

# October Health and Wellbeing Hot Topic

## **2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October Back Care Awareness Week**

Back pain – by this we often mean low back pain – is very common worldwide and difficult to prevent completely. Some estimates claim that around 80% of the population will experience back pain at some point during their lives. However, there are a number of things you can do to reduce the risks of developing disabling back pain.

### **Top 10 tips for back pain**

1. Exercise your back regularly – walking, swimming (especially back stroke) and using exercise bikes are all excellent to strengthen your back muscles but anything that you enjoy and helps you keep active will be beneficial.
2. Keep active and moving even when you have pain. Gentle walking and stretching will prevent stiffness. Also try to avoid long periods of bed rest as this is counterproductive.
3. Always lift and carry objects close to your body, bend your knees and your hips not your back, and never twist and bend at the same time.
4. Try to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle as this will help prevent back pain. Quit smoking as it increases your chances of developing back pain.
5. Use painkillers when pain occurs to allow you to carry on being active. If pain is persistent speak to your GP.
6. Consider your work environment. If you work in an office look at your workspace and ways to adapt it to help you manage your back pain. If your work is more manual in nature, try to be aware of and work according to health and safety procedures such as manual handling or loading procedures.
7. Try to carry items in a rucksack and avoid carrying single sling bags.
8. Always try to maintain good posture. Avoid slumping in your chair, hunching over your desk and walking around with your shoulders hunched up.
9. Always use a chair with a back rest and sit with your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. Don't forget to change your sitting position every few minutes.
10. If you do suffer from back pain caused or made worse by being at work, talk to your employer or your HR department. They may be able to help you come up with adaptations to your work environment, patterns and activities in order to help you better manage your back pain



## **4<sup>th</sup> October World Smile Day**

Sometimes all it takes to make the day better is a smile, whether it's one someone gives to you, or one you share with another. Little acts of kindness can bring a shining smile to someone who has otherwise had a terrible day, and it can change everything that follows.

### **Learn about World Smile Day**

World Smile Day is the perfect day to make others smile while also ensuring you have a smile on your face as well. There are a lot of events that go on around the globe on World Smile Day, all of which have been designed to make people feel happier and to share great moments with others. We see associations, organizations, people, and schools get involved, with many different activities going on that can make a person smile. This includes sending lovely messages to people and giving food to those who need it. Whether it's just a simple compliment, a cheery hello, or a gift of something small to help brighten their day, World Smile Day encourages you to take action to bring a few more smiles into the world.

## 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October Work Life Week

National Work-Life Week, observed from October 7th to 11th, is an annual campaign dedicated to encouraging conversations about wellbeing at work and achieving a healthy work-life balance.

### The Importance of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, including family time, hobbies, and rest. Achieving this balance is essential for several reasons:

**Employee Wellbeing:** A balanced work-life dynamic helps reduce stress and prevent burnout, contributing to overall mental and physical health.

**Productivity:** Employees who are well-rested and have time to recharge are more focused, creative, and efficient at work.

**Job Satisfaction:** When employees feel their personal lives are respected and accommodated, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and loyal to their employers.

**Family Priorities:** Supporting work-life balance allows employees to spend quality time with their families, which is crucial for personal fulfilment and happiness.

### Suggestions for Employers

To recognise National Work-Life Week and promote a healthier balance between work and personal life, employers can implement various initiatives and policies. Here are some ideas:

**Flexible Working Hours:** Allow employees to adjust their working hours to better fit their personal schedules, such as starting or ending the workday earlier or later.

**Remote Work Options:** Provide opportunities for remote work, giving employees the flexibility to work from home and reduce commuting time.

**Family-Friendly Policies:** Implement policies that support parents and caregivers, such as parental leave, childcare support, and the ability to take time off for family emergencies.

**Wellbeing Programs:** Offer wellness programs that promote physical and mental health, including fitness classes, meditation sessions, and stress management workshops.

**Encourage Time Off:** Actively encourage employees to take their full vacation days and provide support for taking short breaks throughout the day.

**Create a Positive Work Environment:** Foster a workplace culture that values and respects personal time, discouraging excessive overtime and promoting regular breaks.

**Recognise Achievements:** Acknowledge and reward employees' hard work and dedication, showing appreciation for their contributions and encouraging a balanced approach to work.

For those interested in exploring more about work-life balance and how to support it in the workplace, the following resources offer valuable insights:

- [Working Families: National Work Life Week](#)
- [CIPD: Work-Life Balance](#)
- [Mind: How to Manage Stress](#)
- [ACAS: Flexible Working](#)



## World Mental Health Day – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**“It is time to prioritise mental health in the workplace”**



Like most awareness days, weeks and months, it throws a spotlight on a topic of great importance. Everyone has mental health – it matters 365 days of the year, but the 10th October is a chance for everyone to unite across the globe to educate and raise awareness of mental health matters.

It encourages everyone to look after their own mental health and those of others through greater understanding and empathy. Organisations often use awareness days to promote and seek support for their services to ensure that people have the help they need.

As we observe World Mental Health Day, it's crucial to shine a light on one of the most pressing issues affecting modern workplaces: burnout. In our fast-paced world, more employees are experiencing chronic stress that leads to burnout.

Burnout doesn't happen overnight. It's gradual and can take hold before you're truly aware of it. It doesn't just affect individual wellbeing; it has far-reaching consequences for organisations too.

We're calling for everyone to take shared responsibility for workplace mental health. From employers to employees, executives to managers, we must unite in educating ourselves and one another to recognise the signs of poor mental health and provide mutual support so that we can create healthier, more resilient workplaces where mental wellbeing is a priority for all. Those with the lowest incomes in a community suffer 1.5 to 3 times more frequently from depression, anxiety, and other common mental illnesses than those with the highest incomes.

By addressing workplace burnout on this World Mental Health Day, we can create a more productive, engaged, and fulfilled workforce. A mentally healthy workplace is a thriving workplace. Let's work together to combat poor mental health and burnout and foster environments where everyone can flourish.

**“It's everyone's responsibility to champion mental health in the workplace.”**

Workplace Mental Health and Training team have developed these helpful resources to encourage and support employers and employees to create a healthy and positive work environment.

- Managing stress and building resilience
- Create a wellbeing plan
- Stress bucket activity
- Conversation guide: talking to someone about mental health

**Please visit the following link for access to the above**

<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/get-involved/mental-health-awareness-days/world-mental-health-day/#:~:text=World%20Mental%20Health%20Day%20is,threat%20to%20people's%20mental%20health.>

## Stoptober-

If you need a bit of motivation to help you along your quitting journey, why not take part in the Stoptober challenge?

Run by the NHS and Public Health England every October, the Stoptober smoking challenge encourages smokers to give up the habit for 28 days. 2.3 million people have made quit attempts since the campaign's launch 10 years ago, making it the nation's biggest quit smoking attempt.



### What is Stoptober?

Stoptober is a 28 day stop smoking challenge that takes place every October. It is based on research that shows if you stop smoking for 28 days then you're five times more likely to stop smoking for good.

[Evidence shows people are 5 times more likely to quit for good if they can make it to at least 28 days smoke free.](#)

### But how does Stoptober work?

The challenge breaks down the quitting process into 28 days, making it more manageable for people looking to kick the habit. People are also encouraged to go through the stop smoking journey with friends, family and like-minded quitters, leading to a better Stoptober success rate than when quitting alone.

How to improve your chance of quitting with Stoptober:

- Write down your reasons to quit
- Use help and support available
- Have a plan to manage cravings
- Don't give up on giving up

Visit [Better Health: quit smoking](#) to find out more on what support is available.

## Go Sober for October

### What is Sober October?

Macmillan Cancer Support is here to do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer in the UK, but we can't do it without you. So we're asking you to get involved in Sober October by going alcohol-free for the month of October, to raise money for people with cancer.

Every penny raised will play a vital role in helping Macmillan Cancer Support fund critical services, so we hope to see you take part in Sober October this year, raising a glass (of something non-alcoholic) to help Macmillan continue supporting people living with cancer.



### Why should I go Sober?

Macmillan Cancer Support are doing whatever it takes to support people living with cancer, but we need your help. By going sober this October, you'll be raising vital funds for Macmillan, so we can continue providing much-needed physical, financial and emotional support to the millions of people living with cancer in the UK. Going sober for October is a small sacrifice that makes a big difference!

### How funds raised for Sober October make a difference

There are [three million people living with cancer](#) in the UK right now and they are counting on us for physical, financial, and emotional support. We know that life with cancer is tougher than ever, so we're doing whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

Since the launch of Sober October in 2014, our amazing Soberheroes have raised over £34million. This incredible amount has made a huge difference to the lives of people with cancer and is helping them to live life as fully as they can.

People living with cancer need Macmillan now more than ever before. We're doing whatever it takes, but without your help we can't support everyone who needs us. That's why we need you to take part in Sober October this year and ditch the booze to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Link to register -

[https://www.gosober.org.uk/users/sign\\_up?\\_gl=1\\*wxkusr\\*\\_up\\*MQ..&gclid=EAlalQobChMliYKP6drsiAMVYpRQBh2AxAmFEAAYASAAEglxT\\_D\\_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.gosober.org.uk/users/sign_up?_gl=1*wxkusr*_up*MQ..&gclid=EAlalQobChMliYKP6drsiAMVYpRQBh2AxAmFEAAYASAAEglxT_D_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds)

## 20<sup>th</sup> October World Osteoporosis Day

World Osteoporosis Day 2024 is a global awareness campaign aimed at highlighting the importance of bone health and raising awareness about osteoporosis, a common but often overlooked condition that weakens bones, making them fragile and more susceptible to fractures. This day serves as a platform to educate individuals about the risk factors, prevention, and management of osteoporosis and encourages people to take action to maintain strong and healthy bones throughout their lives.

### How to get involved with World Osteoporosis Day 2024?

Participating in World Osteoporosis Day allows you to contribute to the promotion of bone health and the prevention of osteoporosis. Here are some meaningful ways to get involved:

- **Spread Awareness:** Share information about osteoporosis, its risk factors, and prevention strategies on social media, blogs, or within your community.
- **Organize Bone Health Events:** Host or participate in bone health awareness events, workshops, or screenings in your area.
- **Encourage Regular Exercise:** Promote physical activity and exercises that support bone health, such as weight-bearing exercises and strength training.
- **Support Osteoporosis Research:** Donate to organizations conducting research on osteoporosis and bone health to advance understanding and treatment options.
- **Advocate for Bone Health:** Advocate for policies and initiatives that prioritize bone health education, especially among older adults.
- **Get a Bone Density Test:** If you're at risk or have concerns about osteoporosis, consider getting a bone density test to assess your bone health.

## World Stroke Day –

Every second 100 billion neurons in our brains are each firing 5-50 messages, each one a vital spark of connection that ignites our unique identity, and writes the story of our life. But when a stroke strikes, that story is changed forever. This year the WSO campaign is drawing its inspiration from the power of our brain's infinite connections, energy and capacity to overcome harnessing it to the emotional power of sport to show that as a team we have the power to be #GreaterThan stroke.

We aim to build a movement inspired and motivated by stories of courage, resilience, inventiveness and hope from our global stroke community. From the survivors who work every day to build back their lives, the caregivers who coach and support, the healthcare teams that race against time to save lives, the rehab specialists who get people moving one step at a time, we will show that we have what it takes to deliver a world free from stroke.

We're calling on our community to help us bring the campaign to life by thinking big and connecting our campaign team to:

- Sports celebrities who have lived experience of stroke
- Sporty survivors and/or caregivers who have used sport/physical activity as part of their rehabilitation, awareness and/or to raise funds
- Inclusive activity leaders/sports coaches/friends who are enabling stroke survivors to follow sporting passions/challenges
- Doctors, nurses and AHPs who are keen sports persons or an unusual sports interest
- National Sports Associations, Local Clubs and Leagues - reach out to them and ask them to share information about stroke and prevention to their members and public using their existing communication networks. (We'll be sharing a template with members and partners soon!)

Look out for our global physical activity challenge that will provide a Call to Action and if you are planning a physical activity event in October, our hope is that you will encourage your local participants to sign-up and log their participation as part of Team #GreaterThan. For more information, please visit <https://www.world-stroke.org/news-and-blog/news/world-stroke-day-2024#>

## Menopause Awareness

Menopause is an important stage during a woman's life as it marks the end of her menstrual cycle and fertility. This occurs when women stop menstruating for 12 months because of reduced oestrogen levels. Usually, it happens once they reach the age of around 50 years old (but there could be a 10 year lead up to this) and includes many physical and emotional changes which may include:

- Night Sweats
- Fatigue
- Memory loss
- Change in sleep patterns
- Headaches



World Menopause Day is held on October 18th every year, and it's an important event organised by the International Menopause Society to raise awareness and educate people about menopause. As our population ages and retires later in life, more people than ever will go through menopause or experience menopause symptoms whilst at work. It's a completely natural stage of life, yet menopause is still a taboo subject in many workplaces, and so many people feel shameful when discussing their symptoms or asking for extra support. According to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), nearly 8 out of 10 of menopausal women are in work. 3 out of 4 women experience symptoms, 1 in 4 could experience serious symptoms.

As employers, there's a significant role to play in supporting menopausal women in the workplace. It's also now your legal obligation to have an awareness of menopause and to provide reasonable adjustments wherever necessary. Let's explore how you can prepare for October 18th by enhancing educating your employees, holding open conversations, and implementing effective policies and support to make your workplace more menopause-friendly.

- Raise awareness and education
- Open conversations about menopause
- Champion menopause and wellbeing
- Provide support where needed



<https://www.fertifa.com/post/world-menopause-day-2024-employer-guide#:~:text=4-World%20Menopause%20Day%202024%3A%20What%20can%20you%20do%20as%20an,year%20by%20following%20these%20tips.>

## National Cholesterol Month

#NationalCholesterolMonth #NCM

Nearly half of UK adults have elevated cholesterol levels, a key risk factor for heart disease.

Our goal this National Cholesterol Month is to raise awareness about cholesterol, empowering people to make informed decisions and take action to lower their high cholesterol, leading to a healthier heart.

Be sure to follow us on social media and sign up for our [e-newsletter](#) to get the latest advice and tips straight to your inbox.



## What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of blood fat which is made in the liver. It's found in some foods too.

We all need some cholesterol in our bodies just to keep us ticking over, but having too much can clog up your arteries and lead to health problems in the future, including heart disease.

By getting a simple cholesterol test and making healthy lifestyle changes, most people can keep their cholesterol levels healthy. A cholesterol check involves a simple blood test. Your healthcare professional should also check another blood fat called triglycerides, as these also affect your heart health.

For more information please visit <https://www.heartuk.org.uk/national-cholesterol-month/NCM24>

## Black History Month

October 1st 2024 marks the beginning of Black History Month, widely regarded as one of the most prominent cultural celebrations of the year. Honouring the contributions made to society by people of Black heritage and their communities, Black History Month is a time to educate and enrich the world with the importance of Black history.



## What is Black History Month?

Black History Month is the annual celebration and commemoration of moments in history, achievements and contributions that Black people have made.

First brought to the UK in the 1980s, Black History Month was initially introduced to the country by a member of the Greater London Council, Akyaaba Addai Sebo. Since 1987, Black History Month has been celebrated annually in the UK, to eradicate discrimination and encourage racial equality.

## Why is Black History Month Important?

Studies revealed that 60% of Black professionals still experience racism in the workplace, so a key motivator behind Black History Month is to highlight how people from such communities have made pivotal contributions to society.

It has also been reported that 25% of people find that assumptions are made about their abilities, character or behaviour due to their race. Such statistics emphasise the importance of Black History Month, as the event brings to light how Black people are both uncredited in our history books and undervalued in the workplace.

Feeling inspired to celebrate this Black History Month? There are many ways you can pay tribute, see our top three ways to celebrate below:

### 1. Raise money for charity

A great way to celebrate is to raise money for a charity that is dedicated to helping people of Black or ethnic minority backgrounds. Hold a bake sale, sponsored bike ride or non-uniform day - the list of possibilities is endless, but all have the moral outcome of raising money for incredible causes.

#### *Prominent charities:*

- [Stop Hate UK](#)
- [UK Black Pride](#)
- [Black Minds Matter](#)
- [Black Lives Matter UK](#)

### 2. Champion Diversity and Tackle Discrimination in Your Workforce

An important way to celebrate is by becoming an advocate for diversity and inclusion. Ensuring that people of different races are treated equally should be a top priority in your business, to tackle discrimination and improve the statistics we discussed earlier.

By addressing racism head-on in the workplace you can be a pivotal figure in decreasing the number of Black people suffering such racial injustices. This Black History Month, consider issuing an inclusion statement, outlining your business' stance on racial equality.

### 3. Hold a Black History Month Event & Book a Speaker

Here at The Motivational Speakers Agency, we have a range of top speakers from Black and ethnic minority communities, each a leading voice on equality. Take a look at our top five Black History Month speakers here:

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

In 2024, more than 360,000 people will be diagnosed with breast cancer. But there is hope. Advancements in early detection methods and support continue to increase the chances of survival. When caught in its earliest, localized stages, the 5-year relative survival rate of breast cancer is 99%.

Early detection—finding cancer before it spreads—is critical. Get our free guide to learn ways to identify breast cancer by being proactive about your breast health in 3 easy steps. - <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-awareness-month/>

Wear It Pink 2024 is an annual event that invites people to wear pink clothing or accessories to show their support for breast cancer awareness and research.

