

## REDUCE YOUR RISK



Forget Me NOT

One knot is for **YOUR BRAIN**

**Push your brain with puzzles and challenge it to figure out new things. Stimulate it by connecting with others socially. Push it to protect itself from losing every memory and piece of you it holds**

- Take up a hobby such as painting, woodwork or craft work.
- Read different styles of books, newspapers and magazines.
- Learn a language, an instrument or to dance.
- Go to the theatre, museum, cinema or to a concert with a friend.
- Play boardgames or cards with a club or with friends.
- Volunteer with a favourite charity or local community group.
- Travel to see new places, go with a group of people.
- Phone or meet family and friends regularly.
- Join a group such as a walking club, book club or sporting club.



Forget Me NOT

One knot is for **YOUR BODY**

**The body that needs to stay in top shape now to prevent it stumbling over simple things later.**

- 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, three to five times a week.
- Walking, cycling, swimming, gardening, dancing etc.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- Include fish in your diet, particularly oily fish.



Forget Me NOT

One knot is for **YOUR HEART**

**A knot is to remind you to keep it strong. Good food and exercise are part of the plan. Protect yourself from the things that can damage your heart and your brain**

- Have regular health checks with your doctor to ensure your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar are at healthy levels.
- Take steps to maintain a healthy body weight.
- Cut down on salt.
- Reduce fat, saturated fat and sugar.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- It's never too late to stop smoking.

## TEA DAY

This year's annual Alzheimer Society of Ireland fundraiser is on Thursday, 7 May. If you'd like to hold a tea party, you can register by calling 1800-71-9820 or by sending an email with your details to [teaday@alzheimers.ie](mailto:teaday@alzheimers.ie)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- There was a 20% increase in the number of calls to the Helpline in 2014.
- Female relatives accounted for 77% of the calls.
- Over half the Alzheimer Society of Ireland's income comes from the HSE. It is a registered charity.
- Nearly 90% of all funds received are spent on direct care provision.
- It has recently called for more research into why more women than men are developing dementia. Latest figures reveal that there are 30,359 Irish women living with dementia in Ireland as opposed to 17,385 men.
- A National Dementia Strategy was published in December.
- Dementia care in Ireland costs €1.69 billion per annum.

## CONTACT

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's National helpline is 1800-341-341 and is available Monday to Friday 10am-5pm and Saturday 10am-4pm. See [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie) for more information. **CL**

[www.fionahoban.ie](http://www.fionahoban.ie)

We need to acknowledge pain before offering any explanation, writes **Fiona Hoban**

I did an exercise class last week. It was called friendly circuits. I warmed to the notion of it being friendly

because circuit classes are invariably unfriendly and involve being shouted at.

I had some naive notion that there'd be a group of us there, chatting away to each other as we did a bit of light exercise.

It didn't take long for me to figure out that "friendly" is a nice way of saying "beginners". But there's nothing "beginners" about doing any level of circuit class – they're all tough going. Still, I felt great afterwards. Not so great the following day though. I could barely move. I think it was Sophie Lauren who attributed her sustained beauty to "posture and no old person sounds".

Cripes, you should have seen my posture last week, and as for making sounds – I moaned and groaned every time I either sat down or stood up. Even turning in bed was a delicate task that had to be broken down into three or four stages.

It's funny how people respond when you tell them you're in pain. They usually either offer advice: "Epson salts are great for muscular pain." Or they try to give rational explanations: "That'd be the build-up of lactic acid – it'll pass in a day or two."

Even though I know they're probably right in what they're saying, I still find it quite annoying. It's as if they're a step ahead of me. I'm not quite at the point where I want advice or explanations. I first need to have my pain acknowledged.

It's the same when I

NO PAIN  
NO GAIN

say I'm having a bad day. People can often jump in trying to rationally explain why I really shouldn't be having a bad day or offer advice on ways to improve my bad day. I just need to be heard.

It has been said that we spend our lives in the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Sounds simple and reasonable enough – such a pity we're so bad at it. Let's be honest, for some of us, our pursuit of pleasure causes more pain than pleasure (overeating, binge drinking – I won't go on) and our avoidance of pain often causes even more pain (ignoring a physical pain to the detriment of our health or burying our heads in the sand and hoping a problem will go away – it never does,

it only gets worse). So much of our pain is self-created and avoidable.

I love the Henry Cooper joke about a guy going into his doctor and saying: "Doctor, doctor, every time I raise my arm to this level it causes terrible pain." The doctor replied: "Then stop raising your arm to that level."

All joking aside, it's worth bearing in mind that much of our behaviour is not so much about the pursuit of pleasure but an escape from pain. This can help us understand, rather than judge, addiction and suicide. Eckhart Tolle says: "All addiction starts in pain and ends in pain."

We need to be able to acknowledge this pain before seeking or offering any advice or explanation. **CL**

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