

STUDENT VOICE NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2021

#INTHISTOGETHER

READY, STEADY, GO! GET SPRING-READY

By Alesia Briggs
Access to Higher Education Diploma Health & Physiotherapy

Ready, steady, go! Get motivated to exercise this spring.

Regular physical activity has been shown to have a host of health benefits. Among other things, exercising can improve your sleep, give a boost to your immune system and help treat depression. Exercise is indeed a magic health pill.

There is no denying, however, that it's challenging to commit to a fitness routine. It requires time, focus, and dedication, but it's doable. Here are few tips to help you start on your fitness journey.

Do what you love

Even the most avid gym-goers and ultramarathon runners may not love every single minute of their training, but they stick to their fitness regimes because, overall, they do what gives them joy. It's worth trying different kinds of exercises to figure out what appeals to you, whether it's running, martial arts, strength training, HIIT, yoga, dance, or something else. Your workouts should be challenging, but also fun. An enjoyable physical activity will stimulate the release of the neurotransmitter dopamine (our feel-good hormone) which directly affects motivation so you're more likely to come back for more. Life is too short to make time for activities that feels like a punishment just because we were told they are good for us!

Set a realistic goal

Having a clearly defined goal gives you a reason to exercise, allows you to measure your progress, and gives you a sense of accomplishment - all of which can be incredibly motivating. Start small and set realistic goals. Your fitness journey should be sustainable. If you are a beginner, it will make more sense to commit to doing 30 minutes of yoga 3 times a week or working towards being able to run 5k rather than planning to win the Ironman World Championship next year. Unrealistic goals might lead to frustration, burnout and even injury if you push yourself too hard too soon.



Rinse and repeat - form a fitness habit

You're more likely to benefit from exercise and see tangible results if you make it into a regular habit. Apparently, it takes 66 days (on average) for a new habit to form and starting is probably the hardest part. As Amelia Earhart said, 'the most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is mere tenacity.' Once a habit is formed (so do try to stick it out for at least two months), the behaviour becomes semi-automatic and will require less willpower than before. After a few months, going to the gym at 6pm will be akin to brushing your teeth in the morning.

Beware of 'all or nothing' thinking at the beginning of your journey. Life happens and it's not a big deal if you missed a couple of workouts - that doesn't mean that you've failed and have to start it from scratch or abandon it altogether.

Share your fitness journey with others

As the old adage goes, there is strength in numbers. It's easier to stay motivated when you are exercising with others. In pre-COVID times we could train with a workout buddy, attend group classes or get a PT. There's nothing quite like the buzz you get from a sense of collective effort during a particularly sweaty HIIT session at the gym. But even whilst we are all stuck at home, it's possible to connect with others - for example, by joining live online yoga classes or making yourself accountable by sharing your goals with friends on social media.

“

It's also an excellent idea to join our very own Fitness Society - a place where we share fitness tips, inspire and support each other and take part in challenges.

”

Let's make 2021 a year we become fitter, healthier, and more active.



STUDENT REPS: THANK TUTORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Over 66 members of staff have been recognised by Student Reps for their contributions to the student experience in the December and February Rep meetings. Highlights include recognition for:

- Providing tailored support for students
- Being immensely helpful and being reliable with feedback and support in modules
- Making sure to communicate relevant information to class as soon as it is available
- Inspiring students, lifting spirits, and encouraging
- Providing audition advice and receiving industry insights
- Always at hand to answer questions
- Support with job search and sending students relevant job notices for those struggling to find placements.

Here are some examples of our Rep nominations:

“Hollie goes above and beyond for all her students ALWAYS! She is super approachable and is always there to help with any queries or issues regarding university work. She is incredibly patient and understanding to all our needs and knows how to bring the best out in us. Thank you Hollie for always guiding us with a wonderful smile.”

“All tutors in graphics departments have been a great help throughout this time, with regular communication on the Teams group which has helped significantly when we have had queries or required guidance on the projects we have.”

“Jasmine is really quick at replying to the emails, makes sure she is really approachable and she always makes sure to let us know she is there for us.”

“Matt for his audition advice within the audition technique classes, we've loved learning his choreography and learning about his insight towards the industry.”

“They have all been really helpful and supportive. They reiterate they are there for us and just to ask if we need anything. Thank you Joanne, Katherine and Alexanrda.”

“I would like to thank Elvis specifically for helping me find a job in care. He has sent many job notices out to all the students that were are struggling finding placements even though it's not part of his role. He has gone above and beyond with supporting us in that regard as well as being so reliable with feedback and support in our modules. ”



Wellbeing

UCEN Manchester students have access to PAM Assist, our free 24/7 wellbeing service. Telephone: 0808 196 3533 or visit www.pamassist.co.uk

Username: student

Password: student1

Welfare & Finance

Students have access to a wealth of external support and information which can be found at: www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/life/inthistogether-support

Acknowledging the extra costs that students might now need, as a result of lockdown and working from home, we have been allocated an additional hardship fund of £30K to support our students. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/additional-funding-for-student-hardship-for-2020-21/>

This is in addition to our own Future U Hardship provision. Hardship is based on financial need and we aim to support students in any way we can. The awards can vary depending on their circumstances

To apply go to <https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/he>
Complete the application and send to careers&welfare@ucenmanchester.ac.uk

SPOTLIGHT STORIES: ALEXANDRA PARK PEOPLE

By Jonathan Aspinall

Access to HE Diploma - Nursing and Midwifery

"As daunting as it is approaching people at times, the rewards, both aesthetic and interpersonal, are huge. The main thing I've found thus far is that people just want to be heard; an opportunity to tell their story. Perhaps the anonymity of "a stranger with a camera" aids this process..."

When did you start being interested in photography?

I have been into photography for over ten years now.

What got you interested in photography and what got you started?

At first, I was just photographing pretty much anything and had no particular interest in people. It was the level three course at the Fielden campus back in 2013 that got me into it researching different types of photography, and I took a shine to the likes of Martin Parr, and Street photographers such as Trent Park, Saul Leiter, and Lee Friedlander. I then came across a guy called Jim Mortram, who had a project called Small Town Inertia, in which he documented people in his local community. The stories were really hard-hitting because the people had a range of conditions, such as Schizophrenia and blindness, etc, and they immediately had a profound effect on me. Before then, photography was just about taking pretty pictures of "nice" things like flowers and people smiling, but this guy seemed to introduce me to something organic and raw. This inspired me to do my own projects.

What attracted you to your latest project?

I started photographing the people of Moss Side's Alexandra Park in September '20, and was amazed by people's response to the project. I just went down there with my camera one day, thinking "If I can ask people for their portraits, then see what comes from it". But I got talking to Miroslav, this Polish bloke in his 90s, for what seemed like forever, learning that he visits the park most days and sits on the same bench opposite the pond. Then I got talking to a couple of others that do work in the community. It was amazing how generous these people were with the level of information they were offering me as a complete stranger. Before I knew it I had stories about loneliness and depression during the lockdown; about looking after ungrateful relatives and children etc. With their permission, I was putting them on social media along with a small bio of each one, and before long they attracted the interest of a Psychotherapist friend of mine, who said she was doing a similar project, and there might be a chance to exhibit them. Naturally, this gave me the confidence to continue with it all, and at least now I had something to say when I approached people in the park.

So what is next for you and your project?

The images will hopefully be exhibited in a Manchester venue sometime in the coming months (lockdown allowing). I am glad to have been asked to write this article on the project for UCEN Manchester student Newsletter, as this is where I am currently studying Nursing, which itself seems to be centered around the relationship between individual and society...

Checkout more of my photography here:

JONASPINALLPHOTOGRAPHY



SPOTLIGHT STORIES: SHARING HOBBIES

By Nela Blinkhorn
SU Vice President

In light of multiple lockdowns and many of us adapting to a different type of life at home I thought I would focus on a positive: things we learned from lockdown. I know that it may have remained incredibly busy for a lot of people but I also know that some found they had extra time on their hands, even if just on those quiet holidays where plans had to be cancelled. I have gathered a few ideas about what students and staff did with that time, and I am sharing these things with you.

Learning a new crafting hobby!

In the Christmas holidays, I found I had quite a bit of time and needed to look for something to do since I couldn't go anywhere. I decided to go ahead and order myself a beginner's needle felting kit! It came with many different colours of soft wool, and a good few little tools that I have no idea what they are for... I don't know if anyone else's social media comes up with cute little crafting videos, but I admit that is what inspired me. I also learned from little videos that to turn wool into a 3D felted shape you essentially stab it repeatedly with a special barbed needle, this tangles the strands of wool, 'felting' it. Now by no means am I perfect at this, I realised it is therapeutically time-consuming and focusing, and helps de-stress and

practice mindfulness. It takes practice, certainly one of those things you can't expect to be good at immediately but you can learn strange little things about it as you go, such as, the more you felt a mass of wool, the smaller and denser it becomes. It definitely taught me a few things about planning, and adaptability following a lack of planning!

The felting kit, and some little test projects I made:



Languages, baking and running!
Ahmed, Students' Union Sports and Activities officer:

During the lockdown, I managed to learn a new language. It was French, using Duolingo which was very helpful and easy to use.

Also, I started baking different types of bread by making my own **sourdough** starter which gave a really nice, natural flavour to the bread. It is so simple to do by following the steps shown in the picture. My favourite one is "**Pistachio & Dried Cranberry Loaf**".

I have been baking some healthy cakes as well by adding some vegetables and fruits instead of using sugar.

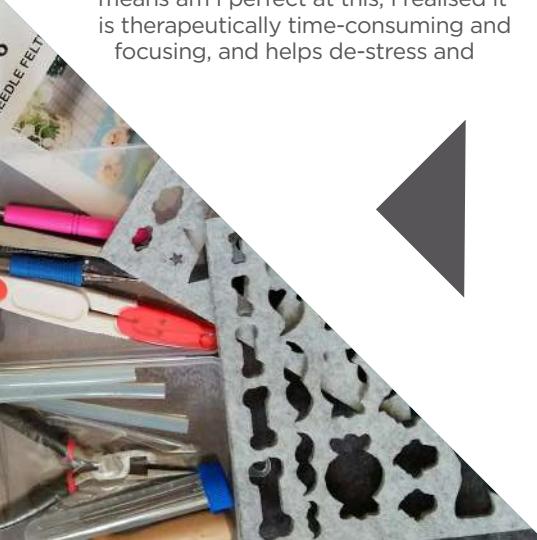
My main hobby is running, so I challenged myself to do something different by running 10Km every day for a month. And I am proud to have achieved this personal record which helped me to run the Virtual London Marathon in 2020.



Gaming and programming!
Shaikh found ways to supplement his career choice, as well as ways to take a break from reality:

Hi, I am Shaikh and I am the Student Union Employability and Enterprise officer. During the lockdown I started new hobbies and a few of them are gaming, programming, learning new technologies. During the lockdown I started doing more research around my study area and I found out a lot of new things that are now related to computer network engineering, like what big organisations are looking for from engineers and what new knowledge I need to be successful in the careers. Also, I became quite a gamer these days. Now I have a team of 4-5 people and we play Call of Duty every day and sometimes Elder Scrolls online, just to give ourselves a bit of a break from all the pandemic frustration and work. I also learned a lot of new stuff like Python, a bit of ANSIBLE and also working towards my LPIC certification. I spend an hour or two on LinkedIn and always end up learning something new related to my career.

I hope that these different experiences from our staff and students inspire you and give you ideas when feeling a little lost in these difficult times. Remember to reach out if you are ever struggling, even if all you need is a chat and a cuppa! You are not alone; we are in this together so let's watch out for each other.



HERE ARE ALSO WHAT SOME OF OUR UCEN MANCHESTER STAFF HAVE BEEN UP TO...

A walking challenge

Sophie achieved an awesome challenge she set herself a year ago:

The first lockdown, in March 2020, coincided with my 30th birthday. To commemorate, I decided to go on 30 new walks, before my next birthday, giving me a year to get some exercise and explore new places. Depending on the government guidelines, at times this meant scouting out walks on my doorstep, and at others I was able to travel further afield. For many, I was even able to invite a friend along to join me; giving us a chance to chat and catch up in a safe way, whilst getting some exercise. Having the target of 30 new walks really motivated me to get some fresh air, when otherwise I may have stayed indoors in front of the TV. It made a huge difference to my mental and physical health, and I'm pleased to say, a year on, that I've now achieved my 30 walk goal! I would definitely recommend this to anyone else who's looking to get a little bit more exercise and to connect with nature.

Here is a picture from one of my favourite walks:



Taking a course!

Liam sought out training in a new skill:

Through Lockdown 1.0, I managed to use some of my savings (as we weren't going on Holiday anywhere) and re-trained as a Tiler, with an aim to set up Self-Employed on a Part-time basis (evenings and weekends). I attended a course for a week in Liverpool in July in my annual leave from college, arranged bookings, and then set myself up with the equipment and tools.

It's been a massive boost in a number of ways, financially and mentally as it gives me a different angle on challenging myself outside the 9-5. And it's also great for being my own boss outside of work, taking on work where I can, and refusing if stuff is just a bit too much for me.

Training a beloved pet!

Ella and her dog Honey:

We've been trying to teach Honey to collect the post! Next, we'll try teaching her to actually hand it over to us instead of running away and hiding it round the house...



Learning skills with a new gadget!

Tas taught her son skills by working with their new Cricut:

I bought a cricut machine and my son and I have been personalising things for family members. This was just to start him up with some entrepreneurial skills to see if he wants to branch out. We have personalised our mobile phone cases, a few t-shirts and a couple of other bits.

It just meant spending time away from everyday mundane activities and being a little creative and learning a new skill. It also means spending a bit of time with my teenage son - win win!



CONGRATULATIONS TO JAQCUI DUNN FOR BEING SELECTED AS A JUDGE FOR THE EQAD FILM FESTIVAL

By Jacqueline Dunn

Special Effects Make-up Artistry | Foundation Degree

Having worked in the independent UK film industry for six years in varying roles utilising multiple skill sets, I found my ultimate passion and talent extended into Artistic Direction and Special Effects props and makeup for film, TV and theatre. In light of this, I'm currently a second-year student on an FdA in Special Effects Makeup Artistry at UCEN Manchester where I hope to graduate with a BA (Hons) in 2022.

Still currently in the film industry in a professional capacity and as a student, I am also a mum to four wonderful children, three of whom have been diagnosed with disabilities. Originating from a disadvantaged background personally, mine and my children's life experiences, alongside testaments from courageous people I have met, fire my determination for enablement and advocacy of individuals and minority communities in our fight for positive changes towards equality and diversity.

What better medium to promote this than art and film. We are here... experiencing and listening!

Judging for the Equality and Diversity Film Festival

The standard and quality of work submitted was outstanding. As the topics covered the vast spectrum of equality and diversity issues some of the entries were immensely emotive. The most difficult choices had to be whittling them down to 10 entries per category. There were 6 categories covering Best Music Video, Best Short Film, Best Documentary, Best Animation, Best Feature Film and Best Web Series.

The Judges Award Winner and Best Short Film was awarded to "*Innocence*", directed by Ben Reid. I cried my eyes as it's a subject very close to my heart. Watch the trailer [here](#).

It was just awe inspiring to see so much talent, creativity and diversity all challenging sensitive subjects head on... refreshing!

For a first year festival it was highly successful! I am really looking forward to judging next year too!

If you are interested and would like more information or how to get involved in the EQAD Film Festival, visit the below links:

[EQADEqualityandDiversityFilmFestival](#)
[eqadfilmfestival.com](#)

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A STUDENT AT UCEN MANCHESTER?

As part of our commitment and work around understanding the experiences of students from underrepresented groups, UCEN Manchester will be holding student consultations with students.

The ideas and feedback will help us understand the challenges faced and ways to improve the experiences of the following groups:

- Students who grew up in a low socioeconomic background.
- Students from a Black Asian or Ethnic Minority (BAME) group.

If you are interested in taking part and sharing your views

Contact slawal@ucenmanchester.ac.uk

OR the SU@ucenmanchester.ac.uk

Join us to talk about your experiences at UCEN Manchester and how we can implement strategies to support students through their student journey

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CAREERS CORNER: DEVELOP YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE WITH LINKEDIN

By Suzanne Leech
Careers and Welfare Coordinator

LinkedIn is the social media channel designed especially for professional networking and job searching. It has over 700 million users worldwide.

No matter what your profession, there are advantages to joining including:

- Learning from other members' profiles about what is involved in different job roles and what kinds of skills and experience you need to get these jobs
- Making connections with people who may be able to give you information or advice relevant to your career aspirations
- Finding relevant job vacancies to apply for or even being approached by recruiters about your interest in particular jobs.

Some sectors rely heavily on LinkedIn recruitment including IT and marketing. Business owners and freelancers can also find work opportunities.

Start by creating a headline and summary about yourself and add details about work and education, similar to those in your CV, and you can also add examples of your work and recommendations.

Here's an example of a student profile to give you some ideas - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/studentsample/>



LINKEDIN TOP TIPS FOR STUDENTS:

- ▶ Your profile is fully completed, including key words about your skills, experience and the types of jobs you're targeting
- ▶ You include a professional-looking headshot
- ▶ You follow individuals and companies from your targeted job sector and that you like, share and comment on their posts
- ▶ You post content of your own relevant to your sector of employment.

Find out more about using LinkedIn and other social media for developing your career in this article -
<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/getting-a-job/social-media-and-job-hunting>

1 Careers

The Careers & Wellbeing team is available to offer group tutorials and one-to-one appointments, designed to help students make informed choices about their intended career path. Some of the support we offer includes progression and employability tutorials, mock interviews and CV writing skills, as well as exploring labour market information.

Students can request appointments, which can be conducted via telephone and Microsoft Teams. You can request appointments by getting in touch with one of the team or emailing at careers&welfare@ucenmanchester.ac.uk.

2 Libraries

While the libraries are closed, due to the national lockdown, the team is working remotely to support via website, chat, email, and phone.

Student can download the 'Lounge to Library' Study Skills Guide here:
<https://library.tmc.ac.uk/refresher>

As part of Safer Internet Day, you can visit the 'Safer Internet' libguide on the library website. To view it, click on the link on the library home page or click here:
<https://library.tmc.ac.uk/safer-internet/home>

Don't forget the Library has a wide range of EBooks which you can access from home. Explore our wide range of eBooks available at home.

3 Study Skills

The Spring Term study programme has now been released. The focus of this term is reflection, encouraging students to critically analyse their study habits from the autumn term and reflect on their formal feedback from assessments.

Sessions are available at <https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/study/summer-school>

NUS TOTUM CARD

Don't forget to get your Totum Card.

Totum offers over 200 UK discounts to use at home and abroad, instore, and online. There's also an app to download too. Currently Totum are running a deal for the price of 2 years you can get a 3-year card! A bonus for final year students is you will get 2 years of student discount after you have finished your course!

DID YOU KNOW...not only do you save money when purchasing a card, but you are also adding to the Students' Union income for student benefits. If you haven't already, get one now by visiting www.totum.com



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Join a Students' Union society (or create your own!)
- Become a writer for the SU Bee Blog or submit stories for this quarterly newsletter
- Volunteer at SU events
- Campaign for change across campus
- Become an SU Officer
- Get your National Union of Students TOTUM card at www.totum.com for access to lots of student discounts. There is also the free version, TOTUM Lite, with selected discounts. Download the app on the App Store or Google Play.

Follow our social media channels for updates, news, events, and campaigns happening on your campus:

[Stu Tmc](#) | [@tmcsu](#) | [@tmcsu](#)

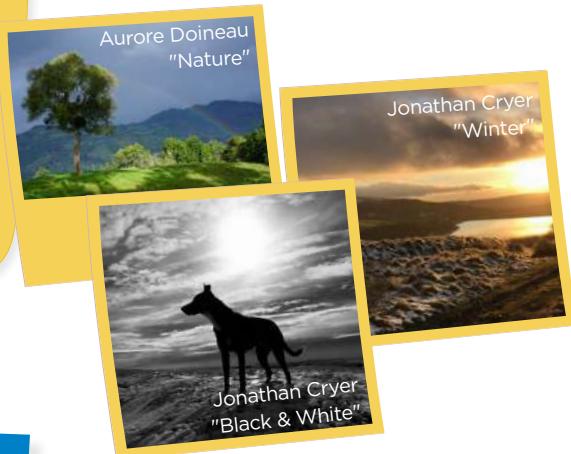
STUDENTS UNION CORNER

Societies Update

Photography Society

This one was started up last December. They have a group on Teams where they post photos to share with the group and have a monthly competition where they submit a photo that fits to one of the optional themes.

Here are some of our winning photos so far!



Visual Arts Society

This is one of our newest clubs that was just set up at the end of February, the aim is for people who enjoy drawing, painting and sketching to come together, share their work if they want to and encourage each other with feedback.

The Fitness Society

This club is a large community that have come together to encourage each other to be healthy, mentally and physically, and take on challenges to push individuals to their personal best, they are a super friendly and active group. In February they started strong with a challenge of walking 10,000 steps a day! People just do the best they can, and every little accomplishment is valued. As well as general encouragement, there are occasional competitive challenges too!

P.E.V.

Prestige. Equality. Voices. This is a group set up for minority students, to find and support each other. A friendly community for people to be there for each other.

Creative Networking Society

This is a Facebook group and a Teams group for students from varied creative courses to share their work and projects, as well as being a space where they can reach out to different classes for potential collaborations.

Tea & Chat Society

This one is very new too! It's a casual friendly space for socialising, we've had a few tea & chat evenings where people can get to know each other, talk about anything, and unwind a little. Everyone is welcome!

Film Club

This society makes use of bob, Box of Broadcasts, which is a site with many films free to watch for students. They vote on weekly films with the idea that people can discuss a film with others who also just saw it. In the future when there's a bit more freedom and we can be in groups again this society hopes to be more social and have the opportunity to get together!

Tech Society

This group aims to share knowledge and learn, all things tech! They have been having meetings to provide help for career preparation and are also organising guest talks from industry professionals.

I encourage anyone interested in any of the societies to get in touch and you can be added to the groups! Also let us know if you'd like to start a society yourself, if you have an idea we would be willing to help you find like-minded people!

Email us: SU@ucenmanchester.ac.uk

Follow our social media channels for updates, news, events, and campaigns happening on your campus:

Stu Tmc | @tmcsu | @tmcsu



HAVE A STORY YOU WANT TO SHARE? WANT TO FEATURE IN OUR FINAL EDITION OF THE YEAR?

The Newsletter celebrates student success stories, as well as reporting on past events or advertising upcoming exhibitions, performances, showcases etc. The UCEN Manchester student newsletter and blog is a great way to unite the community of students who are studying virtually and promote activity that might support cross-campus collaboration.

To submit a feature email sławal@ucenmanchester.ac.uk with your story and any supporting imagery by the **final week of April**.