

11 Amazing bodies

Daniel Kish is riding his bicycle through the streets in Long Beach, California, on a Monday morning. He stops at traffic lights, waits, then goes on. Morning traffic can be dangerous for anyone on a bicycle, but Daniel Kish is blind! He lost both eyes when he was thirteen months old, but he has taught himself to 'see' with sound.

Daniel makes a special sound with his mouth and tongue. The sound hits things like cars and people, then comes back to his ears. Different things change the sound that comes back, so Daniel knows what they are. Try closing your eyes when you're a passenger in a car. If you are driving along a quiet street, you can hear the sound change when you go past something big – like a house or car.

Of course, Daniel Kish is very, very good at doing this. His brain uses sounds to make a picture of the world. Daniel can tell where things are, how fast they are moving, if they are big or small, and even what they are made of.

Daniel has taught many blind people to use sound in this way. He enjoys swimming, he dances well



Daniel teaching a blind child

and he likes to ride his bicycle in the mountains, far away from any roads. At first, many people don't think that he can possibly be blind!

Evelyn Glennie began to lose her hearing when she was twelve years old. But that hasn't stopped her from doing what she loves. Evelyn has made twenty-eight music CDs, and performed in front of big crowds in cities all over the world. Her music is always unusual, different, and exciting. She once played an amazing piece of music using only things that you can find in a kitchen! When Evelyn talks to people, she watches their mouths and 'reads' their lips. But when she performs, she 'feels' the music with all of her body. Evelyn takes her shoes off before she plays music, so that she can feel more with her feet.

There are lots of very successful disabled people around the world. There is a cook who can't taste his food, a dancer with one leg, writers who write with their feet . . . and many, many more amazing people. People like Daniel Kish and Evelyn Glennie don't stop doing things because they are disabled. They find ways to beat their problems and they have happy, successful lives. *They* don't think that they are different from other people – and they don't want other people to feel differently about them.



Evelyn Glennie

The Paralympic Games happen every four years, straight after the Olympic Games. It's a great chance to see some of the world's top disabled sportspeople. On the fourth day of the 2012 London Paralympic Games, thousands of people waited excitedly for the start of the men's T44 200 metres. T44 is the name for a race between people who have lost part of one or both legs. They run with blades – special legs for disabled runners. The fastest



Oliveira after the race

T44 runner in the world, Arnau Fourie, was in the race, and he started very well. He was in front for a long time, but then Oscar Pistorius, a South African runner, caught him. Pistorius was winning the race until the last 50 metres. Then suddenly, a young runner called Alan Fonteles Cardoso Oliveira came up fast from behind.

Nobody thought that the twenty-year-old Brazilian could win the race, but he crossed the line 0.07 seconds in front! The crowd went crazy! In Brazil, 8,000 kilometres away, Oliveira's family jumped to their feet, shouted, and cried. It was an amazing win for him – and one of the most exciting races in the Olympics or Paralympics in years.

12 Healthy living

We all know that it's important to look after our health, but how? There are lots of ideas in magazines and on TV and the internet, but always remember that everyone is different. Some people are healthier than others, and it can be dangerous to diet fast or exercise too hard. Here are a few ideas about how to stay healthy, but talk to people like parents, doctors, and teachers, and listen to their ideas too.

Exercise

From Monday to Friday the city of Bogotá, in Colombia, is full of traffic. But on Sunday the streets are silent. You can't drive in the city centre on Sundays, so people walk or ride their bicycles everywhere. More than a million people go for a walk in Bogotá every Sunday. It's a great way to make people exercise more.

It's very important to exercise because many people spend hours and hours sitting down. We sit in cars, buses, and trains on the way to work or school, and then many of us sit at a desk all day. And when we get home, we sit in front of the computer or watch TV.

When you exercise, or just move around, your muscles burn nutrients faster. When you sit and do nothing, these nutrients stay in your blood. Over time, this can make your artery walls narrow and full of fat. In the end, it can stop blood from getting to your heart!

Do you like swimming, playing basketball, or running? How about working in a garden, or walking to school or work? There are lots of ways to exercise, and not all of them are sports. The best exercise makes your heart beat fast, but even cleaning the house is much better than watching TV.

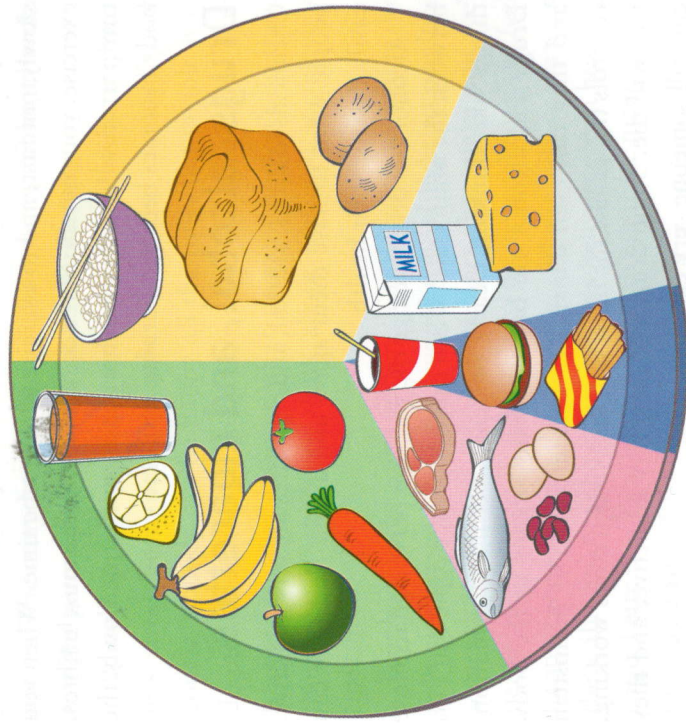
Exercise is great for your health, but it's important to exercise safely. Lifting something heavy can hurt your back, and running fast will hurt your legs if you haven't done it before. So always start slowly and exercise gently. Check with a doctor before you try anything new.

Healthy eating

Your body needs carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, but some types of these nutrients are better for you than others. Chocolate and fruit both have carbohydrates like sugars in them, but the natural sugars in fruit are much better for you than the sugar in chocolate. It's also important to get your nutrients from healthy, not unhealthy, food. You can get protein and fat from unhealthy things like hamburgers, or from healthy foods like fish and some vegetables. Don't forget to drink lots of clean water every day too.

The plate on the right shows one example of a healthy diet: how much of each kind of food you should eat. The two biggest parts of the plate are fruit and vegetables (green) and foods like rice, bread, and spaghetti (yellow). These are great foods for vitamins, minerals, fibre, and 'good' carbohydrates.

The smallest part of the plate is for foods with a lot of fat or 'bad' carbohydrates, like sugar. A lot of these foods, like chips, also have salt in them. Over many years, eating too much fat, sugar, and salt can damage most of the organs in your body.



Eating too much food is bad for you, but many people don't realize that eating too little food is also dangerous. If you eat more food than you need, your body will change the extra nutrients into fat. This fat stays under your skin and around your organs, and it's very dangerous for your health. But if you don't eat enough food, your body won't get enough nutrients to work well. You will be tired all the time, and you will become ill.

Some people try to lose extra kilos by dieting, but it isn't easy. When people diet too quickly, their bodies make them feel tired and hungry all of the time. The body doesn't want them to lose the extra kilos, so what can they do?

If you want to lose extra kilos, it's important to diet very slowly, not fast, and to exercise at the same time. When you exercise, your muscle fibres change. Inside the muscle fibres, tiny parts divide so they can burn more nutrients. Slowly, the body becomes better at burning extra fat.

Drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes

Chemicals in drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes are very addictive: people want to have them again and again. And they can easily destroy their health.

Alcohol and drugs change the way that nerve signals move between the brain cells. When this happens, people can't do things like thinking clearly or remembering information. Drugs and alcohol are bad for many organs in the body, and they can even damage the brainstem. The brainstem controls things like the heart and lungs – if it stops working, you will die. Some drugs are very, very addictive, and they can kill someone very easily.

A chemical called nicotine in cigarettes wakes people up and makes them feel good for a short time. Later, they feel bad and want to smoke again. For this reason, it's very hard to stop smoking once you start. Dangerous chemicals in cigarette smoke damage your lungs and many other organs in your body. It becomes more difficult to breathe, and smokers cough all the time. In the end, smoking kills about 50 per cent of people who smoke cigarettes for a long time.

Don't worry – be happy!

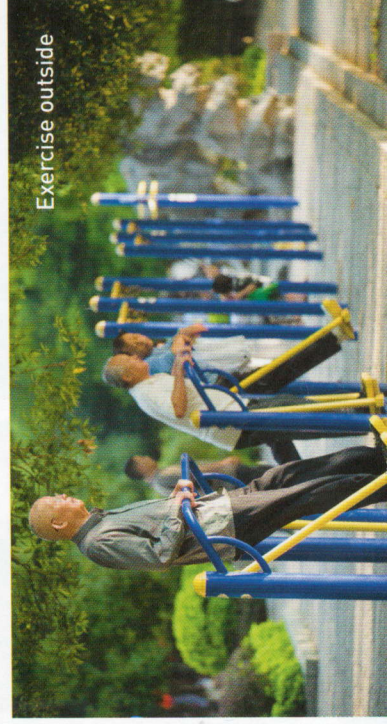
Stress makes your body produce 'stress hormones'. In the past, these hormones made people ready to fight or run away from danger. But most of the stress in modern life comes from things like working too hard or worrying about

something. Over time, too many stress hormones can make you ill. They can damage organs and arteries, make it harder to fight germs, and also stop you from sleeping.

Being happy is good for you because the body produces less stress hormones and other dangerous chemicals. Of course, nobody can be happy all the time. But people who do interesting things, go outside a lot, and spend time with friends are usually happier than people who don't do these things. So it's good to think about how you spend your free time.

People in some countries say 'The doctor goes where the light doesn't go.' And it's true. You need light to produce some vitamins, and 'good' hormones that make you feel better and sleep well. Bright, light houses make people feel happier too. So open the windows and use light colours on the walls. Studies show that pictures help people in hospital to get better, so it's also a good idea to put some nice pictures on your walls.

A few years ago, people studied groups of old men and women in Britain. They found that older people who do things in their free time and feel good about life live about six years longer! That's a long time in a person's life. So if you want to stay healthy, go out, meet people, try new things – and have some fun!



Exercise outside