

Your Health

 Health Partners

APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

WORLD HEALTH DAY & MANAGING STRESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE



In this issue of **Your Health** we take a look at our healthcare history and what we can do looking forward, in honour of World Health Day. Additionally, we focus on how to manage stress in the digital age and how to use tech intentionally.

World Health Day

A DIVE INTO OUR HEALTHCARE HISTORY & WHAT WE CAN DO TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE

World Health Day has been celebrated annually on April 7th since 1950. It was established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to mark its founding and to draw global attention to important health issues.

Each year, World Health Day focuses on a specific health theme to highlight priority areas of concern for WHO. Over the years, themes have included mental health, food safety and climate change. The theme for World Health Day 2025 is 'Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures'. In keeping with this theme, we're looking back at key health challenges faced in previous decades and celebrating the ways they have been overcome, before taking a closer look at the issues of today and how we can continue to build healthier futures for ourselves and our families.



Each generation faces its unique set of challenges.

A CENTURY OF HEALING

In the UK we have combatted health challenges and trends over the decades and found new and inventive ways to drive change.

▶ **1948**

The cornerstone of healthcare advancement was the establishment of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. A revolutionary step towards provision of universal healthcare, the NHS was founded on the principle that good healthcare should be available to all, regardless of wealth. This institution has since become a defining aspect of British society, providing free medical care at the point of use for every citizen.

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▶ **1960s: Smallpox**

Smallpox is estimated to have caused half a billion deaths over 100 years. It remained a significant global health concern in the 1960s and 70s, particularly in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) launched an intensive vaccination campaign in 1967. Through widespread immunisation, rigorous surveillance for outbreaks and rapid response to any cases, smallpox was declared eradicated in 1980. The vaccine has been used more recently to interrupt transmission of monkeypox.

▶ **1970s: IVF**

Pioneering work in cellular and molecular biology and the development of in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) in the late 1970s lead to the birth of the world's first 'test-tube baby' in Oldham General Hospital in England on July 25, 1978. A landmark for those battling infertility.

► **1980s: HIV/AIDS**

The 1980s saw the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which quickly became a global crisis. This was initially met with fear and stigma, creating barriers to accessing information and support. Mortality rates were high.

The response to HIV/AIDS included extensive public health education, the promotion of safe sex practices and the development of antiretroviral therapies. Today, 98% of those living with HIV in the UK are using medical treatment. With access to effective management, HIV is no longer considered to be a life-limiting condition. Unfortunately this is not yet the case in all parts of the world.

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► **1990 & 2000s: Tobacco Use**

As the health risks associated with tobacco use became undeniable, the end of the 1990s and early 2000s marked a significant push towards tobacco control. Around 30% of over 16s in the UK were smoking during this time.

Public health campaigns highlighted the dangers of smoking, tobacco advertising was restricted, smoke-free public spaces were enforced and taxes were raised on tobacco products to discourage use. Today, it is estimated that around 11% of the UK population smoke, underlining the success of the above measures.

► **2010s: Obesity and Related Diseases**

The rise in obesity rates and associated diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, became a primary focus in the 2000s. Public health initiatives have been implemented, promoting healthier diets and encouraging physical activity in effort to control the ongoing impact on our wellbeing and our NHS.



LOOKING FORWARD

The UK's current health landscape is complex. As we consider future generations, the importance of preventative healthcare becomes increasingly evident in the context of health services under significant pressure. With growing rates of unemployment, it will be important to emphasise the long term health benefits of 'good' work and encouraging access to work for all.

Screen time

Screen time rates have soared, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, with both adults and children spending hours in front of screens daily out with work and school. This digital dependency poses risks not just to our physical health, through increased sedentary behaviour, but also to our mental health, with implications for sleep and social interaction. You can take back control of your screen time by monitoring it and aiming to substitute some of this time with other activities, such as going out for a walk or reading a book.

Diet

Eating habits have moved towards convenience and processed foods as quick and cheap options in fast-paced modern life – to the detriment of our health as a nation. For example, most of us don't eat recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables, which would ideally make up just over a third of our daily food intake. A balanced diet should include a variety of different foods from the five main food groups containing a wide range of nutrients – fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, dairy or dairy alternatives, protein and (unsaturated) fats and oils. It is also recommended to drink 6 to 8 cups or glasses of non-alcoholic, low sugar fluid a day.

Exercise

Challenging the gradual shift towards sedentary lifestyles must be a priority. The NHS recommends that adults do some type of physical activity every day, with under 65's aiming for 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week. Physical activity lowers the risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Mental health

Mental health is a growing concern in the UK, with increasing incidence of anxiety and depression and reports of problematic stress, particularly among young people and those facing financial difficulties. Future efforts will be focused on understanding the reasons for this with high quality research and innovation in care models to improve access to support, which will require adequate funding. Individually, we can practice healthy habits, self-care, and foster social connections. Well informed workplace mental health policies can also play a crucial role in promoting overall wellbeing.

As we face contemporary challenges, our actions today will lay the groundwork for the health of tomorrow.

Prevention, as always, is better than a cure

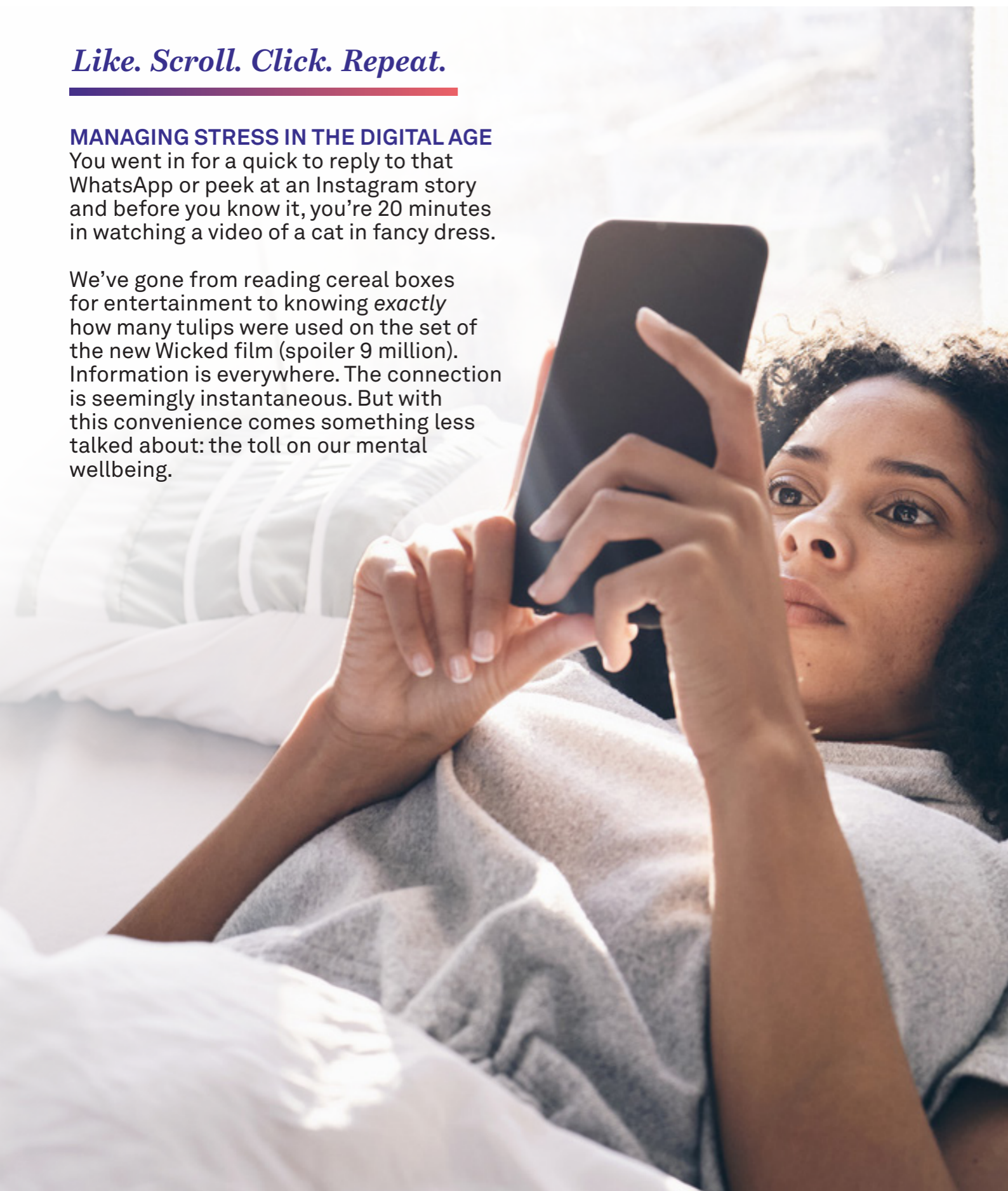


Like. Scroll. Click. Repeat.

MANAGING STRESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

You went in for a quick to reply to that WhatsApp or peek at an Instagram story and before you know it, you're 20 minutes in watching a video of a cat in fancy dress.

We've gone from reading cereal boxes for entertainment to knowing *exactly* how many tulips were used on the set of the new Wicked film (spoiler 9 million). Information is everywhere. The connection is seemingly instantaneous. But with this convenience comes something less talked about: the toll on our mental wellbeing.



WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT DIGITAL STRESS?

Stress isn't always the villain. It's our body's in-built alarm system—crucial for helping us react to danger or meet a challenge. Without stress, we wouldn't leap out of the way of a dog darting into the road or rush to meet an important deadline. But prolonged exposure to stress can lead to burnout, anxiety, poor sleep and even weaken our immune system.

In the UK alone, stress-related mental health issues cost the economy an estimated £28 billion annually, with 17 million working days lost to stress, depression and anxiety. Meanwhile, one in six young people are now grappling with mental health issues, with digital exposure playing an undeniable role.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

The internet serves up endless trivia—but at what point does entertainment become overload?

We live in an age of information bombardment. Companies, platforms and apps are competing for our attention—not just with each other but with themselves. Your focus has become the most valuable commodity in the digital marketplace. One minute you are Googling dinner ideas; the next, you're deep-diving in to celebrity feuds or watching how blockbuster films pull off their special effects.

Addiction plays a role, too. Social media platforms are intentionally designed to trigger release of dopamine, the brain's 'feel-good' chemical with every notification, like or new post. This reward cycle keeps us returning for more, even when it leaves us overstimulated and drained.

COMPARE AND DESPAIR

Cognitive theory teaches us about common thinking styles - one of which is compare and despair. Social media is a breeding ground for this. When we constantly compare our everyday moments to the curated highlight reels of others, it's easy to feel like we're falling short. Rationally, we know those beach holidays and spotless homes are filtered snapshots, but emotionally the impact is hard to ignore.



TECH: FRIEND OR FOE?

Let's be fair, it's not all doomscroll-worthy headlines and dopamine hits. Technology has given us incredible tools to connect, learn and engage. For many—especially those from marginalised communities, including LGBTQ+, disabled, neurodivergent and racial minority groups—digital platforms provide vital spaces for support, representation and belonging.

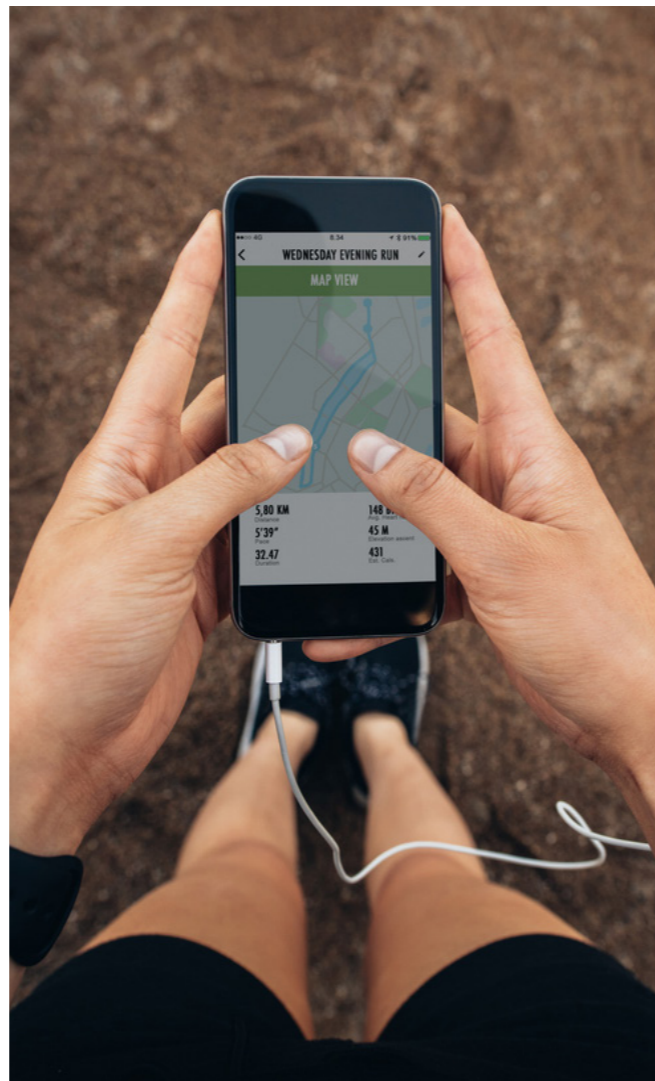
Mental health care apps have revolutionised access—with long waiting times for traditional services, digital platforms offer an alternative, putting mindfulness exercises, therapy sessions and crisis support literally in the palm of your hand.

On the other hand, imagine you finish a workout, drenched in sweat, only to realise you forgot to start the app. Cue the wave of disappointment as you wonder if your effort is somehow... invalid. Wearables and tracking apps promise to boost motivation, but they can also trap us in a cycle where data takes over. Closing rings, hitting step goals and monitoring heart rates can turn everyday activities into high-stakes competitions—with ourselves.

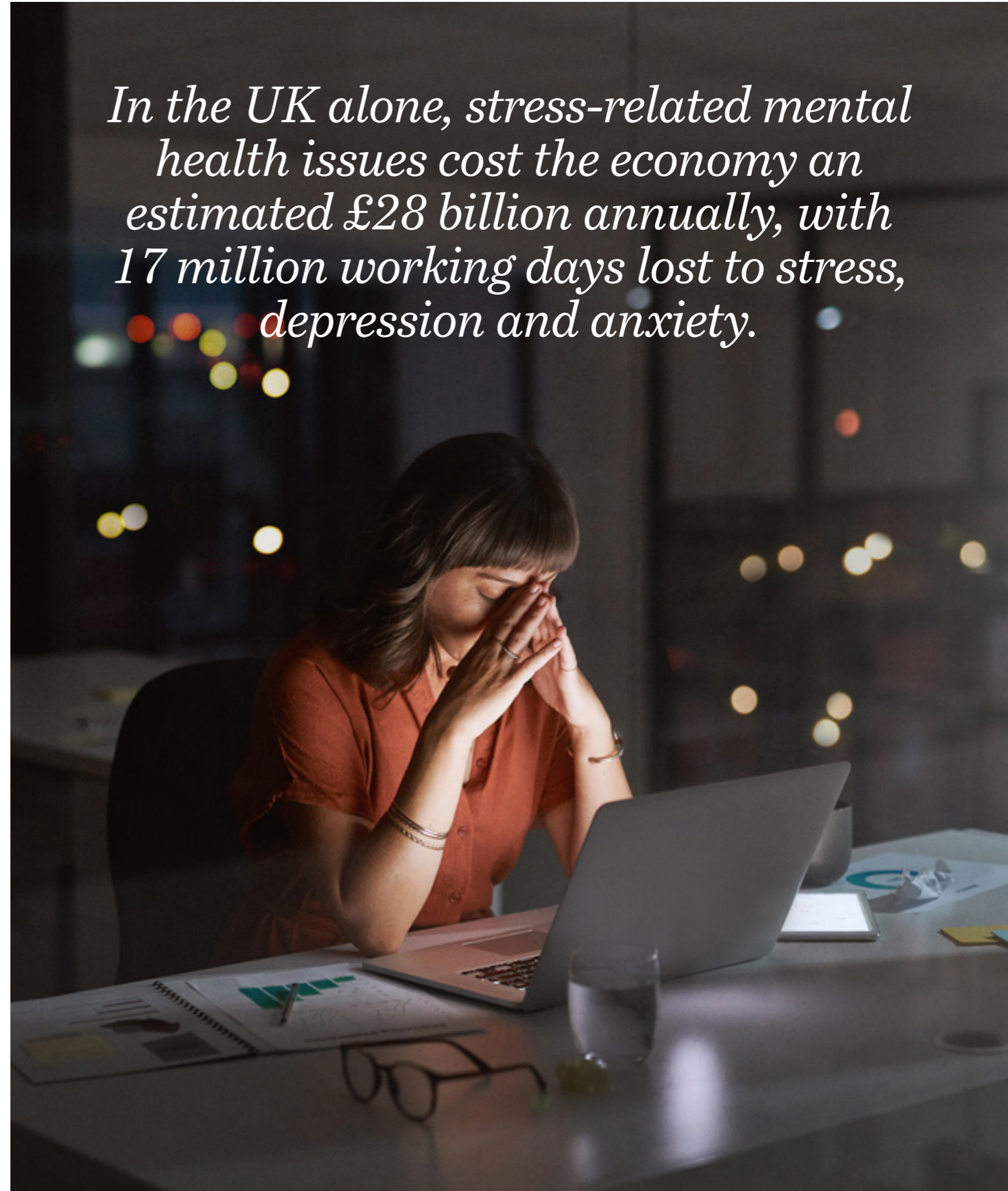
Did it even count if you didn't track it?

Sleep tracking can be another offender, especially if you find yourself lying awake stressing about how much sleep you'll log rather than resting. In striving for 'optimal performance', what began as helpful feedback can morph into anxiety, perfectionism or guilt when targets aren't met. Don't forget the dreaded notification: 'You didn't meet your goal today.'

There is also the subtle creep of data. Calories burned, minutes active, standing hours, it's easy to let numbers define success and overlook how you actually feel. What if you're exhausted but push on because the app says you're just 1,000 steps away from a goal? Or skip a rest day to keep a streak alive? Technology should support wellbeing, not turn health into another to-do list. Metrics can be motivating—but when they overshadow intuition, it might be time to pause the tracking and remember why you started in the first place. Sometimes, a run without data is just as valuable. It counted. You did it.



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WHAT CAN WE DO?

Stress in the digital age isn't going anywhere—but how we respond can make all the difference. The first step? It's worth considering how technology acts as a pacifier. We often reach for our phones to fill awkward silences, soothe boredom or distract from difficult feelings, even though endless scrolling rarely leaves us feeling better.

Here are some evidence-based strategies to help you scroll smarter:

- ▶ Notice the signs: Identify how stress manifests for you—whether it's jaw clenching, a racing heart or certain thought patterns.
- ▶ Curate your feed: Follow accounts that inspire you and mute those that drain you. Your digital space should uplift, not exhaust.
- ▶ Take tech breaks: Experiment with “phone-free” hours or app limiters. Even brief pauses can help reset your brain.
- ▶ Reconnect with nature: Just 20 minutes outdoors can reduce cortisol (the stress hormone) and boost mood.
- ▶ Call instead of text: A voice conversation can be far more nourishing than endless typing.
- ▶ Move regularly: Physical activity—whether it's a walk, dance session or gym workout—helps lower stress levels.
- ▶ Prioritise rest: Blue light from screens disrupts sleep—switch to wind-down activities before bed.
- ▶ Meet in person: Face-to-face interactions build stronger connections than digital ones alone.
- ▶ Practice mindfulness: You don't need an app—just take a minute to breathe deeply and check in with yourself.

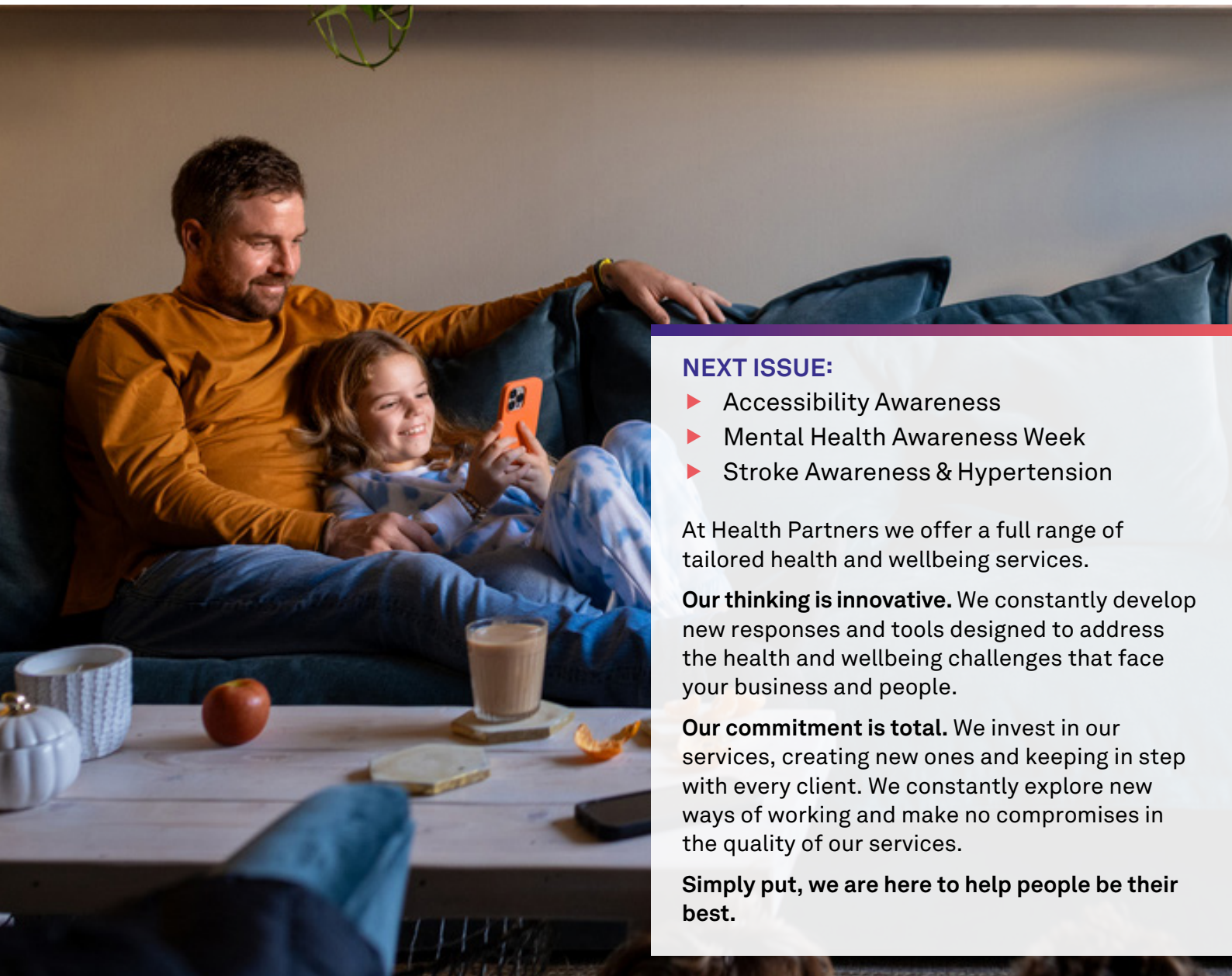
Technology isn't going away—nor should it. When used intentionally, it can connect us, educate us and even improve our wellbeing, but when mindless scrolling becomes a coping mechanism, it's worth pausing.

The key is balance: harness the benefits without letting the digital world run the show.



RESOURCES

- ▶ [Generational Shifts in Young Adult Cardiovascular Health? | WHO](#)
- ▶ [Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64 - NHS](#)
- ▶ [Tips to Curb Screen Time for Adults - Scripps Health](#)
- ▶ [Healthy eating advice must be based on the best evidence – UK Health Security Agency](#)
- ▶ [Eating a balanced diet - NHS](#)
- ▶ [The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)
- ▶ [It's A Sin and HIV in the 1980s: 'By 25, I'd lost 50 friends to Aids' - BBC News](#)
- ▶ [Smallpox - Our World in Data](#)
- ▶ [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)
- ▶ [NHS Digital](#)
- ▶ [Royal Society for Public Health](#)
- ▶ [University of Exeter, Nature & Mental Health Study](#)
- ▶ [Fixing Healthcare Is A Generational Thing | Forbes](#)



NEXT ISSUE:

- ▶ Accessibility Awareness
- ▶ Mental Health Awareness Week
- ▶ Stroke Awareness & Hypertension

At Health Partners we offer a full range of tailored health and wellbeing services.

Our thinking is innovative. We constantly develop new responses and tools designed to address the health and wellbeing challenges that face your business and people.

Our commitment is total. We invest in our services, creating new ones and keeping in step with every client. We constantly explore new ways of working and make no compromises in the quality of our services.

Simply put, we are here to help people be their best.