

WELLBEING

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# OUR LOCKDOWN ADVENTURE

WITH LIGHT NOW AT THE END OF A VERY LONG LOCKDOWN TUNNEL, **VICKI-MARIE COSSAR** ASKS FOUR EXTREME ADVENTURERS HOW THEY'VE DRAWN ON THEIR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES TO GET THROUGH IT



Your Mental Health and Wellbeing has never been so fundamental than now, during these unprecedented times.

Working with an emphasis on anxiety, stress, mindset and resilience. Once addressed this will help enhance both your personal and business life.

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**'HABIT IS LIFE-SAVING IN EXTREME CONDITIONS'**

Polar adventurer Jenny Wordsworth, has completed some of the most arduous events in the world. 'When I complete a challenge, I change in ways I never could have anticipated,' she says. 'Neither success nor failure is absolute, and I focus more on the experience and opportunity.' Jenny first attempted to ski 750 miles solo and unassisted from Antarctica to the South Pole in 2018, but she had to be medically evacuated. She recently completed the challenge, but suffered from polar thigh (painful ulcers that open in the cold). 'I was alone for 44 days and after a fall 200 miles from the end, I felt and heard my skin split and the ulcers at the top of my inner thigh join up to my knee,' she says. 'I made it to the pole, but missed the world record by a few days and was in agony. At the beginning of any adventure, you feel excitement and trepidation and there's lots of support, a bit like the beginning of lockdown. Now, we're all struggling to maintain the discipline that got us this far. It's a long journey and we don't know when it will end. During my challenges, I stick to a very strict routine (habit is life-saving in extreme conditions) and I have done the same for lockdown. People underestimate routine, but it helps you stay focused.'



Long haul: Jenny has skied 750 miles from Antarctica to the South Pole

**'WE'RE NOT DESIGNED TO BE AT HOME ALONE'**

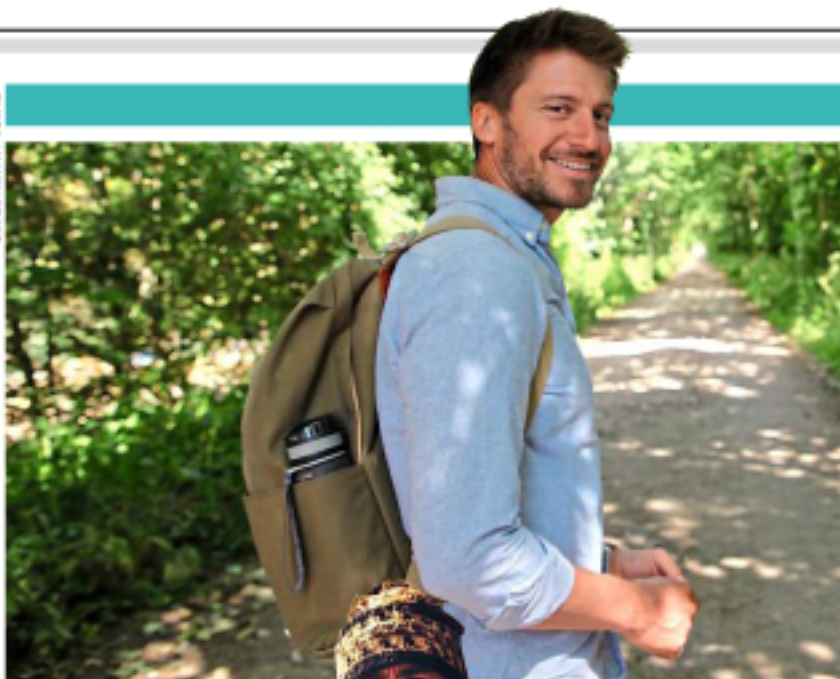


Peak fitness: Hiking the highest peaks has done wonders for Harrison's mental health

Harrison Ward is an outdoors man and mental health speaker. He has been sober for four years and completely turned his life around from a time when he was once a 22 stone alcoholic. These days, you'll mostly find him hiking the highest peaks in the Lake District and camping in the wild. His passion for cooking outdoors has also enticed a huge Instagram following. 'I was using alcohol to clear my mind of dark thoughts,' he says. 'I thought it was my medication, but it was actually my poison. That first fell was the start of a new fitness journey and I'm now seven stone lighter, sober and smoke-free.' Harrison describes lockdown as



his 'biggest temptation' to date to drink. 'As humans, we're not designed to be at home alone,' he adds. 'We belong outdoors with others. I'm sure a lot of people are using alcohol as a means to survive. It's a vice, I'm by no means a preacher, but if it's starting to have an effect on daily life and other people, then it's time to reassess. Try and get outside of your four walls and find a passion that ignites a new addiction in you. I'm a big fan of ecotherapy, the endorphin boost from being outside is essential to both physical and mental health.'



**'TO HELP WITH THE LAST LEG, SET YOURSELF TASKS'**

Rob Bell is an adventurer who loves to push his physical and emotional limits. He has experienced every environment the world has to offer, and because of the challenges he's faced, he has developed mental and physical resilience. From canoeing remote waters of Canada, to rallying through the Sahara, and trekking in the Arctic, he's also completed seven marathons, on seven continents, in seven days. 'The first marathon in Antarctica was incredibly special and a bit surreal,' he says. 'By the fourth, I felt demotivated and disheartened. That's a big parallel with what's going on at the moment. When the virus first hit, it was lovely to spend time at home, but now it's getting a bit tiresome. In every tough situation I've been in, I try to focus on how it will feel when it's over. It can be very easy to get overwhelmed by the immediate hardship, but by visualising the positives, like hugging family, or watching a sporting event, that will come at the end, it gives me the motivation to keep slogging it out. Visualisation is a powerful thing. To help with the last leg, try setting yourself tasks. I've completely renovated my back garden and I've learnt new songs on the piano. I dip into these projects when I'm bored and visualise entertaining friends and playing them music when this is over.'



Super-focused: Rob has run seven marathons in seven days

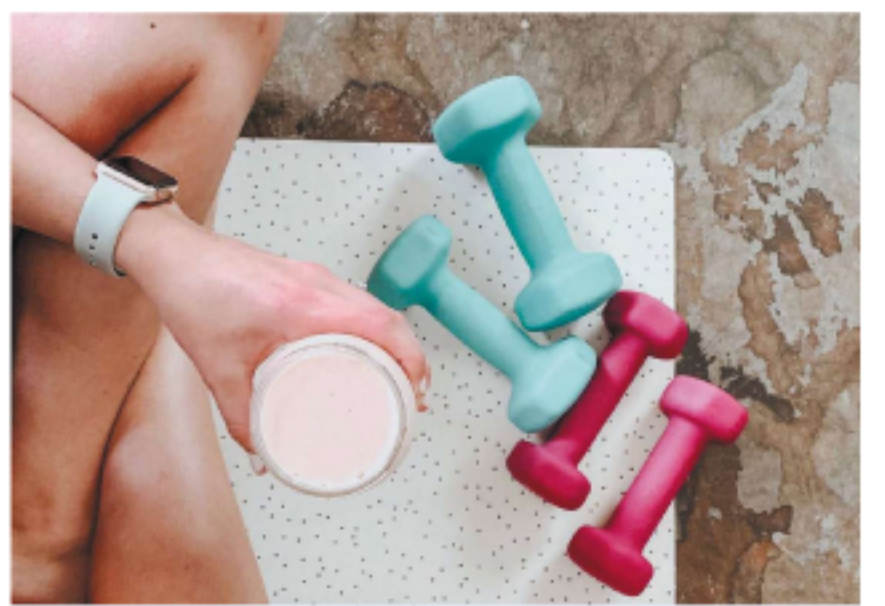
**'MY 100M RULE: FOCUS ON THE NOW'**



Stay connected: Former Royal Marines Commando Ian says humour is a great tool

Explorer Ian Finch, a former Royal Marines Commando, has been travelling to remote environments for ten years. 'I did a 69-day canoe descent of the Yukon River in Alaska that spanned 2,000 miles,' he says. 'We would paddle for eight to nine hours a day then sleep in the middle of the river on a remote island, so isolation is nothing new to me. When I'm on an extreme expedition, I try to find my own safe space. It's not often you can be in a place and find real quietness from the barrage of external stimulation in today's world. On expedition, I came up with the idea of a 100m rule. This means focusing on the present moment, the next 100m. That could also be one day, or one week. Just try to be the best you can during that time and don't look any further ahead. Humour in adversity is also a great tool. Quite a lot of the time on expeditions, weather, tiredness and other factors tend to grind away at your soul, so being able to find humour in any given situation can instantly change the energy. It's important to have a strong network around you and while Zoom and Houseparty have become a bit tiresome of late, it's so important to stay connected. Don't underestimate the importance of contact, so keep those bonds strong.'

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