

**TRENDS** STYLE // WELLBEING // CELEBRITY

**CAN'T GET TO THE GYM? TONE UP YOUR LEGS WITH THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVENLY GOOD HEALTH, SAYS AMY DAWSON**

IF THE StairMaster summons neon-tinted visions of retro sweatbands and leg-warmers for you, think again. Stair climbers and stair-based workouts are back in vogue this year, and they are a great thigh-toning solution for isolated times.

Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Jennifer Aniston and Adele are among the fans of the Rise Nation workout (risenationco.com), where experienced climbers can reach a summit of up to 6,000 feet in a 30-minute session on a Versaclimber machine. Beginners start climbing anything from 700 to 2,500 feet.

The good news is, you don't need to push yourself quite that hard to reach dizzy new heights of fitness. You can also use the stairs in your house, block of flats or office.

'Climbing stairs is a fantastic way of increasing your heart rate and pushing harder than walking without increasing the impact through your joints,' says wellbeing expert Harry Jameson. 'You'll get strengthening benefits as well as cardio, and it tones the whole leg - the quads [front of your thighs] and glutes [buttocks] in particular. Going down stairs can be more challenging than going up, especially on the quads.'

While stairs are a convenient way to stay fit, it's important to be mindful of falling and to not overdo it.

'You must be cautious, especially if you're running down stairs,' says Jameson. 'If you are doing repeated intervals, it's a good idea to run up and walk down, making the downward section into an active recovery.'

When out and about, choosing the stairs rather than the lift or escalator just a few times a day is worth the effort. Researchers at Ulster University found that women who climbed stairs for

just six minutes a day gained cardio fitness and slashed cholesterol levels by up to 15 per cent in just over six weeks.

Because you can easily integrate stair-climbing into your working day, it's a lot easier to commit to than many other fitness activities. Ramp up the challenge with the StepJockey app (stepjockey.com, free on Android or iPhone), which links to QR code 'smart signs' on 15,000 staircases worldwide to give you the height and calorie-burn for each.

While calorie expenditure varies from person to person, it estimates you'll use up 11 calories every 60 steps.

You can take on challenges or link up to compete with others. So, are you ready to take your elevation to another station? Here's how...



**Climbing high:** Rosie Huntington-Whiteley



**Rise and shine:** Jennifer Aniston

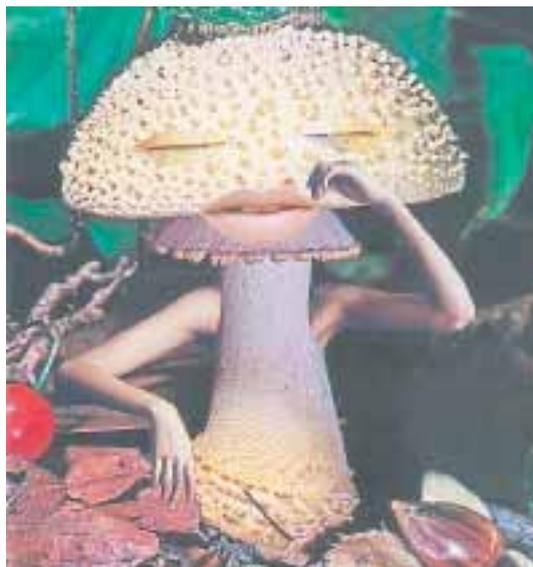
# STEP UP YOUR ISOLATION



**HARRY'S HIGHWAY TO FITNESS**

**TAKE STAIR-CLIMBING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

- 'Everyone's access to stairs is going to be different so it's best to think about it in terms of time and your personal effort levels, not the number of flights.'
- 'If you go at a steady state [giving it around 50 per cent of your maximum effort, which will vary from person to person] try to walk or jog up and down the stairs for between half an hour and an hour.'
- 'But if you are able to increase the intensity, you can lower the time. For example, if you feel ready for faster intervals [pushing towards 70 to 80 per cent of your maximum effort], you could aim for one minute of work, followed by one minute of rest, for 25 minutes.'
- 'If you're really getting into it, a weighted vest will add extra load to your legs and make the cardio more challenging.'



**Shroom with a view:** Somerset House staged a fungi exhibition

## Mushroom for improvement

TURN TO FUNGI TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY - AND YOUR SKIN

SOME are deadly poisonous, some make us hallucinate and some glow in the dark. We're talking about mushrooms - the immune-boosters that are having a real moment in the wellness world. So much so, they've even been the subject of a recent exhibition at London's Somerset House - Mushrooms: The Art, Design And Future Of Fungi.

These humble superfoods can - like humans - create vitamin D through exposure to sunlight. Some experts even suggest we put them outside for an hour or two before we cook them.

'Mushrooms are a rare, plant-based source of edible vitamin D for vegans,' says nutritionist Dale Pinnock, aka The Medicinal Chef. 'The most exciting things are the polysaccharides they contain. What the vast number of clinical trials have shown is that these polysaccharides can increase the number of specific white blood cells supporting immunity.'

In short, tucking into mushrooms (as part of a broad and balanced diet) can help us stay well. Some edible varieties

are known as 'functional mushrooms,' with powerful health-boosting potential. The lion's mane mushroom, for example, is thought to improve cognitive and heart health.

Functional mushrooms are, however, often expensive or hard to come by, and some don't taste amazing, so some mushroom devotees take a supplement. Mushroom teas, tinctures and, inevitably, lattes are all increasingly popular.

'I take mushroom capsules daily,' says Pinnock. 'The coffees, well, for me the jury is still out!'

With celebs such as Brie Larson and Kelly Brook (above) partial to a spot of mushroom foraging, the pastime is also on

the rise. For many, it's not just a food-gathering mission, it's an opportunity to switch off and reconnect with nature.

'I've definitely seen a growing interest in fungi,' says Fergus Drennan, aka Fergus The Forager, who runs fungi courses. 'The slow, methodical walk among trees and other lovely spaces, with senses alert, thoughts focused on the task at hand - it's mindful and grounding.'

Even the beauty world is going wild for fungi. 'There's a line of thought that mushroom extracts could be good for boosting hydration,' says cosmetic doctor Rekha Tailor. 'With anti-inflammatory properties, mushroom-derived ingredients are also said to improve acne, rosacea and eczema. They are also rich in vitamin D, selenium and antioxidants that protect your skin against wrinkles.' **AD**

