, subjecting people to any risk linked to surgery was a matter for concern.

Experts from the NICE committee looked at a popular form of eye surgery called LASIK. This procedure involves placing a local anaesthetic into the patient's eye, which remains open throughout the treatment.

It works by cutting a tiny flap in the cor-

ner, the transparent covering over the front of the eye, so the middle of the cornea is exposed. Surgeons then use the laser to take out a small amount of tissue, depending on the degree of correction needed. When the flap is replaced it is held in place by natural suction within the eye.

NICE found that between 63 per cent and 79 per cent of laser eye surgery on mild to moderately short-sighted patients ended in 'normal' vision being restored and their conclusion was that this type of procedure is effective for people in these categories.

However, when it came to people with more serious long or short sightedness, NICE found that the success rate – those patients ending up with 'normal' vision – was between 26 per cent and 36 per cent.

The NICE experts also concluded that there were links between LASIK surgery and complications, ranging from weakened corneas which may require more surgery, infections, glare or a phenomenon which has seen some people see 'halo' effects around objects at night.

Professor Bruce Campbell, who chaired NICE's committee of experts, said: "LASIK offers improvement to people who are moderately short or long-sighted. This is a problem that can easily be corrected by spectacles or contact lenses, so any risk of damage to the eye by LASIK is a real concern." He added, though, that there was "very little information" about how many people who have had LASIK treatment suffer complications or damage to their eyes as a result.

But Christopher Neave, chairman of the

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Steve Parsley is happy to put his glasses aside after laser surgery

Eye Laser Association, which represents private service providers in the UK, said: "We applaud the level of interest and awareness shown by NICE but we do wish to make it clear that, since 1990, some 280,000 people in the UK have been treated and we estimate that fewer than 0.1 per cent have experienced persistent problems."

Sheraz Daya, director of the Centre for Sight at Queen Victoria Hospital in Grinstead, West Sussex, said: "Eight million eyes have been done around the world and we haven't seen any evidence of a public health problem." He said he was concerned that the NICE report would "end up alarming patients."

According to the Ultralase website, another private provider: "There is no evidence to suggest that patients will develop problems a long time after surgery". Records stretching back to the 1960s showed no reports of problems many years after treatment.

The reason why laser surgery is probably not suited to the NHS is the "prohibitive" cost of providing a service which is life-enhancing rather than a medical requirement, according to Ultralase.

Steve Parsley (see case study, above right) had his vision corrected at the Optimax Laser Eye Clinic in Mosley Street, Newcastle. The Newcastle clinic, housed in an imposing former bank, opened in June 1996. Since opening its doors, nearly 8,000 laser eye treatments have been performed.

According to the company website, Optimax claim to be the UK's leading

providers of laser eye treatment, offering a choice of eye correction procedures at "affordable prices".

Founded in 1991, the company has concentrated on providing what they term affordable laser eye treatment. Prices start at £595 per eye and the company offers free credit so customers can spread the cost of treatment.

While some laser companies only offer LASIK, Optimax offers a choice of procedures to suit individual needs. These include Epi-LASEK, for those requiring a lower level of vision correction, implantable contact lenses, cataract treatment or Wavefront LASIK treatment (for patients with irregularly shaped corneas).

● For more information 08705 14 33 14 or visit [www.optimax.co.uk](http://www.optimax.co.uk)

*The most important thing for me was to be able to go for a walk with the kids and see everything properly*

## 'How laser eye surgery changed my life'

**S**TEVE Parsley admits he was feeling pretty anxious as the powerful eye laser began its work with a staccato chatter. "I've always had a thing about anything touching my eyes and I'd never been able to wear contact lenses," said Steve, who had laser surgery on both eyes at the Newcastle Eye Clinic two years ago.

All he could think about was the image in the movie Goldfinger when James Bond is strapped under an industrial laser and there is no way out.

"I'd been assured this was not going to hurt but it still felt like I was staring down the barrels of a shotgun," recalls Steve, who lives in Harrogate.

But after the anaesthetic eye drops and Valium kicked in Steve, 43, reckons the actual 'operation' was all a blur. And within a few days of the procedure he savoured the fact that he could see everything crystal clear for the first time in 20 years.

The only difficulty he remembers having after the operation was the urge to run down the street and tell everybody about the wonders of laser eye surgery – or laser vision correction as the professionals like to call it.

"The change was dramatic. The most important thing for me was to be able to go for a walk with the kids and see everything properly. My son would point out a kestrel

and I could actually see it," says Steve, who works as a press officer for Yorkshire Water. "I saw a big difference with driving although every time I get in the car I still feel that I've forgotten my glasses."

His home life has also changed. Steve used to sit in a particular spot to watch television – now he jokes that he can watch next door's TV.

"Watching and playing sport is another big change. I coach kids for football and it has made a big difference. I can judge distances now and see a football coming."

Steve admits that he was apprehensive before the procedure, but stresses that it doesn't hurt. "It's actually no worse than getting shampoo in your eye. If you have any worries, the clinic's staff will talk you through the theoretical risks involved."

"There is definitely a risk but I was persuaded that the risk was out-weighed by the benefits," says Steve, who would have no qualms about going back and having the same procedure again.

Steve had LASIK surgery, the so-called "flap and zap" method which is said to be less painful and speedier than the more established and cheaper alternative known as PRK.

In layman's terms, LASIK cuts a flap in the front of the eye, which is then lifted and the laser used to alter the curvature of the tissue beneath.



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# Have wheels, will travel

In a society with an ageing population, people sometimes need extra help to maintain their quality of life. IAN LAMMING looks at what is available

*“My electric wheelchair is everything to me, it’s my independence. So if I can’t take it with me, I’m not likely to go*



DAD chairman Gordon Pybus, above, and left with colleagues Lauren Robinson, Garry West, Margaret Langan, Jacki Hiles and Chris Thwaites. Picture: CHRIS WOOD

**M**EDICAL knowledge, wonder drugs and modern diet are key factors in helping us all live longer. But as the population ages and expectations rise, people often need a helping hand.

While our strength, mobility and senses can fail us, the technology and expertise is out there to compensate allowing people to live life to the full in their own homes.

At the forefront of work nationally is Darlington Association on Disability, a charitable organisation formed in 1986, now with over 30 staff and 110 volunteers.

With high profile offices in the heart of Darlington’s Market Place, DAD operates a variety of schemes and is used as a consultancy by organisations such as the council and local health bodies, including the hospital, Primary Care Trust and mental health trust. For example, all Darlington planning applications go through DAD to ensure they are accessible and its staff have been consulted over the designs for the new West Park hospital and Darlington PCT walk-in health centre.

Led by disabled people, DAD exists to promote their rights and ensure they have access to equipment and services. Enter the offices, and rows of electric scooters and wheelchairs hint at what is available.

The Shopmobility scheme, for instance, offers free use of the equipment to allow people to get around the town to shop and attend appointments. One of 250 such schemes nationally and ten in the region, it is used more than 350 times a month by the town’s residents and visitors – 28,000 times since the launch.

“The impact of this shouldn’t be underestimated,” says project co-ordinator Chris Thwaites. “We deal with people who have not left their houses in years but are now able to, thanks to the scheme.”

Row after row of brochures offers a massive array of equipment to help perform the daily routine. Catalogues detail a host of gadgets which help people communicate if they are living with impairments that affect their hearing or sight. There is also advice on accessing interpreting services.

Turn the pages and there are aids to help you get about, eat, see, hear and garden. There is even a talking colour detector.

There is a mass of equipment for people with physical and learning disabilities and DAD exists to guide people to the help they need.

DAD information worker Ann Rowe says that many people living with disabilities enter a health and social care system. “But we are also there for people who are not in the system,” she says. “It could be that peo-

ple are just getting old and suddenly realise it is becoming more difficult to use the toilet, the bath or shower.”

They may need no more than a higher toilet seat, a well-placed grab handle or something to help them get the top off a jam jar. At other times people may simply need a friend, or it could be that their carers need support.

Disability can affect all ages and Darlington also has the DASH scheme. This Darlington After School and Holidays initiative supports disabled children and young people, allowing them access to play and leisure facilities. It also operates a kids’ club.

Dimensions Disability Initiative promotes self-progression helping people to access jobs, education, training and leisure.

The Direct Payments Support Service provides practical assistance to people receiving direct payments in lieu of services from the local authority.

Disability is high on the Government’s agenda and the Disability Discrimination Act aims at ensuring everyone has access to buildings and services. A Disability Bill is also expected to go through Parliament in 2006 placing a legal duty on public bodies to include disabled people in all aspects of life.

DAD chairman Gordon Pybus says: “We are one of the leading independent disability organisations in the country and the work we are doing is spreading nationally. We are starting to be used as a model of good practice and are DDA consultants, which results in meetings with architects, building control staff and planners.

“If you can’t access a service, it is a service denied to you, so we work closely with all organisations to try and stop this happening. My main concern is that if people find it difficult to access services then they won’t bother and will miss out. For instance, my electric wheelchair is everything to me, it’s my independence. So if I can’t take it with me, I’m not likely to go. People need to realise this. Disability is about how you are treated and there’s a lot of work still needed to be done.”

With the ageing population this is a growth area and the more people who realised there is help out there for them, the more there is to be done, he says.

“But with the right help and adaptations, people lead very happy contented lives, independently, in their own homes and out of hospital. In fact, more than that, they can access education, training and employment and put something back into the society which is helping them.”

● DAD is based at 20-22 Horsemarket, Darlington (01325) 489999, minicom 01325 245061.

Don't miss the Health page, every Friday in The Northern Echo



In-depth interviews by Health Correspondent Barry Nelson

**Cancer:** The Facts - a special series  
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**Me and My Health:** celebrities tell us about their lifestyles

# WIN fitness and diet videos



**S**TILL feeling flabby and over-indulged after the festive season? The Housework Workout might be just the thing.

This 60-minute video guarantees a dynamic, high-energy workout that will help shed the pounds and gets you in shape in no time whilst incorporating all your daily housework routines such as hoovering, ironing and dusting.

Whatever your physical ability and fitness level, the Housework Workout is suitable for you. Starting with a 15-minute warm-up, the video moves onto a fat burning section, combining familiar exercises but using

household cleaning objects. This 30-minute aerobic workout is a cardio-vascular and fat burning exercise for all fitness levels. A gentle cool-down follows, with an abdominal workout and stretch to lengthen and strengthen the muscles.

Correct techniques are shown by top exercise instructor Lisa Brockwell – a Reebok Master trainer and personal trainer – ensuring you get the maximum benefit from each exercise and avoid the risk of injury.

Or you can stop the post-Christmas bloat with Dr Gillian McKeith, as the nutrition doctor guides you through her healthy eating plan. In the C4 series You

Are What You Eat, Dr Gillian McKeith changed the lives of some of Britain's worst eaters and now she can change yours too.

In this two DVD package, every step of the journey to better health is detailed through an easy-to-follow series of questionnaires, nutritional information, a list of common ailments, tasty recipes and some gentle exercise, all of which can be tailored to individual needs and levels of fitness.

● **The Housework Workout** (Lace International, rrp. £17.99 DVD/£12.99 VHS); **You Are What You Eat** (Lace International, rrp £19.99 DVD/ £14.99 VHS)

## WIN A COPY

We have ten copies of each of the videos to give away. To stand a chance of winning, just tell us the name of the presenter of C4's You Are What You Eat. Send your entry, together with your name, address and which video you would prefer, to Fitness Videos Competition, NE

Health Magazine, Features, the Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF. The closing date is the end of January.



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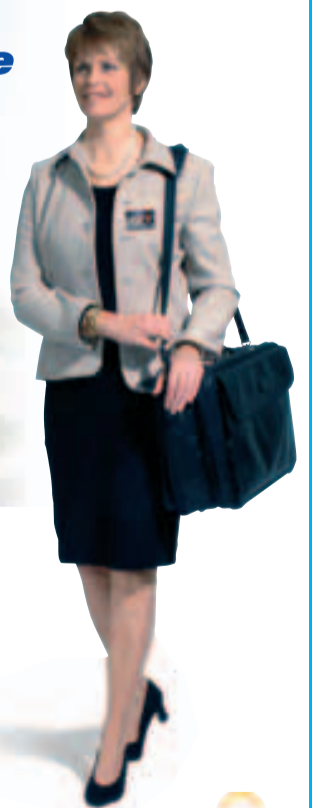
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