An insight into Lock down Life… Fitness, Mental Health & More

Wen Hooker
HR Executive

This month Jo has shared some amazing insights into how she has found ways to work through the challenges faced throughout lockdown and how sharing this with the team has allowed them to improve their well-being and mental health throughout this difficult time.

The Amazing team at 12x3, a popular Boxing Gym located near our London Office, have given us some great advice, sharing their expertise, knowledge and passion for mental health and well-being and explain how their passion for Boxing has allowed them to cope in these unprecedented times.

Thank you so much Jo for sharing this with us!

Lockdown and Mental Health:

1 in 4 people will suffer some form of mental health issue every year (Mind,2020). Social isolation, loneliness, sudden drastic changes in life, not to mention the big traumatic events that can hit anyone at anytime can all trigger depression and anxiety. The COVID Pandemic is unique in the fact that everyone of us will have been touched by it in a significant way regardless of whether or not you have experienced the virus first hand or know someone who has. Lockdown even for those of us who have been lucky enough to maintain our jobs, will have affected and changed our lives in a sudden and drastic way and still is impacting us daily.

There are of course positives, a chance to reflect on your priorities in life and perhaps if lucky more time with the immediate family, for example. However, the lack of human contact, being isolated from family and friends, the need for multiple hats, I.e. Employee, School Teacher (I have so much respect for this profession now! LOL), shopping for vulnerable relatives, the removal of freedom of movement and the ability to immerse ourselves in whatever coping mechanism we have to reduce the stresses of life, such as Friday night drinks or a workout in the local gym will be taking there toll. And as life slowly gets back to normal, we'll have to adjust to more changes like eventually going back to the office. I imagine that during this transition many of us will experience anxiety like that 'back to School' feeling.

'Exercise is the most potent and underutilized antidepressant'

When they first announced Lockdown apart from the shock of it all, having suffered from depression in my past and coming from a family that also experiences anxiety I immediately knew that I would need to prioritise my mental health. Being self-aware, I know my triggers well and navigating the changes in the World due to COVID, was for me going to contain a mind field of them. I don't come from a family that is active or into sport of any kind, but I was lucky enough to come across a Teacher in my Teens, who introduced me to exercise as a form of coping with depression. Since that day I have always been an avid fan of keeping fit, in one form or another, Dancing, Swimming, going to the Gym, Running. You name it I've done it and it's helped no end to me maintaining a positive attitude towards life.

"Get fighting fit without getting hit" *@jimmymacjnr*

https://instagram.com/jimmymacjnr?igshid=1ft3aw1hhwqn4

When I joined APG just over 2 years ago, a group of us started going to 12x3 a boxing Gym based in Paddington and Aldgate, in London https://www.12x3gym.co.uk/ . I immediately fell in love with Boxing as a form of fitness/stress relief and the gym became like a second home. All of the Instructors are at the top of their game and there is always such an incredible buzz about the place. When Lockdown hit one of my first thoughts was:

'how am I going to get my 12X3 fix?' and when they announced closure 'OMG how are all the Instructors and the Team going to survive without their livelihood'.

Enter Instagram, something I'd never thought I'd sign up to, as I'm not a Social Media fan. However, right from the get go, 12X3 used this platform to bring us free daily half hour work outs with all our favorite Coaches and it became a lifeline. Since then I have roped in many of the APG Team, family members and friends and together with the Coaches, it started to evolve into a Community, regularly arranging early morning meet ups on Zoom to workout together and additional APG private sessions where I was able to introduce 12x3 to the team. Giving us the human interaction we were missing, motivating us to get out of bed in the morning and the much needed endorphins that exercise can bring. You will now see me regularly posting on Insta to motivate this little Community into keeping the good work up and bringing the team closer together, which works two fold, as it keeps me going too.

Jimmy Mac - 12x3 Coach

If you are interested in joining any of the 12x3 online classes or Live Zoom workouts, please get in touch with Jo! For further information, visit their website!

https://www.12x3gym.co.uk/%20

Boxing Gym London | Boxing Classes | 12x3 Gym

www.12x3gym.co.uk

12x3 Boxing Gym in London, offering boxing classes and one to one training by Boxers. The best total body workout at a friendly, boutique boxing gym.

Mental Health & Well-being

Another off shoot of the 12x3 classes for the APG Team has been the introduction of these twice weekly classes, which have been incredible for both team morale and mental wellbeing. Below is more detail from one of the Founders herself Valerian.

'Positive wellbeing gives us greater capacity to cope with adversity and to avoid breakdown when confronted by stress.

Stress is also an opponent we can face with confidence, because sports and health psychology studies show that exercise helps us build resilience and emotional intelligence whilst we improve our physical health, our technical or tactical ability.

Since her retirement in 2018, Valerian Spicer ex Commonwealth Games boxer and Dominica's first Continental Championship medalist, has been equally ambitious to contribute to the development of positive mental health through boxing. Together with Psychologist and Addiction Therapist, Andy Cole, they developed The Spicer Method.

The Spicer Method is a unique boxing programme that combines fitness and psychology together, using a storyboard of lessons from Valerian's career as an elite athlete.

The Spicer Method is inclusive and welcoming of all ages and levels of fitness. Since lockdown, It has been delivered online to reach and teach a global audience. There has been a specific focus on shadow-boxing, meaning that no equipment is required and any space will do for the workout.

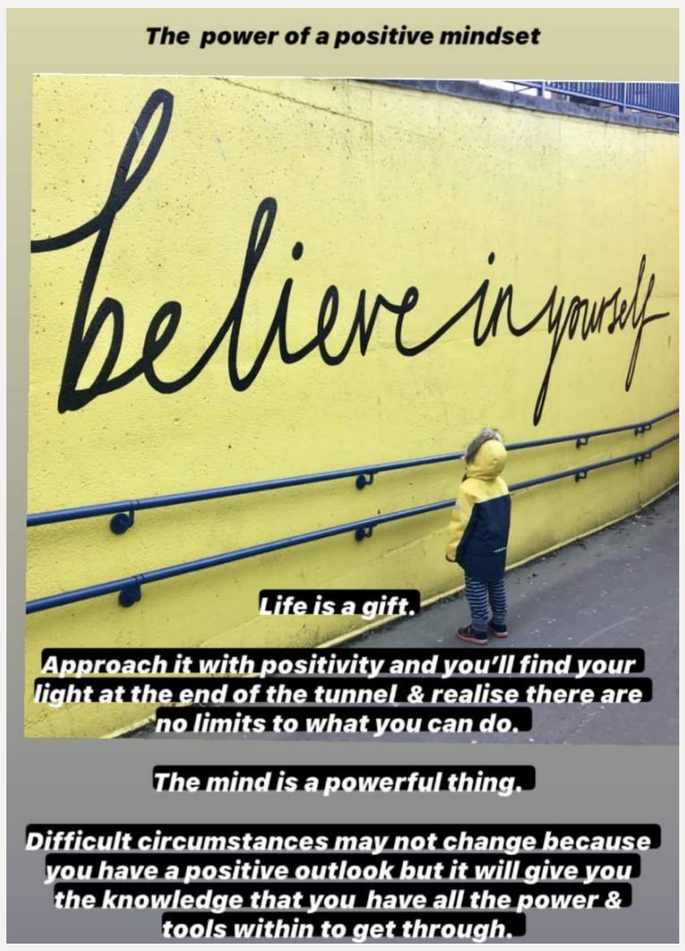
Valerian told me that "studies show us time and again how shadowboxing is hugely beneficial for the body, the heart and your mind. So, by taking up boxing training, you are also making a significant contribution to your mental and social wellbeing too".'

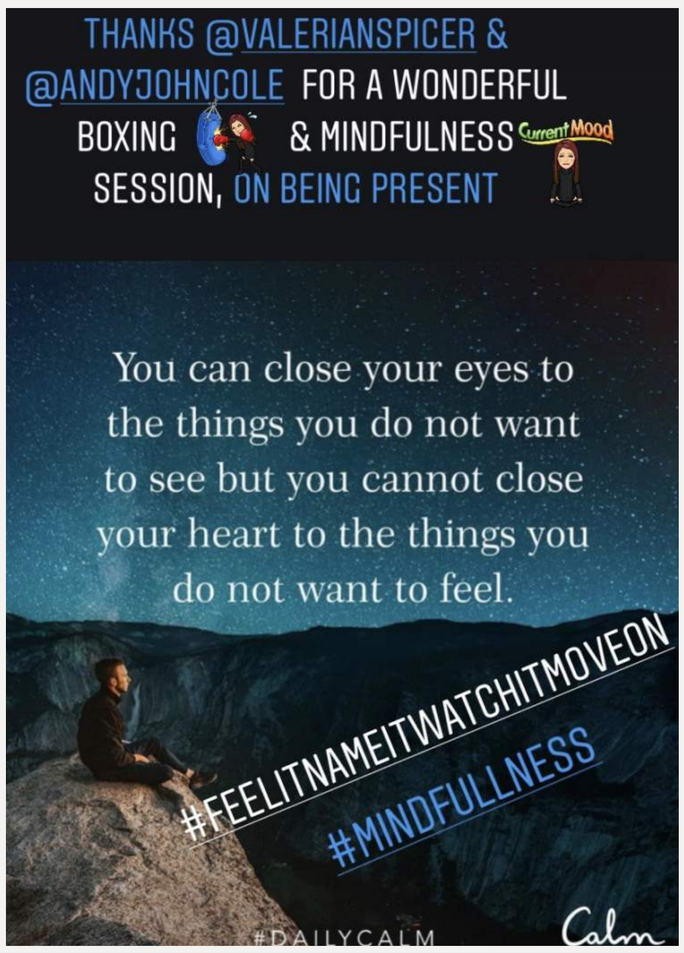
https://www.thespicermethod.com

Welcome to The Spicer Method

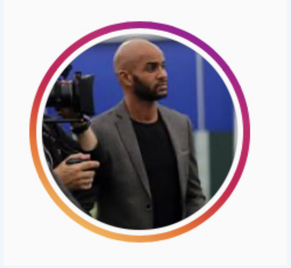
www.thespicermethod.com

Welcome to The Spicer Method - Physical Fitness Meets Positive Psychology - Andy Cole & Valerian Spicer





The 12x3 Team have also given some great insight into how beneficial exercise can be for our mental health and provided us with their personal experiences over lockdown:



Leon Mckenzie:

“Being a former athlete and performing at Elite levels, fitness has always been a part of me. With my ups and downs one thing that’s always helped me continue to try is being able, what I mean by this is that sometimes through life circumstances that haven’t gone to plan have thrown me off mentally and I haven’t coped so well with the things I haven’t been able to control. Fitness has kept me going as it covers so many factors of feeling great physically but mainly keeping my mental state of mind in the fight so I feel fitness brings me hope and makes me feel better.” @leonmckinsta

https://instagram.com/leonmckinsta?igshid=ohn4ff0x6ndq

Maisey Rose

“I think that me staying active and teaching classes during lock down has kept me sane. Having a routine, getting up training, eating, teaching, sleeping has make lockdown easier for me. At some points, when I’ve been lazy and couldn’t be bothered to get up, that’s when I felt the full force of lockdown and COVID 19 and what’s really going on. So using exercise/ boxing has helped me a lot, I’m in the best shape of my life!, I’m also teaching classes whether it be on Instagram live or zoom, is amazing, it’s like meeting up with people but not really, seeing people wanting to train and get fit, drives me to do it more. Thanks to boxing!”

https://instagram.com/_maiseyrose?igshid=t36e391bkddq

Jay Revan:

"I feel the mental health of the general public across the UK has taken a huge hit during the COVID pandemic and in my opinion the fitness industry has definitely had its role to play in keeping spirits high as exercise plays such a crucial role in our mental wellbeing. What Jo has done over this period of lockdown with her team getting them involved with 12x3Gym and working out together 4-5 times a week for the last three months has been simply amazing. I would personally like to congratulate Jo and the whole team at APG for pulling together over this period and showing what a strong team they are both mentally and physically.”

https://instagram.com/jayrevanfit?igshid=1t08p6zocqugc

As Jay mentions, many of the APG Team have got involved with 12x3 Boxing which has allowed us to stay connected as a team but also improve overall well-being with a postive impact on Mental health also…

Paulina Czuber

“I loved the Instagram and Zoom classes that were offered by 12x3 gym. We build an online community that supported and motivated each other, as we got our friends and work colleagues involved. I set up new goals concerning my fitness and was executing them every day. I will remember this as the best time and achievement during the lockdown.”

Trisha Simpson

“Doing the 12x3 workouts have given me a reason to get up in the mornings especially since lockdown started. I feel more focus and really motivated after each session, I may feel tired after a workout but it does energize my day. 😊 It is also so good to see other members of the APG team taking part as I may not see them in person but virtually is also good. I just hope they keep the online classes going when this pandemic is over as option also.”

Rudy Clauzon

‘This pandemic has had a big impact on how we work and what we must do to ensure the continuity of our operations. It’s been good to attend 12x3 classes and still have a way to bond with colleagues, especially when work can be tense at times. We all work better together if we can relate to each other on more than just work.’