



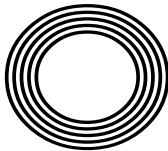
TOP 4
TIPS TO
PREVENT
AGEING

EASTER TRADITIONS
from around the world

Radish Ready
How to use the veg of the season

RAYE

Singer makes history on her rise to fame



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MARCH 2024

Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Hertford.

It's been a busy few weeks, and it's good to see when I've been visiting local businesses that they've reported an increase in customers. Business has also been good here at **VISION**, where we offer unique ways to measure the response to advertising. To find out more, please get in touch.

One thing I've noticed when I've been out and about is how seemingly insurmountable challenges quickly become part of our everyday lives. Whether it's the cost-of-living crisis or issues with recruiting new members of staff, there's always challenges for us to worry and complain about.

However, we all figure out new ways to live our lives to deal with these issues. It's part of the human condition that we are driven and resilient to overcome challenges.

More people seem to be talking about mental health these days. One of the best tips I've heard if you're feeling anxious or depressed is to write down the top 10 things that are bothering you, then put a cross through all the ones you can't control. For example, if you're worried about war in other countries, there's not much you can do to fix this, so put a cross through it. But if you're worried about your business not doing well, this is within your control, so you can start planning ways to make improvements.

Finally, I hope you have a lovely Easter with family and friends.

Brett Shohet

This is your town's hyperlocal magazine, delivering to homes and businesses every month.

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Barbie's BIRTHDAY BASH

LEARN THE HISTORY OF THE ICONIC DOLL THIS WORLD BARBIE DAY, ON MARCH 9, AS BARBIE TURNS 65!

Barbie made her grand entrance into the world in 1959 at the American International Toy Fair in New York. She was sporting a blonde ponytail and black and white swimsuit – and was an instant hit. She was the brainchild of Ruth Handler, co-founder of Californian toy company Mattel.

Barbie was special because she had an adult body shape. Back then, most dolls were shaped like babies or young children. But when Handler watched her young daughter play with a German fashion doll on a family holiday in 1956, it sparked an idea.

Handler hoped that the new doll would help girls dream big, and over the years,

Barbie has had around 200 careers, including astronaut, Olympic athlete, and US presidential candidate. She's even worked at McDonald's.

Since 1961, she's been in a relationship with her boyfriend, Ken. And in 1962, she got her first Dreamhouse!

Over the years, Barbie has changed. She's had a range of

haircuts and hair colours. And in 1970, she became fully poseable – she didn't just bend at the knees and twist at the waist; she could do the splits. Her side-glancing eyes now gazed forward, and her pursed lips turned into a pearly white smile.

However, the first African-American and Hispanic Barbies didn't hit the shelves until 1980. We also had to wait until 1997 for her figure to become more realistic, with a larger waist and smaller breasts. In 2016, things went a step further with Barbies in three new body types: tall, curvy and petite.

There's also a wheelchair-user Barbie, introduced in 2020, and there are Barbies with hearing aids and prosthetic legs. Last year, British model and actress Ellie Goldstein unveiled a new Barbie with Down's syndrome, the condition she has herself.

In the 2023 movie, Barbie and Ken live in the perfect world of Barbie Land before being transported to the real world, where they discover the challenges of human life.

Barbie was one of last year's most talked about

films and earned nearly £1.12billion at the box office, becoming Warner Bros.' biggest global success to date – even ahead of *Harry Potter*. It was also nominated for eight Oscars and sparked a love of all things pink and the Barbiecore trend.

But did you know that all the Barbie Land scenes were filmed not in sunny Los Angeles but at the Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden, near Watford, Hertfordshire?

SIX FUN-FILLED BARBIE FACTS

- ★ Her full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts.
- ★ Her boyfriend Ken was named after Ruth Handler's own son, Kenneth.
- ★ Barbie originally cost just \$3.
- ★ 100 Barbies are sold every minute.
- ★ She's owned outfits by Oscar de La Renta and been painted by Andy Warhol.
- ★ The most expensive special edition Barbie, complete with authentic diamond jewellery, was sold for £300,000 in 2010.



Ruth Handler



photo credit: Barbie.com, shopping.mattel.com

'HANDLER HOPED THAT THE NEW DOLL WOULD HELP GIRLS DREAM BIG AND OVER THE YEARS BARBIE HAS HAD AROUND 200 CAREERS'

Spring EQUINOX

Spring is finally on its way, but when does the season actually start? If you're confused, it's not surprising. That's because there are two different types of spring – one based on weather patterns and the other on the positions of the Earth and the Sun.

ALL ABOUT WEATHER

The spring that depends on the weather is called meteorological spring and is all about making things easy. The year is split into four seasons, each lasting for three months. So, according to meteorology, spring begins on March 1 and lasts until May 31.

ASTRONOMICAL SPRING

Astronomical spring depends on the Spring Equinox – the date when day and night are pretty much the same length, wherever you are. This date varies very slightly from year to year. But it always falls between March 19 and 21 – and this year it falls on March 20.

WHAT IS THE SPRING EQUINOX?

The Spring Equinox happens because the Earth is tilted, not straight. As our planet travels around the Sun, spinning as it goes, most places get more sunlight at some times of year than at others. It all depends on whether your part of the planet is leaning towards or away from the Sun, and this is what gives us our seasons.

During the Spring Equinox, the Sun is directly over the Equator. This means the Earth's tilt isn't leaning toward or away from the Sun – so the days and nights are almost equal wherever you are in the world.

WHY DOES THE DATE VARY?

The date of the Spring Equinox varies because it takes the Earth around 365 days to orbit the Sun – but not exactly. We adjust for this with a leap year every four years, but the timing still isn't perfect.

Now that you know all about spring dates, go out and enjoy the wonders of the season!

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HATS ON FOR HOPE

FASHION

This month marks Brain Tumour Research charity's Wear a Hat Day 2024, which takes place on March 28, 2024. This annual charity event raises funds and awareness in the fight to find a cure for brain tumours. You can take part by hosting a hat-themed fundraiser or doing a hat-related challenge, like running while wearing a hat you've created yourself.

In 2024, hat trends for both men and women offer many stylish choices for a variety of occasions. From protecting your head from the sun to keeping your head warm on chilly days, there's a hat for every occasion.

BUCKETS OF STYLE: One style that's bang on trend is the bucket hat, with many top designers offering their own take on this retro classic. As the weather warms up, these hats provide good sun protection while adding a touch of retro flair. They pair effortlessly with casual jackets, t-shirts and denim, making them a spring wardrobe must-have.

FEDORA FINESSE: Named after a character in a 19th-century play, fedora hats are another popular and versatile choice for spring. They'll add a touch of sophistication to your outfit without being too fancy. Team your fedora with jeans and a t-shirt for a relaxed look, or throw it on with a simple dress to bring a chic touch to something casual.

BERET GOOD: With its combination of French flair and elegance, the beret trend has seen a spectacular revival for both men and women in the last year or so. These days, you can buy them in all sorts of materials in addition to wool – think distressed canvas, leather and even suede. Berets shine brightest when paired with a monochrome outfit; it's all about letting the beret steal the spotlight.





For more information about fundraising for the Brain Tumour Research charity, visit braintumourresearch.org or call 01908 867200.

WEAR A HAT DAY

Photo credit: braintumourresearch.org

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PREVENT & protect

As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, and this couldn't be more true than when it comes to caring for your skin.

WHAT IS PREVENTATIVE SKINCARE?

Preventative skincare, as opposed to skincare repair, is concerned with the prevention of the ageing of the skin. Typically, this type of skincare routine is best suited to those in their 30s and 40s, although people in their 50s and beyond who do not have too many deep-seated wrinkles can also benefit from this process. If you are a smoker or your skin has had a lot of sun exposure, preventative skincare is even more vital if you want to keep your skin looking younger for longer.

HOW CAN I ADOPT A PREVENTATIVE SKINCARE ROUTINE?

1. Focus on facials

Dry and dehydrated skin shows signs of ageing much more readily than plumped-up, hydrated skin. Fortunately, a facial that cleanses, exfoliates and hydrates can help to prevent fine lines and

wrinkles, as well as resulting in clearer, less acne-prone skin.

2. Load up on vitamins

As your skin starts to age, you may experience issues such as larger pores, facial redness and an uneven skin tone. To combat this, look for skincare that contains ingredients such as vitamin C, which is known for brightening the skin, and vitamin A, which can help to protect from sun damage.

3. Consider a weekly retinol serum

Retinol has the ability to actively boost collagen in the skin, smooth fine lines and wrinkles, and minimise pigmentation. If you have not used retinol before, then you should start slowly (once or twice a week) and gradually increase if needed.

4. Apply products gently

By gently pressing creams, serums and oils into your skin, instead of rubbing, you will enjoy all the benefits of the ingredients of your chosen skincare products without any of the damage of application.

Proper PUSH-UPS

Great for building upper body strength, burning calories and improving posture and balance, push-ups are one of those exercises that can transform your overall fitness and strength. However, they only work if you have the correct form.

HOW TO DO PUSH-UPS CORRECTLY

- > Place your hands on the floor shoulder width apart or slightly wider.
- > Make sure that your hands are angled in a way that feels comfortable for you.
- > Place your toes on the floor shoulder width apart or slightly wider so you end up in a high plank position.
- > With your body in a straight line from your head to your heels, brace your core and glutes, and then look a few inches in front of your fingers to lengthen your neck.
- > Begin to bend the elbows to a 90-degree angle or slightly less. Your elbows should be a few inches from your body so that your form looks like an arrow if looking top-down.
- > Pause and then push down into the floor, continuing to engage your core and glutes to press up to the plank position.

your knees on the ground. This makes push-ups easier as you are pushing less of your body weight off the ground.



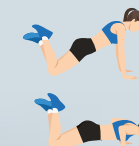
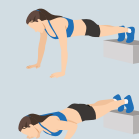
Incline push-ups

Place your hands on a bench or sofa rather than directly on the floor and follow the above instructions. Again, this requires you to push less body weight which makes the movement easier.



Decline push-ups

If you want more of a challenge, then place your feet on a bench, the sofa or a medicine ball and then follow the same instructions as above. This is great for working your upper chest more.



PUSH-UP MODIFICATIONS

Push-ups on your knees

If you are struggling to perform a full push-up, follow the above instructions but, this time, with

HOW MANY PUSH-UPS SHOULD I DO?

If you are a beginner, start with 5-10 reps per workout and gradually increase. Make sure you take rest days to allow time for your body to recover.





All about ROSACEA

Rosacea is a common skin condition, but sadly one that is often poorly understood. Estimated to affect 415 million people worldwide, read on to discover everything there is to know about this long-term affliction.

What are the symptoms of rosacea?
Some of the most common symptoms of rosacea include:

Flushing of the skin, particularly on the face | Burning and stinging sensations | Permanent redness | Spots (papules and pustules) | Small blood vessels in the skin becoming visible

As a relapsing condition, these symptoms can come and go and may be worse during some outbreaks than others.

What causes rosacea?

Although the exact cause of rosacea is unknown, there are a few potential causes, including abnormalities in the blood vessels of the face and a reaction to microscopic mites commonly found on the face.

What triggers rosacea?

There are several triggers that have been identified that may make rosacea worse. These are as follows:

Exposure to sunlight | Stress | Strenuous exercise | Hot or cold weather | Hot drinks | Alcohol and caffeine | Spicy foods

How to treat rosacea

For most people with rosacea, a combination of self-help measures and medication offer the most effective results, including:

- > Avoiding known triggers
- > Topical medications such as creams and gels which are applied directly to the skin
 - > Oral medications such as antibiotics for more severe spots
 - > IPL treatment which uses intense pulsed light to alleviate redness, inflammation and uneven skin tones. For best results, book three to six sessions

Living with rosacea

As a chronic condition, rosacea can have an adverse effect on not only your physical health but also your mental wellbeing. Many people with rosacea experience feelings of low self-esteem as well as frustration. It can be helpful to talk to your GP about options for how to manage rosacea, and you could also join a support group.



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GRAVE(Y) DANGER!

You can't have a roast dinner without gravy, so what do you do if the worst happens and it all goes wrong? Discover four of the most common mistakes when making gravy. Plus, how to quickly fix them.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN GRAVY

Ingredients:

- > 2 tbsp butter
- > 2 tbsp plain flour
- > 150ml port
- > 1.6l chicken, turkey or beef stock or broth
- > Meat juices from your roasting pan (optional)

How to make:

- > Heat the butter in a pan or in the roasting tin containing the meat juices from your roast.
- > Scatter over the flour and stir until you have a dark, sandy paste (known as making a roux).
- > Splash in the port and cook down until sticky.
- > Stir in the stock or broth and simmer for five minutes.
- > Decant into a gravy jug to serve.

LUMPY GRAVY

To prevent lumps in your gravy, use a whisk rather than a spoon to stir, and make sure that you make a roux rather than just adding a thickener such as flour or cornstarch directly to the mixture.

TOO THICK GRAVY

If your gravy is too thick, or even gummy, you have probably added too much thickener. Ideally, when your gravy is hot it should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon but not stick to it like glue. To remedy this, gradually add more broth or stock until you have the desired consistency.

TOO THIN GRAVY

The role of gravy is to coat your potatoes and meat, but it can't do this if it is too thin. To rectify this, you can try cooking it for longer so that some of the liquid evaporates, or you can make a slurry to add to the gravy (a combination of flour and broth or water).

TOO GREASY GRAVY

To remove grease, deglaze your roasting pan with either broth or wine and then pour the liquid into a fat separator or measuring cup. This will help to loosen the tasty bits at the bottom of the pan while helping to get rid of any fat.



Get your RA-DISHES ready

Although most people tend to only eat radishes raw in salads, there are actually so many exciting ways that you can enjoy this jewel-toned vegetable. Here are five wonderful ways to cook with radishes, which are in season this month.

WHAT DOES A COOKED RADISH TASTE LIKE?

If you're not a fan of the peppery and spicy taste of raw radish, you'll be pleased to hear that cooked radishes are a lot more mellow and juicy. Texture-wise, they are similar to a cooked potato and simply melt in the mouth.

HOW TO COOK WITH RADISHES

BRAISE THEM: Radishes are perfect for braising as they absorb all the flavourful liquid and become sweet and juicy. A great alternative to potatoes, try radishes in your next meat or vegetable stew.

ROAST THEM: Nearly all root vegetables respond well to roasting, and radishes are no exception. You can roast radishes in just 10 minutes, and they quickly begin to caramelize.

GRILL THEM: Whole or halved, radishes can be grilled with just a little oil or butter and develop a lovely smoky taste. Perfect for your next barbecue.

SAUTÉ THEM: Don't forget that you can also eat radish tops, either raw like lettuce or cooked. For best results, stir-fry or sauté the tops or blanch as greens and blend with garlic, nuts and cheese to make a pesto.

PICKLE THEM: If you want to retain their crunch, radishes can be pickled by tossing them in equal amounts of red wine vinegar and caster sugar. They are also a great addition to homemade kimchi.

OUR FAVOURITE RADISH RECIPES:

- > Pickled red onion and radishes
- > Brown butter-basted radishes
- > Roasted radish and feta salad
- > Braised radishes with garlic, white wine, dill and mint.





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HOME & DIY

BEST PLANTS for your living room

TOP FIVE PLANTS TO GROW IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

The living room is often the most used space in a home, where everyone comes together to unwind and relax. Whether you are looking to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere or you want a stylish haven, there is a houseplant for every type of living room in the below list.

SPIDER PLANT

If you love hanging plants, then the spider plant is exactly what you need for your living room. Choose to hang them in baskets or draped down over shelves for a stylish and elegant look. These plants prefer bright light but can adjust to low light if needed.

PEACE LILY

The peace lily is a pretty plant that showcases shiny leaves and delivers stunning spoon-shaped flowers. Ideal for complementing contemporary-style living rooms. Place a peace lily on your coffee table, bookcase or shelf near a window for best results.

SNAKE PLANT

If you have a history of killing plants, then the snake plant is the perfect choice for you. This plant, which thrives on neglect, boasts striking upright spikes that demand to be noticed in any space. If you are lacking light in your living room, don't worry, as the snake plant only needs low to moderate light to survive.

COIN PLANT

The coin plant is a compact plant that is best suited to smaller spaces. Also known as pilea, this houseplant has small, rounded leaves that add just enough colour to uplift the ambiance of your living room. The coin plant loves light, so place it directly on your windowsill or on a table nearby.

ARECA PALM

A tropical plant that guarantees to make an impact, the areca palm is ideal for large and bright living rooms. Plant in a statement pot and then sit back and wait for the compliments to roll in.





How to create a SELF-CLEANING HOME



Every day can seem like Groundhog Day when it comes to housework, as if often feels like no matter how much you do, it all miraculously undoes itself by tomorrow. But what if it didn't have to be that way? What if your home could clean itself?

SET UP CLEANING STATIONS: Cleaning stations are a must if you want a self-cleaning home, enabling you to spot clean with ease. Some of the most useful cleaning stations are a microfibre cloth and all-purpose cleaning spray under the bathroom sink, a dusting caddy complete with a furniture touch-up kit in a cupboard in the living room, and a small broom and dustpan and brush under the stairs.

INVEST IN SMART STORAGE SOLUTIONS: When investing in storage for your home, try to pick items that are easy to wipe down and ones that are not prone to accumulating dust. For example, closed cabinets rather than open shelving. Also, divider drawers are great for keeping things in order.

USE AUTOMATION TOOLS: Technology has come a long way in recent years and you can now find tools that will do your housework for you. Among the most popular automation tools for the home are robotic vacuums which effectively remove dirt and debris from the floor all on their own. If you have a cat, self-cleaning litterboxes are great.

TRY TASK CLEANING: Task cleaning involves dividing your home into tasks and assigning a day of the week to each task for a deep clean. This can stop you from feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of cleaning the whole house at once and help you to keep on top of things.

EMBRACE MINIMALISM: The less clutter you have in your home, the easier it is to keep clean. To embrace a more minimalistic approach, get rid of any items that don't serve a purpose or bring you joy.

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These days most homeowners suffer from a lack of storage space. So many precious items that need to be kept - but where to store it all? That's where Home Counties Loft Ladders come in.

The company, based locally, offers homeowners the opportunity to maximise their storage space with a loft ladder. 50sqft of boarding and a light - all fully fitted in less than a day from just £444! But it's not just the affordability of the package that makes Home Counties Loft Ladders stand out, as manager Jamie Oakley explains: 'Our

watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen, so our customers are assured of the best job.

Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford.

Our business relies on referrals and we get a huge amount of our calls from people who have been referred to us by our existing customers

- that simply wouldn't happen if we didn't adhere to our overriding principles.

At the end of the day the old adage that happy customers lead to more happy customers is true and we work hard to make that happen for

every installation we carry out!

So, if you want to make use of your loft space, call Jamie free on 0808 301 9551 and he'll be happy to pop round and give you a no obligation quote so you too can make use of your loft!



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BEFORE



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A GUIDE TO CHOOSING

MATTE VS...

Confused about the difference between matte and satin paint? Not sure which finish to use in which parts of your home? Here's our guide to which paint you should choose for your next project.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

The main difference between matte and satin paint is the finish. Satin paint provides a shinier finish, whereas a matte paint finish is more flat. More specifically, satin finishes have between 25 and 35 per cent gloss and matte finishes have between five and 10 per cent gloss. This means that satin paint reflects as much as three to five times more light than matte paint.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF MATTE AND SATIN PAINT?

Matte paint pros: Covers imperfections well ✓ Easy to touch up ✓ Provides good depth of colour ✓

Matte paint cons: Difficult to clean ✗ Holds dirt ✗

Satin paint pros: Easy to clean ✓ Reflects more light ✓ More durable and long-lasting ✓

Satin paint cons: Does not hide imperfections ✗ Hard to touch up ✗

WHERE TO USE MATTE AND SATIN PAINT AT HOME

Matte paint: On the ceilings, walls in the bedroom, dining room and living room.

Satin paint: In high-traffic areas such as bathrooms, the kitchen and children's rooms and on windows, doors and trims.

WHICH IS BETTER: SATIN OR MATTE PAINT?

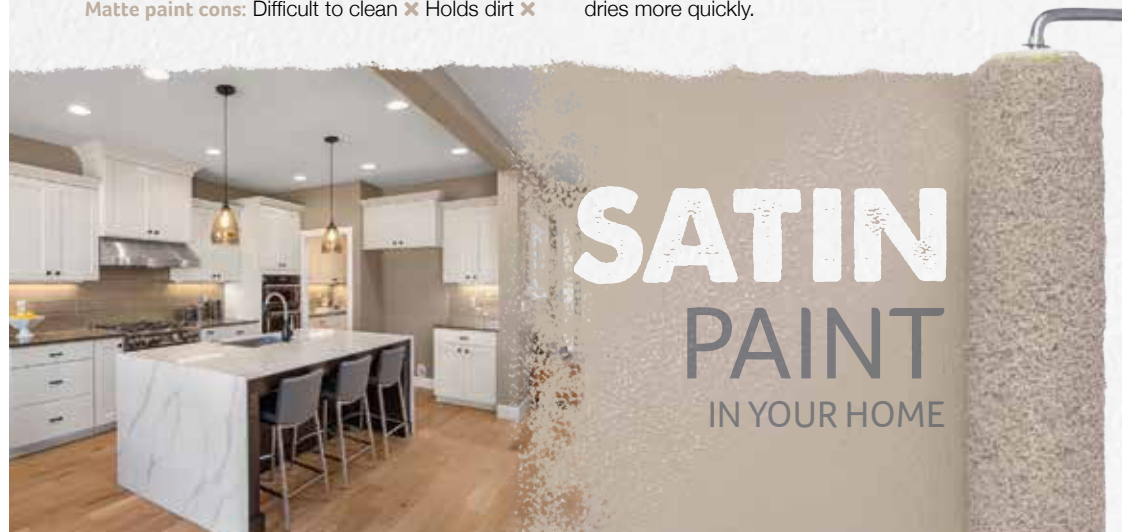
If you want a rich, dark and dramatic colour, then matte paint is the perfect choice as it boasts a low-sheen finish. However, if you want to paint a room in a more neutral shade or lighter tones, then satin paint is preferable as it reflects light more effectively. Satin paint is much more flexible but you do need to apply it carefully, whereas matte is easy to use and dries more quickly.

SATIN PAINT

IN YOUR HOME



HOME & DIY



GREAT BRITISH INTERIOR DESIGNER: KATHARINE POOLEY

LONDON

Katharine Pooley has build up her renowned interior design business over the last 18 years, earning multiple accolades while working all over the world to transform homes and create incredible spaces.

With her elegant, classic styling, Katharine Pooley's portfolio serves as the perfect inspiration for decorating your own home.

BRITISH STYLING WITH INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

Katharine Pooley has travelled the world, using her adventures as the inspiration for her designs. But despite these influences, many looks feel quintessentially British, making the most of traditional features and making them at home among more modern details. Her work includes a mixture of country houses, city living and international residences, with each project resulting in a completely unique look. Neutrals serve as the perfect base for Pooley's visions, with the detail coming through in the accent colours and textures that bring the spaces to life.

Pooley's designs are timeless and multi-layered to create intriguing styles. She also has her own home accessories line, allowing you to bring some of her work directly into your home.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR RECREATING THE KATHARINE POOLEY LOOK

While each of Katharine Pooley's projects is unique, there are some themes that run throughout her portfolio. Some of the ways you can emulate Pooley's style include:

- » Keep spaces light to help make them feel larger. You can contrast with darker shades to add some detail – blues and greys are a popular choice in Katharine's work.
- » Incorporate statement lighting to help make your space unique. You can pick up affordable light fixtures from a range of retailers.
- » Metallic details such as gold accents on furniture and lighting add a little luxury without being overpowering. Consider changing the handles and hardware of your furniture to add subtle glamour.
- » Use fresh flowers and greenery to make a space feel warmer and more homely – homes should look lived in, and this can instantly add a more personal touch.

With the right styling, you can create your own Katharine Pooley-inspired space that has a classic, timeless feel even in the most modern of homes.

Photo credit: katharinepooley.com, @katharine Pooley ltd via Instagram



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RAYE

A photograph of the singer RAYE performing on stage. She is wearing a dark, strapless, sequined dress with a high slit. She is holding a microphone in her right hand and has her left hand near her face, looking upwards with a joyful expression. The background is dark with bright stage lights and a large, glowing 'RAYE' logo.

TALENTED YOUNG SINGER BREAKS BRIT AWARDS RECORD

After topping the UK charts, RAYE has also broken the record for the most BRIT Awards nominations ever received by one artist; yet the singer/songwriter has been waiting in the wings for more than a decade.

They say revenge is best served cold, and yet South London soloist RAYE (AKA Rachel Keen) is the hottest thing in music right now.

In January, the soulful sweetheart made BRIT Awards history by becoming the first artist to score seven nominations in a single year – including in the top category of Album of the Year for *My 21st Century Blues*, a stonking tour-de-force of a record that effortlessly melds pop, deep house, hip-hop, funk and R&B, with RAYE both spitting out rhymes and crooning like a nightingale.

Fresh from breaking records at the BRIT Awards, RAYE was also named best female act at the MOBO Awards, held in Sheffield on February 7.

Her lyrics are frank, raw and bruisingly honest, with many a mention of the industry that left her marooned in music's wilderness for years. For though her name may be new to the ears of many, RAYE has been making music since she was in her teens and landed her first record deal in 2014 with Polydor after wowing with the self-released EP *Welcome to the Winter*.

By 2021, Raye was understandably dismayed with her label and vented frustrations on social media site X, writing: "I have been on a four-album record deal since 2014! And haven't been allowed to put out one album. All I care about is the music. I'm sick of being slept on and I'm sick of being in pain about it."

Eventually taking matters into her own hands, RAYE left Polydor and released *My 21st*

AFTER MANY YEARS OF BEING STUCK ON THE SIDELINES

Century Blues independently. Not only was the album critically acclaimed, but it also missed out on a number-one chart spot by the thinnest of margins, garnered a nod at the Mercury Prize, and led to RAYE scoring a win at the Ivor Novello for the single, *Escapism*.

Now thoroughly vindicated, the 26 year old can focus all her energy on the artistry so dear to her. However, despite her frustrations regarding the major label machine, RAYE amassed a cadre of songwriting credits – for the likes of Beyoncé, Rihanna and John Legend – and guest spots for other artists during her time at Polydor. In 2016, she scored a top-three hit with her guest vocals on Jax Jones's *You Don't Know Me*, and more recently, her Joel Corry and David Guetta collaboration *BED* was in the running for British Single of the Year at the 2022 BRIT Awards.

Raised in a musical household, RAYE's father was a musical director at a local church which boasted a gospel choir that both RAYE and her mother sang in. In her early teens, she attended Croydon's renowned The BRIT School but dropped out after two years as she felt "confined... despite learning an extensive amount", going on to release her debut EP at the age of 16.

On the track *Mary Jane*, RAYE sings: "Look what they done to Amy," in reference to Amy Winehouse. Certainly, there are musical comparisons between RAYE and the late South Londoner whose own prolific musical output was both profoundly honest and heart-breaking.

However, unlike Amy, it appears that RAYE's dark days are firmly behind her. Not an artist who craves the triumph or the attention of the accolades now flooding her way, but after so many years of frustration, they are nothing but deserving.

From Hertfordshire raves to the world stage

There's one woman with ties to our county who stands as a vibrant figure in the contemporary music scene, blending pop and electronic music with a unique flair – Charli XCX.

Born as Charlotte Emma Aitchison in Cambridge on August 2, 1992, her journey into music began at a young age.

However, it's her connection with Bishop's Stortford that adds a fascinating layer to an already absorbing story.

Known for its rich history dating back to Roman times, the town played a pivotal role in her early life as she attended Bishop's Stortford College in Maze Green Road – the prestigious independent school which nurtured her artistic talents.

This educational yet creative background provided a framework for Aitchison's

creativity, balancing academic attention with artistic expression. Indeed, wind forward to today, and the star has returned to the college to speak to the next generation about careers in music and the entertainment sector.

From these relatively humble beginnings – the family lived in the serene hamlet of Start Hill – Charlotte's career took a meteoric rise. Gaining attention in 2007 at underground performances and parties, her early work was characterised by a mix of dark pop and electronica.

In 2012, she gained significant recognition through her collaboration with Icona Pop on the song *I Love It*, achieving international acclaim. The year 2014 brought more praise as she collaborated with Iggy Azalea on smash hit *Fancy*, which topped the charts in the US.

Around this time, Charli XCX also released debut album *True Romance*, then followed up with *Charli* in 2019, *How I'm Feeling Now* a year later, and 2022's *Crash*.

More recently, she contributed the track *Speed Drive* to the hugely successful *Barbie* movie.

And such a prolific body of work in the studio has been matched with both headline tours and supporting the likes of Taylor Swift, Sia and Katy Perry, making Charli XCX arguably Bishop's Stortford's finest global export.

Photo credit Lisa O'Connor/Shutterstock



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A glorious tribute to England's illustrious past



LOCAL FEATURE



In a land dotted with manor homes and regal estates, we often become immune to the grandeur and splendour of the history that surrounds us in the form of bricks and mortar. However, Epping's Copped Hall is in a league of its own.

Not only is the current Georgian manor on the site – completed in 1758 – a marvel to behold with its grand chimneys and bold geometric lines, but the hall also historically featured in one of the most scandalous and intriguing periods of English royal history.

Originally, Copped Hall was established by Henry II who desired two acres of Epping Forest as the site of a hunting lodge. In 1337, the 80-acre property came into the hands of Sir John Shardlow, who gave it to the Abbots of Waltham in 1350 in exchange for other lands. In 1537, the Abbot gave Copped Hall to Henry VIII in the vain hope of saving Waltham Abbey from being dissolved. This failed to appease Henry and the Abbey was dissolved in 1540.

Though the infamous king never lived at Copped Hall, he did visit it, and in 1548, his son Edward VI allowed the future Queen Mary to reside there. She remained – to a large degree – a prisoner at the hall, as she was a Catholic.

Over the centuries, Copped Hall – and its splendid gardens – has likely served as a magnificent backdrop for all sort of scandals and dramatic affairs, but the gossip of Henry VIII's spurned daughter, who would briefly be queen, is arguably some of the most salacious that ever echoed in England's grand chambers and corridors.

In more recent years, the site was saved from development by the specially formed Copped Hall Trust in 1995. The trust helped to restore the racquets court, the stables and a number of service buildings. The derelict walled kitchen garden, acquired by the trust in 1999, has also been restored to its former glory.

Currently undergoing further renovation, the hall and its expansive outside spaces host events for visitors throughout the year, ranging from an Easter egg hunt to drawing classes to musical performances.



Photo credit: visit Essex.com / coppedhalltrust.org.uk



YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

HANDEL: SAUL

All Saints' Parish Church,
Queen's Road, Hertford, SG13 8AY
Saturday, March 23, 7.30pm



Photo credit: Hertford Choral Society Facebook

Join Hertford Choral Society for a rare opportunity to enjoy Handel's dramatic oratorio, performed by a period orchestra and professional soloists. It tells the story of King Saul, the first King of Israel.

Tickets cost between £12 and £16, or just £4 for students. To find out more and book, please visit hertfordchoral.org.uk/upcoming-concerts

CHILDREN'S EASTER TRAIL

Hertford Town Centre, SG14 1HR

Friday, March 29, to Sunday, April 14, any time
Follow the Easter trail map to discover knitted characters hiding in shops across Hertford Town Centre. If you locate all the clues, you will be in with the chance of winning a £30 gift voucher to spend at a local retailer.

The trail map will be available from the Hertford Town and Tourist Information Centre and is available to download at www.hertford.gov.uk/events-listings/children-s-easter-trail

SOULTASIA HERTFORD

Dog & Whistle, 112 Fore Street,
Hertford, SG14 1AB

Saturday, March 30, 1pm – 10pm

Following last year's complete sell-out event, this year's Easter event at Dog & Whistle will see the UK's smash hit touring soul spectacular Soultasia return to Hertford.

Soultasia will feature some of the UK's greatest soul and disco performers, including Odyssey, The Chimes – Pauline Henry, Angelo Starr, Ian Reading, Darren Ball, and more.

This event is strictly 18-plus. Tickets cost £25 from www.shorturl.at/BEO03

EASTER SUNDAY KARAOKE DISCO

Jungle Bar Hertford, 117 Fore Street,
Hertford, SG14 1AX

Sunday, March 31, 8pm – 3am

Jungle Bar is hosting a free karaoke night for Easter Sunday, featuring DJ Scott, in what promises to be an 'eggtastic' night of fun. Bring yourself, your mates and your dancing shoes!

The event is free. Ages 18-plus only, with photo ID required upon entry. Find out more at www.t.ly/-lgrv

THE BRIGHT AND BOLD DESIGN

The Little Theatre, Hertford, SG14 3BB

Friday, April 12, to Saturday, April 20, 7.45pm

The Company of Players present *The Bright and Bold Design*, set in the 1930s North Staffordshire Potteries. Written by Peter Whelan, this production is directed by Jan Palmer Sayer. What emerges is a play of great warmth about art, politics, conflict and community.

Tickets can be purchased for £17 for non-members or £14 for members and under-18s. To book, call 0333 666 3366 or visit www.shorturl.at/suyJP

HARTS FEST 2024

Hertford Castle, Castle Street,
Hertford, SG14 1HR

Saturday, April 13, 12pm – 4pm

Harts Fest 2024 returns to bring residents their annual dose of music, dance, drama and culture. The castle will host a range of art and cultural activities, suitable for both adults and children. The castle will also be open to explore free of charge.

This event is free to attend. To find out more, visit www.hertford.gov.uk/events-listings/harts-fest-2024



Photo credit: Hertford Castle

The genius of Sir EDUARDO PAOLOZZI CBE



He may have an Italian name, but Sir Eduardo Paolozzi CBE was born in Scotland 100 years ago this month, on March 7, 1924. His Italian-born parents had moved from Italy to Edinburgh to run an ice cream shop.

In June 1940, when Italy declared war on the UK, 16-year-old Paolozzi was put in an internment camp, along with other Italian Scots. During his three months in the camp, his father, grandfather and uncle were sent to Canada but tragically died when their ship was sunk by a German vessel.

After leaving the camp, Paolozzi attended art schools in Edinburgh, London and Paris before setting up his studio in Chelsea in the late 1940s.

In the 1950s, Paolozzi moved to Essex and started a design company which made wallpapers, textiles and ceramics. At this time, Paolozzi became known for his screenprints and sculptures that looked part human and part geometric.

In the 1960s, Paolozzi began incorporating pop culture and technological imagery into his art and became known as a founding father of the Pop Art movement. Even so, his work remained experimental and hard to categorise.

In the 1970s, Paolozzi worked and taught in different locations and particularly liked Munich, where he had a studio. It was here that he created the mosaic designs for Tottenham Court Road station in London. These were installed in 1986, and you can still

see them today.

Paolozzi was elected to the Royal Academy in 1979. In 1968, he was awarded a CBE, followed by a knighthood in 1989. He died in London in 2005, aged 81.

Photo credit: Clare Arron/Shutterstock, Christian Mueller/Shutterstock.com, Peter Fleming/Shutterstock.com



Discover THE BEAUTY OF...

Rhossili Bay, on the Gower Peninsula in South Wales, was the first British beach to be awarded TripAdvisor's Best Beach Award two years in a row. It has also consistently featured on lists of the top beaches in the world. So what makes it so special?

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

First of all, the beach is vast and beautiful – three miles of stunning golden sand looking out onto the Atlantic Ocean and backed by majestic limestone cliffs. There's also the tidal island known as Worms Head – it's around 400m from the coast and connected to the mainland at low tide by a causeway known as the Devil's Bridge.

A RICH HISTORY

The beach and surrounding area are steeped in history. In the water, there are remnants of a shipwreck. And in Rhossili Down, just above the bay, there are ancient stone circles and burial chambers. You can also spot the remains of an Iron Age fort and a Second World War radar station.

STUNNING WILDLIFE

Among the wildlife found on the Commons are brown hares, skylarks, coughts, marsh fritillary butterflies, the narrow-bordered bee hawk-moth, southern damselfly, and various invertebrates. Worms Head is also home to a colony of Atlantic grey seals.

AN OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND

In addition to its natural beauty, Rhossili Bay offers plenty of activities for visitors to enjoy. Surfing enthusiasts flock to the beach to ride the waves, while hikers and walkers can access coastal paths and trails along the cliffs. The beach is also famous for paragliding.

FUTURE PROTECTION

The local community is committed to preserving the beach's natural environment and promoting sustainable tourism, as is the National Trust which owns and manages the beach and its surroundings.

HOW TO GET THERE

Rhossili Bay is near the village of Rhossili, approximately 19km (12 miles) southwest of Swansea. There is a car park at Rhossili and buses run from Swansea and Mumbles.

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DIY Egg piñata

Are you looking for a fun and creative activity to do with your kids this Easter? These DIY piñata Easter eggs are perfect for all ages and couldn't be easier to make.

YOU WILL NEED:

PVC glue • Water • Balloons • Some old newspapers • Tissue paper in a variety of different colours • A pair of scissors • Coloured ribbon

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Blow up a balloon and tie it with a knot.
2. Rip the newspaper into roughly 7-8cm strips – you will need a lot of these.
3. Mix one part glue with two parts warm water in a plastic container and mix well.
4. Dip a strip of newspaper into the glue mixture and then apply it to the balloon.
5. Keep repeating this step until the balloon is completely covered.
6. Allow the balloon to completely dry, ideally overnight.
7. Repeat this process three or four times until the balloon has been covered with several layers.
8. Cut the tissue paper into 5cm squares. You will need enough of this to cover the balloon.
9. Scrunch each tissue paper square, add a big drop of glue and attach it to the egg (as per the image).
10. Continue to add more tissue in various colours until the balloon is completely covered.
11. Once fully dry, use a pin to pop the balloon and then cut a small opening on one side of the piñata.
12. Fill it with sweets, mini chocolate eggs or small toys.
13. Close the opening and cover with more coloured tissue paper. Allow to dry.
14. Take your scissors and poke two holes on each side of the top of the balloon – this is where you will attach the ribbon to hang your piñata.
15. Thread the ribbon through the holes and then tie it around a tree in your garden or somewhere appropriate in your home.

Get whacking!



A GUIDE TO AIR LAYERING

Air layering is a plant propagation method that is highly effective at getting plants to root from cuttings. Some of the most common plants that are suitable for this type of layering are magnolias, roses, jasmine, rhododendrons, azaleas and acers.

HOW TO AIR LAYER PLANTS

STEP 1: Choose a one- to two-year-old stem that is straight and healthy. Trim off the side shoots and leaves from a 30cm section.

STEP 2: Remove some of the outer layers of the stem (known as making a wound) by making a 2.5cm cut through a leaf bud, angled towards the shoot tip. This will create a tongue that can easily be lifted.

STEP 3: Apply a hormone rotting compound (powders or gels work best) to the surface of the wound. This is a synthetic substance that replicates the natural growth conditions in plants and encourages roots to form.

STEP 4: Pack a small amount of moist sphagnum moss under the tongue of the wound. This is a type of potting medium that can be purchased online or

at most garden and DIY shops.

STEP 5: Wrap the wounded stem section loosely with black plastic, sealing it at one end with weather-resistant tape.

STEP 6: Pack the wrapping sleeve with moist sphagnum moss to a thickness of 7.5-10cm.

STEP 7: Seal the other end of the wrapping sleeve with weather-proof tape.

STEP 8: Leave the wrapping in place for up to one year. Open and check it occasionally for signs of rooting.

STEP 9: When you start to see strong roots coming through the moss, remove the plastic sheet and cut through the stem just below the rooted section.

STEP 10: Pot the rooted stem in potting compost that is suitable for the plant. Do not remove the moss from the roots. Continue to water and watch grow until established enough to plant outside.

WHEN TO AIR LAYER PLANTS?

Air layering is best carried out in autumn and spring. Evergreens are best suited to layering during the spring, whereas deciduous plants can be layered in either season.

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PETS

POSTNATAL CARE

FOR DOGS...



WHETHER YOU HAVE A CAT OR A DOG THAT IS ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH, IT IS VITAL THAT YOU KNOW HOW TO CARE FOR THEM AT THIS TIME

Postnatal care for a dog and her pups

1. IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Immediately after your dog has given birth, you should remove all the bloodied and soiled materials from her nesting box. Replace these with clean and warm bedding. Clean mum with a damp cloth. Do not bathe her for the first two weeks.

2. THE FIRST FEW DAYS

Within the first 24 hours of the puppies being delivered, you should contact your vet to make an appointment to check on both mum and her pups. Monitor closely for seven days, looking for any signs of distress or extreme tiredness. Feed mum small and regular meals.

3. UPCOMING WEEKS

It takes roughly three to four weeks before a puppy is fully weaned. Puppies should not be taken from their mum until they reach 10 weeks. Provide plenty of fresh water for your dog when she is nursing. At eight weeks old, puppies should have their first set of vaccinations.

Postnatal care for a cat and her kittens

1. IMMEDIATE NEEDS

After your cat has given birth, it is important that you keep a close eye on her and her kittens. Make sure that the room they are in is warm and quiet, and that their bedding is kept clean and dry. Make sure the kittens are feeding and, if not, guide them.

2. THE FIRST FEW DAYS

If your cat does not feel safe or warm enough where she is, she may move her kittens to another area in your home. You may notice her keeping a distance from you but this should settle after a few weeks.

3. UPCOMING WEEKS

While your cat is nursing, she will need good-quality cat food to support her and aid the development of her kittens. After a few weeks, you may be able to gently stroke the new kittens if your cat is happy for you to do so. At nine weeks old, kittens should have their first set of vaccinations. They do not need to visit the vet before then unless you suspect a problem.

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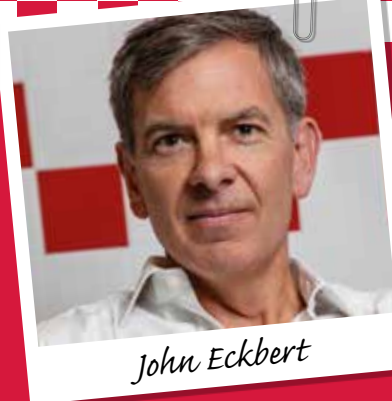


FIVE ALIVE



BUSINESS & PROPERTY

HOW THE FIVE GUYS FAST-FOOD BRAND GREW WITH ZERO MARKETING... PURE GENIUS!



John Eckbert

Five Guys CEO John Eckbert was raised in a simple, uncomplicated environment. His family didn't watch TV, didn't celebrate birthdays, and everyone was up at 5am for music lessons.

While the American always intended to elevate himself way beyond the rural idylls of his childhood, he never saw himself backing a business that was destined to transform the 'burger joint' image of the high street, and one that now has more than 1,700 bases globally.

"We wanted to back a business that wasn't going to be threatened by Amazon," says investor Eckbert. "It was to be one that put people in a certain place, where the internet couldn't necessarily hurt it."

Eckbert landed on Five Guys, a US franchise business founded in 1986 that didn't venture outside the US until 2013. The name comes from the Murrell family, and their values were cemented from the start. It was a simple product – just burgers, hot dogs and fries – and to this day, it boasts arguably the simplest menu of any high street brand. Everything was to be fresh – there are no freezers – and made to order, while products are wholesome and simple. For instance, the fries are hand cut, double cooked and contain just potato, peanut oil and salt.

The rapid expansion came at a time of macro change in public perception and awareness over food, helping Five Guys rise to the top of the industry. It also capitalised on the social media drive, where word of mouth could drive the brand's popularity.

As a result, there was no publicity, no marketing campaign, no PR stunts, and don't ever expect to see a TV commercial. Instead, quality and originality of product, plus accidental endorsement by some of the biggest names on the planet, from Barack Obama to Ed Sheeran to Adele, have led Five Guys to a place that's as honest and wholesome as a 5am violin lesson.

Photo credit: fiveguys.co.uk



Jump starting a car might seem straightforward, but doing it safely is crucial to prevent irreparable damage to the battery, fried electronics and even serious personal injury!

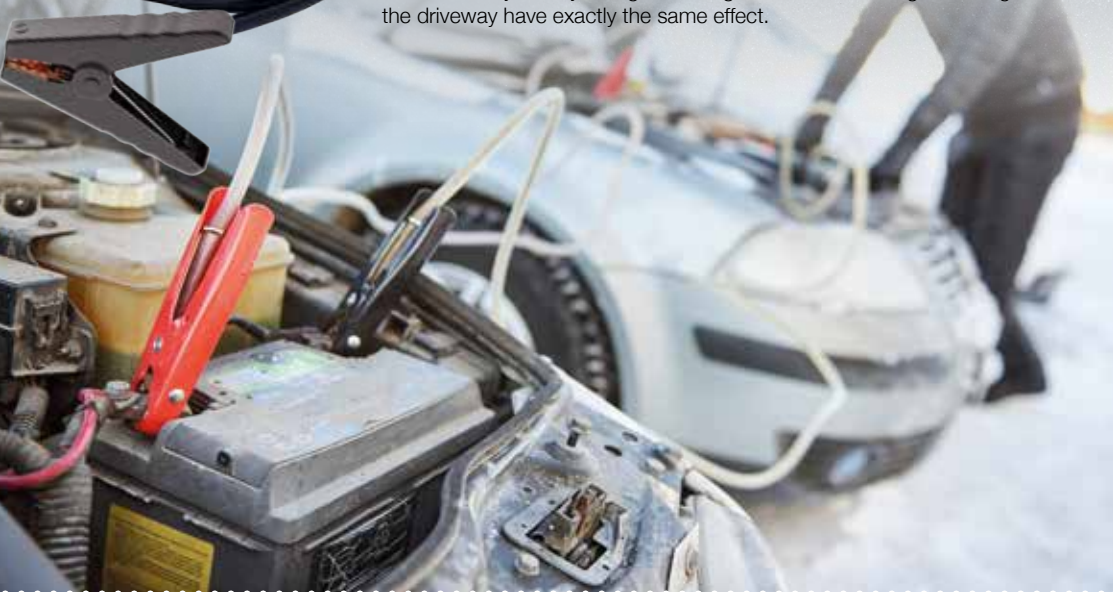
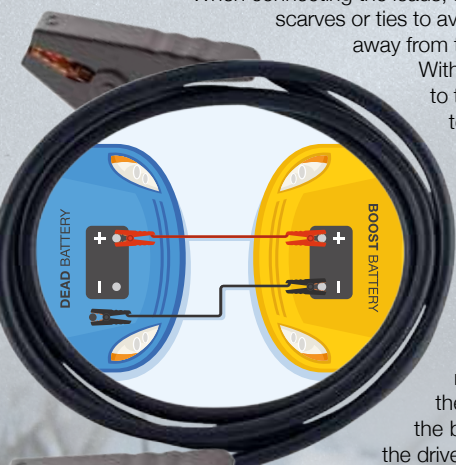
To start with, inspect both the battery and the leads. Do not attempt to jump start if the battery is damaged, swollen or leaking. Similarly, damaged jump leads should not be used, and if they get hot during use, stop immediately.

When connecting the leads, safety in your environment is key. Remove any loose clothing like scarves or ties to avoid them getting caught in engine parts, and keep metal objects away from the batteries to prevent sparks that could ignite battery gases.

With both cars turned off, connect one end of the positive (red) lead to the positive terminal of the dead or lagging battery, and the other to its equivalent on the good battery. Then, connect one end of the negative lead (black) to the good battery. For the other end of the negative lead, attach it to a metal ground on the engine block of the car with the dead battery, away from the battery itself. This helps to prevent sparks.

Once the leads are securely connected, start the engine of the car with the good battery, let it run for a few minutes, then start the car with the dead battery. Let both vehicles run while still connected for a further two or three minutes.

With the jump-started vehicle running, detach the cables in the reverse order you attached them and close the bonnets. Keep the jump-started vehicle's engine running for about 30 minutes for the battery to fully charge – driving it around or leaving it running on the driveway have exactly the same effect.



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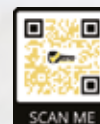
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SPORT

UNUSUAL SPORTS:

ZORBIN



Zorbing is a pursuit many know, though few are brave enough to try. Can our review of one of the fastest-growing extreme sports tempt you to give it a try?

Imagine losing your footing and rolling down a steep hill, gathering ever-increasing speed, and with every turn considering what impending injury may confront you when you finally come to rest.

Well, while Zorbing – that is, being housed inside a transparent round orb – is by no means an injury-free pursuit, it's a somewhat safer way of descending a slope, as well as being exhilarating to boot!

Zorbing was first popularised in the early 1980s in the south of England (Oxford and London) by a group of pioneering thrill seekers who called their group the Dangerous Sports Club. It was one of a number of different activities they undertook that also included the early days of commercial bungee jumping.

Entering the Oxford English Dictionary in 2001 where it is officially described as “a sport in which a participant is secured inside an inner capsule in a large, transparent ball which is then rolled along the ground or down hills”, the orb is composed of two sections. The outer comes into contact with terra firma (and also water in some cases) while the inner one is the part that provides the shock absorption.

The balls are usually around 10ft (3m) in height, and invite participants to test endurance, speed and the strength of their stomachs as part of the thrill!

Indeed, South African Steve Camp travelled 570 metres on a single roll; Keith Kolver of New Zealand reached 32mph in his orb; and Irishman James Duggan blazed 100 metres in 23.2 seconds.

The sport has since evolved into Zorb Football, where the zorb encompasses the top half of the player and a normal football is used on the deck. Also known as Bubble Football, the first World Cup took place in Shoreditch in 2018.

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Answers: see end of The VISION listings

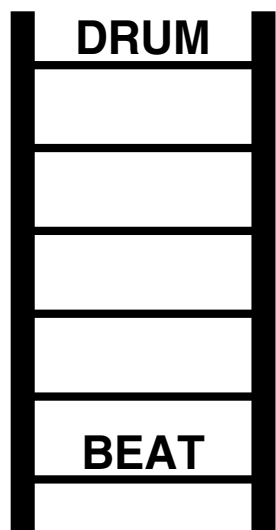
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Most owl species have asymmetrical ears, with one positioned higher than the other, as this allows them to better pinpoint the source of a sound.
- ▶ There are around 250 species of owl and they all live above ground – except for the burrowing owl, which nests in burrows left by other animals such as armadillos.
- ▶ Most owls pair with the same mate every year to breed, and work together to raise their young.
- ▶ Owls have special bones in their skulls to support their large eyes, but this means their eyes are fixed in place, hence their ability to turn their necks 270 degrees in either direction.
- ▶ A group of owls is called a parliament.

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.



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