

New Year, New You

A new year is a new opportunity to become fitter, healthier and happier

But, as Steve Seed from Preston South Circle explains, it need not be a chore



“I am a keen cyclist. I have been commuting to work for about 15 years when the weather is OK as I don’t do fog or ice and avoid rain whenever possible. This is my favourite way of keeping fit as it saves fuel, keeps cars off the road and I find it enjoyable especially in summer when I take the long route home.”

Cycling is a popular pastime and enjoyed by young and old. The advantages to becoming a regular cyclist are numerous, and it’s also environmentally friendly.

Steve says: “Benefits are that it is a clean and efficient way to travel; you see, hear and smell so much more when you are out in the countryside especially. It is non-impact so it doesn’t damage joints. There is a great camaraderie amongst cyclists. It’s also a great family activity as there are off-road trails and routes in most towns and cities that are safe for young and inexperienced riders.”

He adds: “I would encourage anyone to take up cycling but only do what you are comfortable with initially. Don’t spend too much money as over time you will build up your kit. Most of all I would stay safe by wearing a helmet and have lights as well. There is loads of information on sites such as Sustrans (a leading charity) and British Cycling, which give advice and will put you in touch with local groups and led rides.”

Getting on your bike needn’t be daunting. Here are some reasons why you should give it a go in 2019, courtesy of Cycling Weekly.

- Cycling improves mental wellbeing
- Cycling promotes weight loss
- Cycling builds muscle

- Better lung health
- Cuts heart disease and cancer risk
- Cycling is low impact
- Cycling saves time
- Cycling improves navigational skills
- Sleep better
- Boost your brain power
- Strengthen your immune system
- Grow your social circle.

Broughton in Craven Circle's membership officer and immediate past president Chris Beesley is another Catenian reaping the benefits of exercise this year. He's also using it as a great way to raise money for charity.

In celebration of his 67th birthday and by way of fundraising for local charity, ReSETTLEMENT, Chris recently ran the 17-mile Three Peaks of Yorkshire.

ReSETTLEMENT is a group which aims to re-house a Syrian refugee family in the Settle area, where Chris lives. The brainchild of Chris' friend, Paul Kelly, the group is part of a government scheme which runs in conjunction with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. It is also sponsored by Catholic Care Leeds, which has already successfully sponsored other similar groups.

The group has a business plan to cover essentials such as housing, education, English lessons and medical care, and although the family will have full refugee status entitling them to all the welfare benefits, the group must provide a minimum of £9,000 for contingencies.

Chris explains: "I, and probably most other people in this country, can't begin to imagine what these families are going through, where everything that they care for has been taken from them and they have to live in daily fear for their lives. All I had to do was run for five hours, which is something I enjoy, and if it made even a small difference, then it will have been very worthwhile."

The run started at Kingsdale in the Yorkshire Dales and involved a 2,419 ft climb of Whernside before descending to the Hill Inn in Chapel le Dale. From there Chris and the other runners climbed 372 ft up Ingleborough before making the descent to Horton in Ribblesdale. The final climb was another 2,273 ft up Pen y Ghent, before the big finish at Dalehead Farm, Stainforth.

A keen runner for many years, Chris does not struggle to stay motivated. "I love being out in the hills and living in Settle, I look out of my window at some of the best scenery in England. It really does make me want to be out there, whatever the weather."

Although many would argue that age is a barrier to exercise, Chris disputes this: "You are never too old! Running is one of the few sports that you can still do as you get older, and I am still competitive. In fact keeping fit makes you younger."

Although I turned 67 on the day of the run, my fitness is at least as good as most men 10 or 20 years younger. I have won a few age category prizes in the last few years which is a nice bonus. But most of all fell running is something I enjoy and I intend to keep going for as long as possible."

He does however advise taking it slowly and building up your fitness: “If you do start exercising in later life, I would strongly recommend getting a medical check first, and then begin gradually, mixing running with walking.”

Chris also believes that exercise is beneficial: “Being fit means I have more energy and, as a result, enjoy life more. It also means I don’t have any weight-related issues and can, within reason, eat and drink what I like. Yes, I have had a few accidents, it goes with the territory, but only four have been serious, which isn’t that many in 40 years.”

So often, people make the excuse that they are too busy to exercise but Chris disagrees: “Make time,” he says. “We all waste time by watching rubbish on TV, playing computer games, etc., so use that time for exercise instead. It is easy for me since I retired but I ran all my working life, so it can be done. All it takes is a bit of planning.”

For more information on ReSETTLEment contact settle.refugee@gmail.com or visit its Facebook page