



HM Prison &  
Probation Service



Learning  
Together

## **Keeping connected: introducing ThinkLets**

**Learning Together builds educational communities that bring together people who live, study and work in universities and criminal justice organisations. Together, we want to use the power of education to improve lives, institutions and communities.**

**Covid-19 is a major challenge to our health and wellbeing. It means that we cannot physically come together as a community to learn with and from each other. But we can still keep learning and supporting each other to stay hopeful, positive and engaged.**

**Members of the Learning Together Network have created ThinkLets to help us all keep connected. Each ThinkLet contains resources that will help us to think about new ideas and develop new skills together, even from afar.**

**Each week, for the next eight weeks, two ThinkLets will be shared across our national community. We hope you enjoy them and find them helpful.**

**Keep well. Keep hopeful. Keep connected.  
And keep Learning Together.**

**Please note:**

**The following resource was created with love and care by a member of the Learning Together Network. We sincerely hope that the creator's work will be respected by distributors, readers and users, and will not be subject to plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. Thank you for your cooperation.**

# ThinkLet #13

## Motivating from afar: Lockdown and Family Fitness

**Sarah Nixon (University of Gloucestershire)**  
**13 May 2020**

*This period of lockdown is a difficult time for all members of society and for many our routines have become unrecognisable. I am a group fitness instructor and personal trainer as well as a criminology lecturer and the closure of gyms has forced people to rethink their exercise schedules and find new and creative ways of staying fit, healthy and sane. Eating habits have changed as we eat more, drink more and move less. Children are affected by this as many will suffer through lack of exercise and poor nutrition during this period. Joe Wicks has done an amazing job to address the nation and help parents in this respect. So, the focus of this ThinkLet is around keeping families fit and healthy through exercise and nutritional advice, whether you are together or apart right now.*

Some of you may be parents, have younger siblings, nieces or nephews and will be involved in the lives of children through friends. Therefore, the activities are designed to help you to think about how you could support the fitness, health, nutrition and well-being of the children who are important in your life. So, you are going to become Joe Wicks and Jamie Oliver all rolled into one! How does that sound!? This ThinkLet will be broken down into two parts; the first part considers **nutrition** during COVID-19, **childhood obesity** and the link between nutrition and performance. The second part involves considering **physical activity** where you will plan a **week of fitness activities** that children and parents can do to keep fit during this period of lockdown. The aim of this session is to help you to **feel connected** and be part of the journey to keep your family **fit and healthy**. Sending out your ideas to them and hearing the success and impact that they may have had will help you to feel part of their journeys during lockdown.



### Eating healthily during COVID-19:

Good nutrition is crucial for health, particularly in times when the immune system might need to fight back, for example during COVID-19. Limited access to fresh foods may compromise opportunities to continue eating a healthy diet. It can also potentially lead to an increased consumption of highly processed food which tend to be high in fats, sugar and salt. Eating a healthy diet supports good health (World Health Organisation). If we aren't exercising as much as we normally would, taking care of portion sizes is useful to maintain weight (BDA association of UK dieticians).

## What impact might COVID-19 have had upon eating patterns for your children and families?

### List 5 pieces of advice to pass on to your families to keep children eating healthy during lockdown.

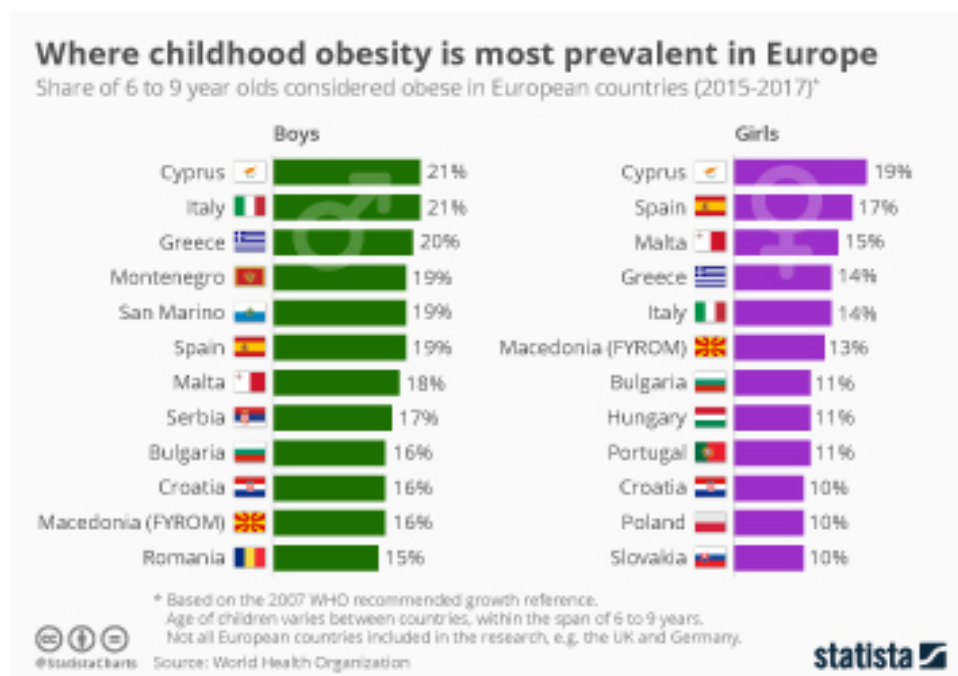
A study by academics shows children eating healthier lunches introduced by the TV chef Jamie Oliver do far better in tests (Guardian 2011). And it is claimed that a child eating healthier food will earn between £2,103 and £5,476 more over their lifetimes due to their improved literacy.

"As indicated by the relative fall in absenteeism in school attendance, it is likely that children's health improved as well, which could have long-lasting consequences for the children involved not only through improvement in educational achievements, but also in terms of their life expectancy, quality of life and productive capacity on the labour market," the study said.

"...we could see the benefits to children's health and teachers. We could see that asthmatic kids weren't having to use the school inhalers so often, for example" "We could see that it made them calmer and therefore able to learn."

### In 2019, an estimated 38.2 million children globally under the age of 5 years were overweight or obese.

Once considered a high-income country problem, overweight and obesity are now on the rise in low and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings. In Africa, the number of overweight children under 5 has increased by nearly 24% percent since 2000. Almost half of the children under 5 who were overweight or obese in 2019 lived in Asia (World Health Organisation). About 4.8 million American kids aged 10 to 17- just over 15% - were obese in 2017-2018, according to a new report (Besser 2019). The report also noted large racial and ethnic disparities. Obesity rates among black and Hispanic youth (22% and 19%, respectively) were sharply higher than among whites and Asians (about 12% and 7%, respectively). "These differences by race, ethnicity, and geography did not happen by chance," Besser believes. Family income also had a major impact, the findings showed.



This is a table of obesity levels in the EU. What factors do you think contribute to childhood obesity? You might want to explore areas like class, unemployment, family arrangements, ethnicity or disposable income (amongst other things).

Explore the comparative differences in levels of childhood obesity. Why does this happen? You might want to consider culture, lifestyle, provision of food or economic infrastructure of the country.

Think about your own health and nutrition in your childhood? What changes have happened in society over the last 2 decades?

What problems do children face in later life through childhood obesity?

## Physical activity:

Children and young people aged 5 to 18 should:

- Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day across the week
- Take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones
- Reduce the time spent sitting or lying down, and break up long periods of stillness with activity
- Aim to spread activity throughout the day

All activities should make children breathe faster and feel warmer, according to Sport England guidelines.



What impact has COVID-19 had upon children's activity levels?

What are the benefits of sport and physical activity in children? Think about benefits that are (a) physical, (b) social, (c) psychological, and (d) emotional.

How might you sell the benefits of keeping fit and active to young children during COVID-19?

What factors do you need to consider when delivering exercise to kids?

Think about your own childhood – were you fit, healthy and active?

What has changed in the last 2 decades to make children more sedentary?

## Get your personal trainer head on!

You are going to plan out a **7-day fitness/activity/sport session** for a small group of kids and adults who are living in the same household. Obviously, social distancing rules apply. You need to consider the following:

- How the adults can facilitate the activity
- The age of the participants
- Suitability and safety factors

Also, think about what equipment might be needed. Get creative with your ideas and make it as **FUN** as possible. Maybe encourage some photographs to be taken so you can see the impact that you have had in helping your family members to stay fit and healthy during COVID- 19.



The next page includes a table to help you organise your ideas, but you can make your plan in whichever way YOU choose. Hopefully, you will enjoy creating this plan and motivating others from afar as much as they will enjoy your activities!

| Day | Activity Location<br>(with Social Distancing) | Activity Details | Safety Factors | Ages | Duration of Activity | Role of Adults | Equipment Needed |
|-----|---|------------------|----------------|------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| M   |   |                  |                |      |                      |                |                  |
| T   |   |                  |                |      |                      |                |                  |
| W   |   |                  |                |      |                      |                |                  |
| T   |   |                  |                |      |                      |                |                  |
| F   |   |                  |                |      |                      |                |                  |
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