



Newsletter from the Ridgeway Surgery Patient Group



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RSPG News & Suggestions please for future talks

Your committee has continued to meet regularly with our doctor representatives and Practice Manager. In May we were sorry to say goodbye to Shivani Dhrona, Deputy Practice Manager. She was always a willing supporter of our work and we wish her well in her new job with Harrow Council. In her place we welcomed a new Management Support member of the practice team, Sinthu Ravikumar. We hope to interview Sinthu in a future patient newsletter.

Our regular Health Education talks have continued with the support of Ridgeway staff. A recent one on Women's Health was well attended and led to several patients seeking further advice on these issues. Slides of these talks are always available. Send requests to our email address: rspatientgroup@hotmail.com We need your suggestions for future talks too. Note that our FREE Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation Courses are back. See the poster later in this newsletter and in the surgery. If you are struggling with contacting the surgery online there is help available now. Check out the FREE digital skills course at North Harrow Community Library. Also, see the poster on the next page about our annual fundraising event for Macmillan Cancer. Please contact us by email if you can donate prizes for our raffle.

The national shortage of both GPs and nurses is a matter of concern for all of us. Fortunately Ridgeway has had a stable workforce for some time. Even so, there is a mismatch between patient appointment requests and the number available. Yet, if you saw the Panorama programme of June 13th (still available on Catch up), investigating Britain's biggest GP network of 70 surgeries run on behalf of the NHS by an American based company 'Operose', you will have been thankful for the commitment of all at our practice! Here the most significant recent change is the replacement of Econsult with a new digital programme called Patches. The surgery think that this will prove to be a more user friendly system. It has built in provision for patients who are unable to use online ways of being in touch with the surgery too. Also, do you know that if you need an interpreter or translator or if you are deaf and need a signer the NHS must provide this help for you free of charge? **See the article in:** Healthwatch Harrow Newsletter, June 2022.

Finally, how can we as patients assist those who provide our health and the social care services to learn from our experiences so they can continue to improve and change where necessary? Harrow Healthwatch is looking for residents and professionals to join their Patient Experience Panel (PEP). It meets every month, reviews service user experiences, monitors equality and dignity and discovers leading health trends. **Our voices matter!** Much has already been written about the inequalities which exist within such care. If you are a woman, on a low income or from an ethnic minority background you are more likely to have a worse experience of waiting for care. By joining the PEP you can be a Healthwatch champion for your networks, social groups such as school, place of worship, care home etcetera and you can share what you are hearing about local experiences. This anonymised data is fed into reports which are shared with our service providers to shape change.

To find out more call : 020 3432 2889

or check out info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk

This newsletter has a focus on what we can all do to promote our own health both mental and physical, and we hope that you will find the many links useful.

Are you a Ridgeway patient but not yet a member of Ridgeway Surgery Patients' Group? Click on Patients' Group on the surgery website and complete the form to sign up to RSPG or email us on: rspatientgroup@hotmail.com

Back again! Our Macmillan Coffee Morning 2022

**Please spread the word - we are relying on your support
& donations for our raffle too!**

THE RIDGEWAY SURGERY PATIENT GROUP IS HOSTING
THE MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING
AT ST ALBAN CHURCH OPEN GROUNDS

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- ❖ Meet the Mayor
- ❖ Donate Cakes & Savouries
- ❖ Enjoy a wide selection of delicious cakes and savouries
- ❖ Make a cash donation - All proceeds go to MacMillan Cancer Support
- ❖ Take part in the Raffle Draw and win Amazing Prizes!

Where: St Alban Church, The Ridgeway, HA2 7PF

When: Friday 30 September 2022

Time: 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**PLEASE INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!
ALL WELCOME!**



NEW THIS YEAR: CROCHET ITEMS

**WE HAVE A STALL SELLING HANDMADE BEAUTIFUL
SOFT TOYS AND BLANKETS**



**MACMILLAN'S COFFEE
MORNING IS ONE OF
THE BIGGEST
FUNDRAISING EVENT
TO SUPPORT PEOPLE
LIVING WITH CANCER.**

Surgery Matters

Thank you for being understanding about all the changes at the Ridgeway. We are trying to update our processes and share them all so that they are easier for you.

We are very grateful to the Ridgeway Surgery Patient Group (RSPG) who continue to support us through these changes and remind us if we are overlooking groups of people. We would encourage you all to register with them so that you hear about what is going on and are able to be involved in discussions about changes and join in online the educational events they run.

There are lots of new faces at The Ridgeway, and we have sadly said goodbyes to a few. We have updated the list of names on the website so you can see who does what.

We know that accessing appointments has been challenging with our same day appointment system. On any given week we offer 1500-2000 appointments. We have heard your feedback about difficulties getting through on the phone and about getting follow up from the same clinician, so we are making changes. If your problem is urgent we will make sure a clinician talks to or sees you on the day.

Appointments

Routine appointments:

You will be able to book an appointment for routine matters ahead of time and where possible, with the clinician you choose.

Other appointments:

When you have an appointment for a problem the clinician should make sure that you know how you will be followed up and book your follow up appointment. If you need or want a face-to-face appointment we will make sure you get one.

Our current software, **Patches** is accessed through the surgery website : -

ridgeway-surgery.co.uk.

This saves you trying to get through on the phone. We read and answer these throughout the day. There are many small queries that can be answered quickly via this route and we can use the information to give you an appointment with a clinician. If possible this appointment would be with the person that you have asked for. If you do need to phone, our team will ask you a few questions to make sure you get an appointment with the right person.

Not all problems are best dealt with by a doctor. We have a wide range of clinicians and in particular, our practice pharmacists and nurses are working hard to proactively arrange reviews of those patients with long term conditions such as diabetes and asthma. You will be invited in for these, usually at least once a year in your birthday month. If you have missed out on checks because of lockdown please let us know.

Please do consider whether your problem could be dealt with by our community pharmacies or your dentist.

Please let us know your UpToDate contact details. We know that not everyone finds it easy to use digital or phone access. With your permission a friend or relative can help you order prescriptions and book appointments.

If you cannot use or do not have a smart phone or the internet, and do not have access to help, please let us know. We will make sure that you still get the appointments you need, for example by writing to you or ringing you.

North Harrow Community library is running Free sessions where they can help you learn to use online access for services such as the NHS and banks.

Phone:02080628418 email: **northharrowlibrary@gmail.com**

Ridgeway Surgery Team

Why we need to make Self-care for men 'normal'

We are often encouraged to prioritise productivity over our health and well-being. When we're busy, practising self-care is often treated as an afterthought or an occasional treat, rather than a crucial part of our lives and an important way to stay well. And due to gendered norms, it is often seen as something exclusively for women rather than for everyone - including men.

Self-care describes the actions we take to protect and improve our physical health and psychological health. It can take time and work and is more than simply pampering oneself. It can mean saying 'no' to additional work projects when your workload is too much to handle, or speaking to trusted friends or family when you are struggling with your mental health. It can also mean eating more healthily so you include more fruit and vegetables, going on frequent walks and consulting your doctor when you need to. It can also mean taking time to focus on yourself and the things you enjoy, or establishing a sleep routine.

A gender difference? Although there has been a greater focus on the importance of looking after yourself, research suggests that there are still differences between men and women in who engages in self-care. Psychotherapist Philip Karahassan says "There is a societal pressure for men to 'stay strong' and that is linked to the impression of having everything under control. As a result, men are seen to be weak if they show any vulnerability or feel the need to look after their mental health. They are expected to keep calm and carry on, take it on the chin. This is unrealistic and unhealthy." In a society in which people are expected to work long hours, there is an underlying belief that we must always be productive. Yet this isn't possible when we are being pulled in many different directions and trying to juggle work with personal responsibilities such as childcare. But by taking some time out to engage in forms of self-care, it is possible to relieve some of the pressures off everyday life. This can boost good mental health and help in managing stress, while relieving symptoms of anxiety and low mood. "There has been a stigma among men getting help for their mental health and so more needs to be done to normalise and destigmatise men's mental health needs" says Karahassan. "I think that more needs to be done around the physiology of how mental health leads not only to behavioural change, but also physical change in the brain," he adds. "Men - just as much as everyone else - need to understand that getting help for one's mental health can change us physically as well as mentally and emotionally. " Crucially, self-care should not be thought of as self-indulgence or being selfish. It means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, function well and do the things you want and need to do, while caring for other people too. It is particularly important at the moment, as the pandemic continues to affect our health and well-being.



Just a couple of facts and figures : Normalising self-care among men has never been more important. Do you know that three times as many men as women die by suicide according to the [Mental Health Foundation](#). Men are also less likely to access psychological therapies than women, with only 36% of referrals to : NHS [talking therapies](#) for men.

Taken from: patient.info: Why we need to normalise self-care for men

When can 'procrastinating' or 'putting things off' be healthy?

We have several well known sayings such as 'never put off for tomorrow what you can do today' and 'a stitch in time saves 9' but when is it better to put things off?



When we think about why we put things off we typically think about the factors hindering our motivation. We know that we would be better off getting on with the task in hand yet we delay partly because of fear of failure or becoming easily distracted or because we find it hard to make the effort for something where the efforts will be rewarded too far into the future or maybe not rewarded at all. However, some scientists think that this describes only one type of procrastination because their thinking is that when putting things off is planned and controlled something more positive can be achieved.

Some examples of the 2 different types of procrastination

A student puts off doing their homework because they are worried that they won't get it right. As a result the delay causes them unnecessary stress and they end up rushing close to the deadline and not performing as well as they could have. This is called **passive** procrastination. An alternative is the student who intentionally puts off doing their homework until close to the deadline because they know that they concentrate best under time pressure. Rather than causing them stress, this delay improves the quality of their work. This is called **positive** procrastination.

Overcoming unhelpful procrastination requires us to identify what is causing us to delay unnecessarily before we can start to do something about it and there are lots of factors that could contribute to this gap between how we know we should behave and how we act in reality.

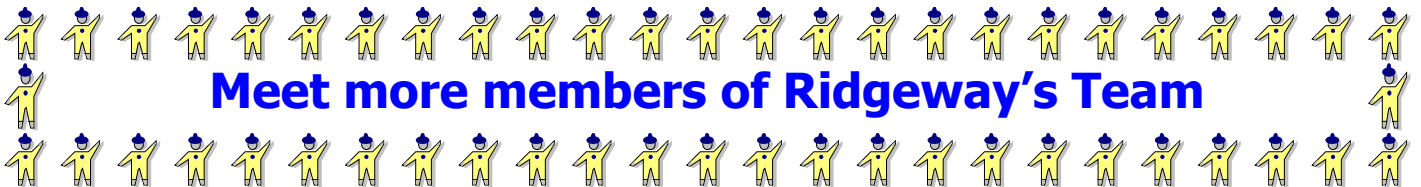
Some of these factors are: -

- **Stress and anxiety:** many studies show a strong link between procrastination and anxiety, particularly exam anxiety.
- **Fear of failure and negative feedback:** these are common demotivators and are also related to low self esteem.
- **Perfectionism:** this is often but not always linked to a fear of under performing.
- **Low mood and depression:** feeling depressed depletes our energy and reduces our motivation.
- **Impulsivity:** putting things off is often impulsive as it can involve failure to plan ahead and think about long term consequences.
- **Distractibility:** becoming easily distracted during a task and using your mobile phone instead is typical!
- **Laziness:** being unwilling to achieve a goal.

- **Lack of energy:** feeling physically tired can also make us less likely to start something that requires effort.

Procrastination is also a widely known symptom of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, the charity Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) emphasises that this form of procrastination is more extreme and cannot be overcome in the same way.

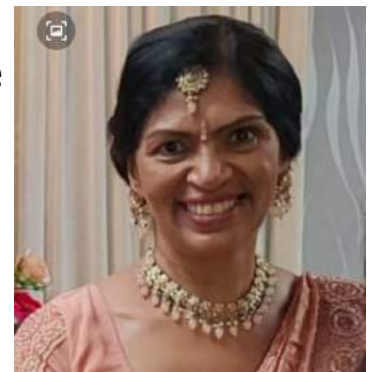
Taken from: <https://patient.info/news-and-features/procrastination-how-not-to-do-it-in-2022>



Meet more members of Ridgeway's Team

Jivi Bhudia joined the team at The Ridgeway 17 years ago at first as one of the receptionists. After a while however she moved upstairs to join the admin section. At present this means dealing with a whole range of patient queries like chasing up discharge letters from the hospital and dealing with other back log issues which have developed as a consequence of the pandemic. She finds her job enjoyable and values being part of a good team at the surgery.

Outside of work keeping fit is important to her so she walks especially in the evening, swims and goes to aqua aerobic classes. Jivi likes to see what is on offer in the shops 'not necessarily to buy' she adds! Her grandchildren, aged 7 and 3½, keep her busy too as she often cares for them after school.



Dr Hetal Doshi joined The Ridgeway 5 years ago. She is in the surgery 2 days each week as she also works in another Harrow practice on 3 days and assists her husband in his fertility work at other times. She qualified in India and did further training there in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. As a GP she sees patients across the age range but her particular interests draw her towards advising on the many advances in effective contraception. Dr Doshi gave an update to patients in one of

our recent Health Education talks. Such interests are not confined to strictly medical matters as domestic violence is an area of concern for her. She also particularly values the ethos of The Ridgeway which she describes as 'open to change'.

Like so many women the move to General Practice was also a lifestyle choice as she and her husband came to the UK with a young family and without the child care support of wider family members. The children are older now (12 and 15), so Dr Doshi has in mind the possibility of extending her knowledge and practice with a hospital placement.

Outside of work and apart from the family the household includes 2 young Shi Tzu puppies who need regular exercise. When time allows Dr Doshi goes to the gym and reads too - with a preference for factual subjects rather than fiction.

Loneliness - one of life's challenges



Loneliness is an issue that can affect us all, young or old, at any point in our lives. We might live in a busy city or a rural location, on our own or with others and still feel isolated. Loneliness has no common cause. Sometimes it can be triggered by a life event or change in situation, or it may not be triggered by anything at all. We all experience feeling lonely in different ways and after Covid many are finding being sociable again is a considerable challenge. Yet there are several ways we can try to overcome loneliness. Identifying the help and support that works for us and bearing in mind that loneliness and difficult feelings can pass too

is really important.

While loneliness is a feeling we can all relate to, sometimes admitting to it is much harder. We want people to talk more openly about feeling lonely and the impact that loneliness can have. Only then can we improve on the ways to deal with it and sometimes it can be easier to reach out to someone else who may be feeling lonely. There are plenty of simple actions we can take to help lift someone out of this state and in so doing, it might help those of us who are struggling to feel less lonely too.

A few tips on how to help ourselves and others

1. Keep in touch with those around you:

Talk to friends and family. Sometimes a friendly chat can make all the difference, whether someone is around the corner or further away. Whether we choose to meet up in person, or chat on the phone, via video calls (especially if we know how to use FaceTime!) or on social media, all contact can remind us that we are not alone. Creating a routine of checking with others and being more sociable can be good as it can make it easier to reach out at the time when we ourselves are feeling lonely. Messaging old friends or colleagues, or setting up a WhatsApp or Messenger group may help them and us to feel more connected.

2. Join an activity based group:

Find a group with a shared interest because being part of a local or online group or a club is a great way to make connections. Think about what you would like to try out and look for groups centred around these.

3. Do things you enjoy :

Filling our times doing more things we enjoy can stop us from focusing on feelings of loneliness and is good for our general wellbeing. Spending time outdoors in green space doing exercise and listening to music, podcasts and radio shows are ways that we can all boost our mood and occupy our minds.

4. Share your feelings but try not to compare:

It's not a good idea to compare ourselves with others and many people may only share the good things happening to them so if we make comparisons this can make us feel even lonelier. We can never be sure what other people are really going through.

5. Help someone else feel connected:

Feeling lonely for a long time can make it harder for people to make new connections. If we are taking the first step to make friendly contact, we have to be aware that others who are feeling this way may find it difficult to respond at first and so patience and kindness from us may well be necessary.

6. Think about making time to volunteer:

It's a great way to meet people and seeing the benefit of our actions can boost our mental wellbeing. Have a look at a couple of suggestions: -

NHS Responders or AGE UK Telephone Befrienders.

Sometimes we may need more targeted help for stress, anxiety or low mood.

See **NHS Mental Health Support Hub** and the **NHS urgent support page.**

Our last Newsletter had lots of information about local green spaces and the volunteers who make them even more inviting. Pinner Village Gardens in particular has been transformed by the '**Friends of Pinner Village Gardens**'. Did you know that they also encourage the health and wellbeing of youngsters on Sunday morning? See the poster below. If you like a range of music, check out 'Save Sunday Music' in **Roxbourne Park**, alternate Sundays 12 to 1.30. For inside activity find out about 'pay as you go' seated exercise called **Abundant Fitness** in **Rayners Lane Baptist Church Hall**.

junior parkrun



Every Sunday at 9am, Pinner Village Gardens holds its weekly junior parkrun. The event is for children between the ages of 4 and 14 though adults are welcome to participate. The course is 2km long and all within the park. For more details or if you wish to help out on the occasional Sunday, visit: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/pinnervillagegardens-juniors/>



Exercise for health

Lockdown changed and continues to change the way we live. Although some people embraced new ways of exercising many people stopped leaving the house, stopped going swimming, no longer attend a gym or do not take as many journeys or steps to work.



There are many studies demonstrating the benefits of moderate exercise (150 minutes a week of something that makes you slightly short of breath- so that you can talk but would struggle to sing and keep in tune). This sort of exercise reduces the chances of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and stroke. Because exercising like this help keeps your weight under control it can also help with other things such as reducing pain from arthritis and improving your mood and mental health.

Many of the national guidelines for treating long term illnesses start off by recommending lifestyle measures such as exercise or looking at your diet. If exercise was a medicine it would be hailed as a miracle- cure!

Most of us know that we need to exercise. Humans are not very good at doing what we need to do. It helps if you can build the exercise into your daily routine so that it becomes a habit. Examples might be to walk to the shop most days to get a paper or milk, or to choose a particular time of day to do stretching exercises. As any of my regular patients know, I walk to work at the start of the day. I know I will be too tired to do anything at the end of the day, and I am a morning person. Walking puts me into a good mood, even if the weather is not great, so my early patients always get the happiest version of me. Other clinicians in the practice take their children out, do tap dancing, compete online on things like Pelotons, do wild swimming and do online or face to face flexibility exercises. It doesn't matter what you do - you just need to find a way to fit it in, build up slowly and choose something that you don't find boring.

There are also studies showing that being sedentary (not moving around) is bad for you. So just moving around a little bit (walking to the kitchen to do the washing up, walking across to the television to change channels instead of using a remote control) helps reduce the risk of illnesses such as heart disease as well as improving your circulation so that you may be less cold or less stiff.

If you are stuck in bed or a chair, there are exercises that you can do :-

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flexibility-exercises/sitting-exercises/>

<https://www.marham.pk/healthblog/17-easy-exercises-to-stay-active-while-bedridden/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/simple-exercises-inactive-adults/>

There are some people who have lost confidence about leaving the house during the pandemic, not just for fear of catching covid, but because when we don't use our muscles they become weaker, and our balance becomes less good. If this has happened to you there may be things we can offer to help. We have nurses who

visit the housebound to see what sort of things are available that might improve your health. If you have been stuck in the house for the whole of the last couple of years, you might benefit from a general review of your health and medication by one of us at the surgery.

Exercising outside, particularly in green spaces, has also been found to be good for our wellbeing. If getting outside is really too difficult, having pots of plants on a balcony or in the house, or even just opening a window, are also helpful.

Harrow offers all sorts of groups supporting exercise.

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/health-leisure/health-walks>
<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/health-leisure/activities-everyone>

Exercise on prescription is available for people whose mobility is limited by arthritis, or who have long term illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension or anxiety and depression. If you think you might be interested ask for an appointment with one of the clinicians at the Ridgeway and we can refer you.

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/health-leisure/exercise-referral>

The local parks have active groups who have tidied them up either as safe and nice places to visit or where you can volunteer to help.

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/environment-parks/commons-greens-open-space>



Local walking groups: Why walk? You already do some basic exercise pretty much every day of your life and that exercise is walking. So why not make the time to do a little bit more on a regular basis and see what a difference it can make to your life? Here are a couple of links from well-respected sources about the benefits of walking

Walking for Health - NHS Choices
Get fit for Free - NHS Choices

'Harrow Health Walks' is a free programme of walks for people who are looking to improve their wellbeing and general health. It also provides opportunities to meet people and explore parts of Harrow that you may not have known existed. You do not need to book in advance, just turn up on the day. The walks are led by qualified leaders who allow you to walk at your own pace. There are thirteen different walks (one on Friday and two on every other day) and they are all different, not just in terms of area and route but also as far as the degree of difficulty is concerned i.e. Easy, Moderate, Moderate-to-Difficult, Difficult. So you see there is something for everyone. You can see more detailed information on: -

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/wellbeingwalks>.

Everybody is welcome to participate regardless of age and fitness level.

We are working with the Public Health Department at Harrow Council and they are in the process of producing an official physical leaflet that we will then be able to distribute amongst all interested patients at Ridgeway Surgery. But in the meantime check out the link above and give it a go on one of the organised walks. Finally please consult your GP before participating in a walk if you have any health concerns.

Dr. Etherington & Peter Wale

**Our Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation courses are back
& they have a new name!**

London Lifesaver Courses

When someone suffers a cardiac arrest, the heart stops. Blood is no longer being pumped around their body and they are clinically dead. The longer they go without what is known as emergency life-support, the harder it is to restart their heart.

The Ridgeway Surgery Patients Group

is organising London Lifesavers Courses

with:

The London Ambulance Service

and

St John Ambulance



We have now run several successful courses with LAS/SJA Community First Responder Trainers. We will be organising more **FREE Sessions** as and when we have enough members to fill the places.

To register your interest in a place, please
either email us at:

rspatientgroup@hotmail.com

Or, leave your name and contact number
in an envelope at reception marked:

"RSPG—London Lifesavers"



12 places per session are available