

April 2020

Let's take a breath ... together we'll get through this



Like many of you, the staff at Mercy Services are doing everything they can to 'Stop the Spread of COVID-19'. We know the safety measures published by NSW Health by heart, as I'm sure you do too.

We must wash our hands; stay at home; cover your cough or sneeze; and wash our hands ... again.

But when we are at home, it is most important to remain connected during a time when we are to be 'socially-distanced'. NSW Health have put out some information on how to improve your mental well-being during this time.

1. Stay connected: keep in touch by phone, social media, or video calls
2. Keep moving: exercise to relieve stress
3. Stick to a routine: keep regular sleeping and eating patterns
4. Switch off: Take a break from the news if it feels overwhelming
5. Reach out: activate your support network

So, I thought I could help you with this list. In this edition of Mercy Matters I've included some helpful information on how to stay active at home as well as some puzzles and recipes.

In relation to Number 3 – keep our routines – I'm hoping you are reading this over your morning or afternoon tea, when you normally read this newsletter.

Item Number 4 - switch off, I think, is essential and the reason for the image above. I thought we could all share a lovely photo with each other. This one is a favourite of mine. My husband took this photo when he was camping last year. Who doesn't enjoy sitting around a fire and sharing stories?

Whilst we cannot come together to do this at the moment, let's instead share our stories and photos using this newsletter.

I invite you to send in a photo that makes you smile and a paragraph explaining that photo. These will be shared in the newsletter and some of them might even make it to our Facebook page. There's only one requirement though ... please do not submit any photos that have people in them. Let's focus on the beauty of nature and our environment. Of course, it can be man-made, like your favourite car, building or bridge – it just can't have people in the photo.

I hope you'll send me your photos so that you can lighten up someone else's day. Together we will get through this troubling time, we just need to take a breath and be kind to each other.

Please send your photos to mercymatters@mercyservices.org.au or text them to 0418 230 498 with an explanation. If you would like assistance sending in your photo, please ask one of our staff to email your photo for you.

Cynthia Mulholland
Editor, Mercy Matters

Happy St Patrick's Day!

What a day, and who knew it was going to be our last one for a while. St Patrick's Day was celebrated a little early this year at the Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre and we're so pleased they did.

On Thursday, 12 March The Red River Roosters performed to a full room and everyone enjoyed a wonderful meal of Irish stew and topped off with green jelly! There was singing, dancing, costumes and great food. Who could ask for more?!

A most valuable and rare prize was handed out for the best dressed ... a roll of toilet paper! Very welcome indeed.



Farewell Sr Kay

In March we farewelled Sr Kay Sheridan from the Board of Mercy Services.

Sr Kay was a long-time member and her input, enthusiasm and dedication will be missed by all.

The role of a Board Member of Mercy Services is an important one and to carry out these duties for a number of years is quite an achievement.

We wish Sr Kay all the best for her future endeavours and thank her from the bottom of hearts for her contribution.

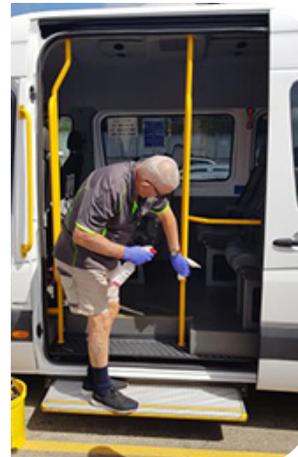
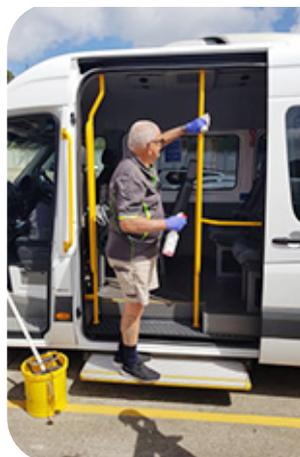


Looking out for your health

Community Transport is doing everything they can to ensure they can still deliver the same wonderful service to their clients. This has meant a few changes, but they are very welcome.

Cleaning has become more and more important lately. Whilst we always prided ourselves on our cleanliness, we are now stepping it up and disinfecting all the hard surfaces to protect your health.

As you can see in the two photos below (left and right) our bus is regularly cleaned. The centre photo shows that Auto Electrician installing power outlets so that we can plug in fridges to transport food for our Meals on Wheels clients as well as any grocery run. Never before has our community transport service been so important in keeping clients safe and connected.



"In all our work we strive to provide compassionate, respectful, high quality and environmentally sustainable practices."

Part of Mercy Services Mission Statement



Mercy Services Singleton is staying in touch

When the staff at Mercy Services Singleton realised that residents would not be able to have visitors for a while, they jumped into action! A letter campaign was quickly shared on Facebook with a great response from people far and wide. The staff have asked the global community to send a letter or a postcard to the residents of Mercy Services Singleton to brighten their day. A 'Go Live' session is now running every afternoon on their Facebook page where they share some of the letters that have come in. To follow them on Facebook, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MercyServicesSingleton/>

In addition to that, they have set up a 'Mercy Singleton Virtual Visiting' roster. Friends and relatives can book a time when they can visit via Facetime, WhatsApp or Messenger, just visit <https://mercyservicesingleton.simplybook.me/v2/> to register.

Paul, the Koala, is recovering nicely

You may recall that in the last edition of Mercy Matters we reported that the Holyoake Women's Group have sponsored Paul, the Koala, that was affected by the bushfires in the Port Macquarie area late last year.

Well, an update on Paul has been received from the Port Macquarie Sanctuary and Paul is recovering nicely.

Paul is still in the Sanctuary and is healing very well and becoming more handsome each day. Paul has his appetite back and is eating well and getting on with all his other koala friends. Paul will not be set free at this time as the Sanctuary is waiting for his habitat to renew itself. There has been quite a bit of rain in the area and that is helping things grow.



Pumpkin and Bacon Pasta

Ingredients

275g spaghetti
350g butternut pumpkin, peeled
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 middle bacon rashers, trimmed, thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups course fresh breadcrumbs
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan
1 tablespoon capers
1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves



1. Cook pasta following packet directions. Drain, reserving 1/3 cup cooking water. Return pasta to pan. Cover to keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, using a vegetable peeler, peel the pumpkin into thin ribbons. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add bacon. Cook for 5 minutes or until golden. Drain on paper towel. Add pumpkin to pan. Cook for 2 minutes or until just tender. Transfer to a bowl. Cover to keep warm.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add 2 tablespoons of remaining oil to pan. Add the breadcrumbs. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 to 2 minutes. Add garlic and oregano. Cook, stirring occasionally, for a further 3 to 4 minutes or until golden and crispy. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
4. Add pasta, reserved cooking water, parmesan, capers, parsley, bacon, pumpkin and remaining oil to pan. Season with salt and pepper. Gently toss to combine. Heat over low heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until heated through. Divide among serving bowls. Sprinkle with garlic crumbs. Serve.

Cornflake and Honey Cookies

Ingredients

150g butter, chopped
1/2 cup honey
1 2/3 cups self-raising flour, sifted
2 cups corflakes



1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper.
2. Combine butter and honey in a small saucepan over low heat. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until melted.
3. Combine flour and cornflakes in a bowl. Add butter mixture. Stir to combine. Roll level tablespoons of mixture into balls. Place balls, 4cm apart, on prepared trays. Flatten slightly. Bake for 10 minutes, swapping trays halfway through cooking, or until golden. Cool on trays for 5 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store between layers of baking paper in an airtight container.

"We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well."

Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy

Activity page to keep the mind active

Zoo Animals



It's important to keep the mind active, so please enjoy these fun activities.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the names of the different animals from the word list in the letter grid below. To find them all you will have to look in every direction, including backwards and diagonally. Good luck!

ALLIGATOR	L K R O T A G I L L A S A L A O K
CAMEL	Y Z U G E U Z R P E J P B K V F L
ELEPHANT	K F G H C C G N C V Y W A G O K U
FLAMINGO	S M O P X P E E O A I N M N O G H
GIRAFFE	I B R O D K L T E I G M A F D P C
GORILLA	P C I G I C N V N A L K E F S A M
HIPPO	O B L H R A V Z R Y K I R O V O O
KANGAROO	L C L I H A Y O J U T C O P N U G
KOALA	A O A P I T O U C A N R E K F H N
LION	R A E P N I Z E B R A L E N H M I
	B L M O O G J S C G I Y R I I H M
	E U A N Y E M A I C P P D U X K A
	A C I Y Q R M R A J I W D G L Y L
	R A X A D E A N Y F H G T N D P F
	F S F Y L F J P L L T M F E X A U
	R V W M F J H Z U W W F P P P H Q
	R K A E J O S B N S Y U W S E A L



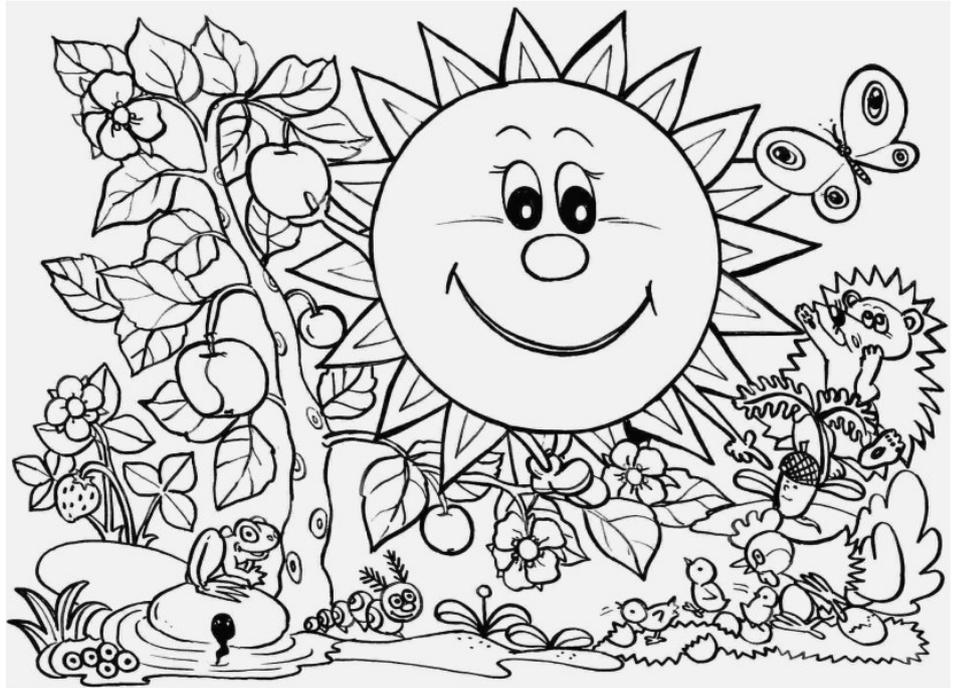
- | | |
|------------|--------|
| MONKEY | RHINO |
| PANDA | SEAL |
| PELICAN | TIGER |
| PENGUIN | TOUCAN |
| POLAR BEAR | ZEBRA |

FINISH

See if you can start at the bottom and find your way to the top.

START

Find a Word Solution



9 Exercises to Improve Strength and Balance

We know it's important to exercise regularly. To help you keep doing that while at home, here are some exercises you can do at home that will improve your balance and strength.

Exercise 1: Single Limb Stance

It's best to start off with a simple balance exercise for seniors. Here's how you do this one: stand behind a steady, solid chair (not one with wheels), and hold on to the back of it. Lift up your right foot and balance on your left foot. Hold that position for as long as you can, then switch feet.

The goal should be to stand on one foot without holding onto the chair and hold that pose for up to a minute.

Exercise 2: Walking Heel to Toe

You might read this and wonder, "How is walking an exercise to improve balance?" This exercise makes your legs stronger, which enables you to walk without falling.

Put your right foot in front of your left foot so that the heel of your right foot touches the top of the toes of your left foot. Move your left foot in front of your right, putting your weight on your heel. Then, shift your weight to your toes. Repeat the step with your left foot. Walk this way for 20 steps.

Exercise 3: Rock the Boat

Stand with your feet apart, so that the space between them is the same width as your hips. Make sure both feet are pressed into the ground firmly. Stand straight, with your head level. Then, transfer your weight to your right foot and slowly lift your left leg off the ground. Hold that position for as long as possible (but no more than 30 seconds).

Slowly put your foot back onto the ground, then transfer your weight to that foot. Slowly lift your opposite leg. Start by doing this exercise for balance five times per side, then work your way up to more repetitions.

Exercise 4: Clock Reach

You'll need a chair for this exercise.

Imagine that you are standing in the centre of a clock. The number 12 is directly in front of you and the number 6 is directly behind you. Hold the chair with your left hand.

Lift your right leg and extend your right arm so it's pointing to the number 12. Next, point your arm towards the number three, and finally, point it behind you at the number 6. Bring your arm back to the number three, and then to the number 12. Look straight ahead the whole time.

Repeat this exercise twice per side.

Exercise 5: Back Leg Raises

This strength training exercise for seniors makes your bottom and your lower back stronger.

Stand behind a chair. Slowly lift your right leg straight back – don't bend your knees or point your toes. Hold that position for one second, then gently bring your leg back down. Repeat this ten to 15 times per leg.

Exercise 6: Single Limb Stance with Arm

This balance exercise for seniors improves your physical coordination.

Stand with your feet together and arms at your side next to a chair. Lift your left hand over your head. Then, slowly raise your left foot off the floor. Hold that position for ten seconds. Repeat the same action on the right side.

Exercise 7: Side Leg Raise

You'll need a chair for this exercise to improve balance.

Stand behind the chair with your feet slightly apart. Slowly lift your right leg to the side. Keep your back straight, your toe facing forward, and stare straight ahead. Lower your right leg slowly. Repeat this exercise ten to 15 times per leg.

Exercise 8: Balancing Wand

This balance exercise for seniors can be performed while seated. You'll need a cane or some kind of stick. A broomstick works well for this – just remove the broom's head before you start.

Hold the bottom of the stick so that it's flat on the palm of your hand. The goal of this exercise is to keep the stick upright for as long as possible. Change hands so that you work on your balance skills on both sides of your body.

Exercise 9: Wall Pushups

As long as you've got a wall, you can do this strength training exercise.

Stand an arm's length in front of a wall that doesn't have any paintings, decorations, windows or doors. Lean forward slightly and put your palms flat on the wall at the height and width of your shoulders. Keep your feet planted as you slowly bring your body towards the wall. Gently push yourself back so that your arms are straight. Do twenty of these.

"A good beginning is of great importance. You must waste some time with visitors."

Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy



Autumn in the Garden

The change of seasons from Summer to Autumn is welcomed by gardeners and the garden alike! The sun begins to lose its intensity, while tropical storms and hot, drying winds subside. As the days become mild and mellow it the perfect time for restoring the garden back to its best.

Planting

If you have a flower garden, now is the time to plant flowering bulbs like daffodil, jonquil, freesia, ranunculus, anemone, crocus, hyacinth and muscari (grape hyacinth).

Pansies, viola, polyanthus, primular, primrose and cineraria can also be planted.

This is also the time to plant Australian natives such as native heath (correa), bottlebrush (callistemon), banksia, lillypilly, gum tree (eucalypt) and grevillea.

South African protea, leucadendron, lecospermum and serruria as well as evergreen trees and shrubs such as camellia, azalea, rhododendron, magnolia, michelia and pieris also prefer this time to be planted.

Vegetables can also be planted at this time of the year. Strawberries winter lettuce, onion, spinach, radish, broad bean, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, broccolini and pakchoy can all be planted in Autumn.

Feeding

An application of plant food now will not only give plants a boost after Summer's harsh conditions, but will help them build up strength to survive Winter's chill.

Garden beds and lawns can be fertilised and given some care over the next few months.

Pruning

Prune back or 'dead-head' (remove dead flowers) roses to promote a final autumnal flush of blooms.

Pelargoniums and fuchsias can be cut back by about two-thirds, while herbaceous perennials that have finished flowering can be cut down.

Now is also the time to trim the evergreen shrubs that need tidying.

Remember, while we are social-distancing and staying at home, gardening is a perfect opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while staying safe.

Information courtesy of Scotts Australia.



SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD.

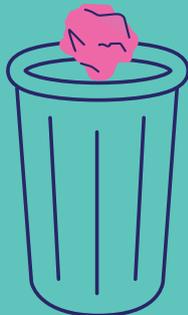
Cough or sneeze into your arm



Use a tissue



Bin the tissue



Wash your hands



TOGETHER WE CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD AND STAY HEALTHY.

For more information about **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** visit **health.gov.au**



Australian Government

Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra

*"We can never say 'it is enough'."
Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy*