

# THE ULTIMATE MONTHLY CHALLENGE



**A FUSION OF FITNESS, MINDFULNESS AND FUN**

  
**MIKEPAGAN**

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the ultimate monthly challenge, a journey that's as much about flexing your muscles as it is about soothing your soul. Ever since I was a teen, making a pact with my best mate to dodge the family trend of letting ourselves go, I've been on a mission to keep life spicy with daily doses of excitement and fun. This isn't just about breaking a sweat; it's about breaking the mould and discovering new passions. From diving into the pages of a gripping novel, strumming the strings of a guitar, to maybe even mastering the art of sushi rolling – it's all fair game.



We've all heard the tales of New Year Resolutions gone kaput by the second week of January. But here's the twist – these monthly escapades are all about crafting a short-term habit that sparks joy, pride, and maybe a bit of friendly competition. Imagine rediscovering an old sport, coaching young adults, or even becoming the local umpire. Or how about enrolling in a crafty class that tickles your fancy? The world is your oyster, and this challenge is your pearl.

This whole essence is a love letter to Self-Care. It's a nudge to treat yourself with kindness, both body and mind, without necessarily morphing into a gym junkie or weekend warrior. It's about connecting with a challenge that resonates with you personally, something that adds a dash of colour to your daily routine and keeps you keen right to the end.

So, what's the game plan? It's simple: pick something that gets your heart racing (in a good way), sets your neurons firing, or maybe even both. Whether it's beefing up your daily steps, experimenting with mindful breathing, or challenging your culinary skills, the goal is to fine-tune your well-being, embracing the whole of you.

A quick heads-up health check – don't forget to limber up before diving headfirst into your chosen escapade. And for those of us dusting off our trainers after a bit of a hiatus (or dealing with pesky health niggles), a thumbs-up from your doctor might be a smart move.

Timing is everything, right? Whether you're an early bird catching the worm or someone who finds their groove later in the day, find your sweet spot and stick to it. It worked wonders for me, and I'm betting it'll do the trick for you too.

So, are you ready to shake things up? I've dipped my toes in every single challenge listed below, with varying degrees of hilarity, success and failure or outright triumph. Tailor them to fit your chi and your capabilities, and let's make this month unforgettable. And remember, the best time to start is now; it doesn't have to be the 1st of .. why wait for a new month when today is as good as any?



Take care, stay safe, and let's embark on this fun journey together. Who knows what wonders you'll discover about the world and yourself along the way?



# PHYSICAL CHALLENGES



# DAILY ACTIVITIES

## Coffee and Sweat

For some, the idea of an early espresso and a gym session is bliss. If it works for you, keep it up. Find the version that fits your lifestyle.

Some people love the idea of getting up at 4.30 am, having a large espresso and heading off to the gym. Either you'll enjoy this idea or laugh at it; the point is that this is a positive routine for certain people, and if it works for you, keep on doing it. Is there another version that could work for you?



## Simple Squats



How many can you do every day? Add one more to your maximum from the previous day, which is always increasing; they don't all have to be done in one go. This is a cumulative daily total that grows by just one every day! At the end of the month, you will be surprised by the level you achieve.

## Lunges

Increase your daily maximum by one. Whether forward or backward lunges, tailor the challenge to your needs. Whatever your maximum is on day one, be that 2, 3 or 17, the following day, you must do one more than your previous maximum. Set it as a whole month challenge, build it into your natural working day and set a target of 15, 30 or even 50 in a row. That may sound impossible on day one, but it really works. Choose a specific exercise activity that best suits or best challenges you!

## Press-ups

Do one more press-up than you did the day before. You might start on 3, 15, 45 or 100 as your day one maximum. Every day, increase by one, and at the end of each week, on days 7, 14, 21, and 28, go for it and do a maximum effort surge - how high can you get?

Now, set that maximum total as your new base for the following week.



## The 30-day Plank Challenge: Plankety Plank

Build core strength by increasing the duration of your planks daily. Each day of the challenge, you'll gradually increase the time you spend holding a plank. At the end of the 30 days, the goal is to maintain a plank for 5 minutes straight.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	5	7	6	8	7	9	8	10	9	11	10	12
11	13	12	14	13	16	14	17	15	18	16	19	17	20	18	21	19	22	20	23
21	24	22	25	23	26	24	27	25	28	26	29	27	30	28	31	29	32	30	33
31	34	1/4 32	35	33	36	34	37	35	38	36	39	37	40	38	41	39	42	40	43
41	45	42	46	43	47	44	48	45	49	46	50	47	51	48	52	49	53	50	54
51	55	52	56	53	57	54	58	55	59	56	60	57	61	58	62	59	63	60	64
61	70	1/5 62	71	63	72	64	73	65	74	66	75	67	75	68	77	69	78	70	79
71	80	72	81	73	82	74	83	75	84	76	85	77	86	78	87	79	88	80	90
81	91	82	92	83	93	84	94	85	95	86	96	87	97	88	98	89	99	90	100
91	101	92	102	1/6 93	103	94	104	95	105	96	106	97	107	98	108	99	109	100	110
Grand Total																		5618	

**For example:**  
 consider this as a 30-day plan = 20 secs - 20 secs - 30 secs - 30 secs - 40 secs - 40 secs - 45 secs - 45 secs - 1 min - 1 min - 1 min - 1 1/2 mins - 1 Min - 1 1/2 mins - 1 1/2 mins - 2 mins - 2 mins - 2 1/2 mins - 2Mins - 2 1/2 mins - 2 1/2 mins - 3 mins - 3 mins - 3 1/2 mins - 3 1/2 mins - 3 Mins - 4 mins - 4 mins - 4 1/2 mins - 5 mins.

Think about how you will entertain your mind while you push forward—singing songs, computing budgets, or dictating an article. Distracting your mind from the task at hand will make this challenge easier!



# RED MONTH CHALLENGES

# RED MONTH: RUN EVERY DAY

How does a RED month sound to you? Run every day, no days off, no matter the distance. Adapt the challenge to fit your fitness level, and enjoy the journey. Just get out there on the roads and footpaths, on a treadmill in the gym and run every day. One month, I did this with my non-runner daughter. At the end of the month, she easily completed 5km +.

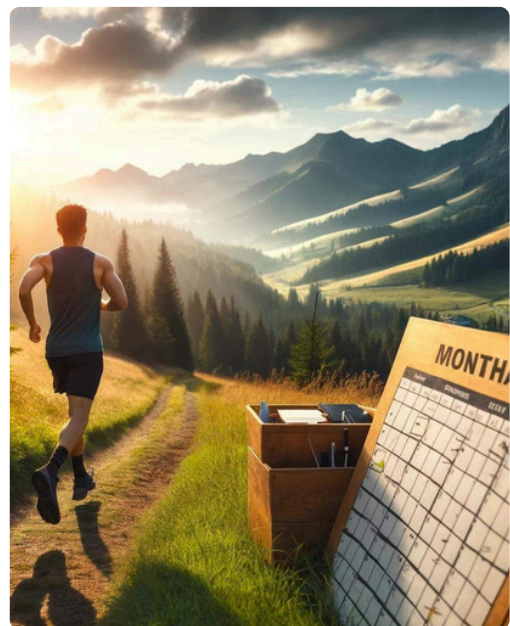
Add some distance challenges if you want to make a RED month harder. I have done a RED5km before now—it was tough, especially as it was in the middle of winter, and I was successful.

## Falling out of hate with running!

You can always go back to a challenge you've done before – recently, I set a unique challenge for myself: I targeted a simple goal to achieve a "PW" (Personal Worst) at the local Parkrun. I succeeded brilliantly; it was a fun way to start the year. However, this triggered the real goal of running for 30 minutes daily for the rest of the month.

Now, this wasn't about distance or speed; it was a commitment to move my 'RUN'ish for half an hour every single day. I can't deny that it hurt at times, and it certainly wasn't a series of quality sprints. There were days when it was, in all honesty, more like a gentle jog-shuffle interspersed with a walk and a bit more running.

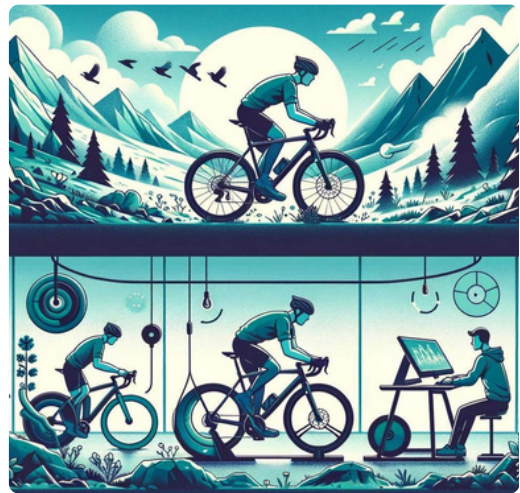
But on day 31, I met that challenge. The result? Tightened muscles, increased energy, and that wonderful feeling of accomplishment. Another personal challenge completed for no other reason than pushing myself!! And I didn't hate the running because I wasn't trying to be Mo Farrah or the equivalent!!



## RED Month – Cycle

Ride your bike daily. (Adapt to weather by using indoor bikes if necessary.)

RED month can also spell "ride" rather than "run" – again, get on your bike every day and ride, choose a minimum time goal or a distance and keep on riding. Beware of those hugely expensive home gym bikes that need permanent space and long-term commitment; don't invest if you risk letting them become an expensive clothes horse in the corner of your room!



## SED Month – Swim Every Day

Swim daily, whether in a pool, lake, or sea, wherever is convenient, realistic and safe for you to do so. Like a daily gym workout, a pool swim needs a target, minimal time in the water or many lengths or distances – every day, you get in and pound those lengths up and down. Over the years, I have found a swim time goal the most effective as it stops me needing to stay mentally present to count each length – I am then free to let my mind wander, to think and plan, just to become blank or in one case calculate the foreign currency transfers I had coming up when I was moving between countries. As always, do what works for you.

I was recently given a set of waterproof headphones. I can swim along listening to music, podcasts or audiobooks; as long as I don't push off too hard, they stay in my ears and keep me entertained. I have never used them in open water as the beauty of being outside is the sounds of nature and the water around you.



There is so much written nowadays about cold water swimming and getting into the wild – yes, I am a fan. However, being UK-based, we are talking cold water (there is colder, of course); anything below 15 degrees is considered cold water and as with all open water, needs to be respected. If this is an area you would like to investigate further, many groups on all social media platforms share advice, swim meet-ups and camaraderie – DO NOT take this up on your own.

A great friend of mine moved to the coast in Wales and became part of a BlueTits group that swims 2-3 times a week all year around in the sea. If I were closer, I would have been more involved there. However, to count for this monthly challenge, it must be completed daily. For many, cold water swimming is a daily routine that has proved therapeutic and encouraged positive mental health.

## Yoga Month

Commit to daily yoga, whether through online classes or at a studio. Improve flexibility, breathing, and mindfulness.

Whether you are a naturally bendy person and practise yoga regularly or not, a month of taking online classes in your front room or going to a yoga studio can make a huge difference to your flexibility, breathing and general mindfulness. Why not give it a go? There are so many free classes on YouTube; try a few, find an instructor you can relate to, enjoy their style, and repeat daily.



I have friends who have committed to this daily for several years, and it has become part of their routine right after getting up in the morning. Find a time that works for you.

## HIT Month

High-intensity training: Good old-fashioned circuit training and classes can be as hard as you want them to be. Don't be afraid of taking one of these sessions because it's not normal for you and looks a bit extreme. As with all the activities described here, it's about completion, not competition, and building habits that benefit us all physically and mentally. In a HIT class, you do what you can, and the next time, you do a little bit more.

Here are some different versions of HIT sessions - On the Clock - The Ladder - Pyramid sessions

### On the Clock:

Create a selection of exercises - some you like and are good at, others you need or want to improve. There could be five, ten or twenty exercises in your set. Then give yourself a fixed amount of time per exercise 30 sec, 45 sec, 1 min - plus a short recovery time.

Do the first exercise in the timeframe you have decided, then do the next exercise until you have completed the set. Take a short break and do another set, if you can, and then another!! The technique is so important here; if you are unsure, stop and take advice and instruction from someone who knows; injuries hurt and can be avoided with the right support, so find and use a coach.

### **The Ladder:**

Allocate exercises to the number of repetitions to be completed. This is a real example of a Ladder I finished recently. It was very hard...

10 Burpees – 9 Jumping Squats – 8 Star Jumps – 7 Bag Slams – 6 Press Ups – 5 TRX Pull Ups – 4 Kettle Bell Row – 3 Bear Crawls – 2 Side Lunges – 1 Crunch

Go up and then go back down again - Do 10 – 10,9 – 10,9,8 – 10,9,8,7 – 10,9,8,7,6 all the way down and then all the way back up again! Yes, that did equate to 200 burpees – I hate Burpees!! Create your version; perhaps go with just five exercises; it's your choice; nobody checks or judges you, so do what works for you!

### **Pyramids:**

You can do pyramids when pool swimming – 25m - 50m - 75m - 100m - 125m - 150m - 175m - 200m - 175m - 150m - 125m - 100m - 75m - 50m - 25m. You choose your next marker and build accordingly, then design the pyramid training environment that works for you.

I have put this with the HIT training because it takes me back to my rugby days on full-sized pitches where we simply had to run back and forth to each line up the pitch and then back down again. This can be completed in any open space where you set out the distance you want to run, build up, and back down again. On the rugby pitch, there are six lines you run out to and back: 25m – 40m - 50m - 60m – 75m – 100m – 75m - 60m - 50m - 40m - 25m; the total distance covered is 600m.

### **Gym:**

Why not just actually attend the gym every day for a month? Choose a Personal Trainer to write a daily mixed workout for you and push yourself to the next level. If something like CrossFit or equivalent works for you, then go for it, I have always avoided that one to date because of self-limiting beliefs (I'm not strong enough, strength to weight ratio not good enough, or maybe even I'm too old). Who knows what you could achieve by consistently using a gym workout with weights, flexibility, cardio, and swimming?





# MOUNTAIN CLIMBER MADNESS

# MOUNTAIN CLIMBER MADNESS:

## "The Ascent of Mount Challenge"

Commit to a daily mountain climber exercise routine, starting with a moderate number for 2 minutes and increasing the intensity and duration each day. Aim for high-intensity bursts that push your cardiovascular and muscular limits.

Imagine yourself at the base of a towering mountain. Each day as you do your mountain climber exercises, visualise conquering a higher part of this mountain. Your goal by the end of the month is to reach the summit. With every passing day, as you push harder and go longer, you're not just strengthening your body but also climbing higher, facing harsher winds, steeper slopes, and finally, the triumphant view from the peak.



If you don't have any equipment or gym membership, just find a set of stairs and set a daily goal for climbing them. Start with a manageable number and increase daily. This challenge improves cardio and leg strength and can easily be integrated into daily life.

**Outcome:** Improved cardiovascular fitness, leg and core strength, and stamina. Be aware of your posture and ensure you always engage your core!

## HIIT the Ground Running: "The Urban Warrior's Quest"



High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) daily. Begin with 15-minute sessions and increase complexity and duration each week. I think of many of these exercises as old-fashioned circuit training – they include burpees, sprinting, jump squats, and push-ups to push the boundaries.

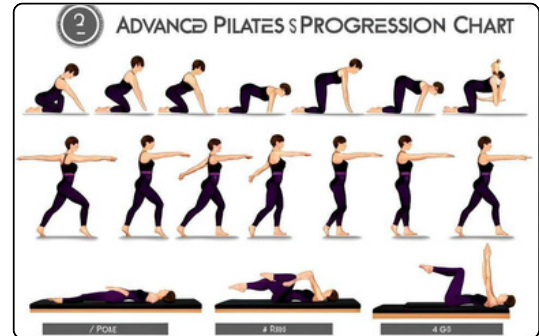
Use a timing app such as Tabata to set your times per exercise and rest – 1 minute followed by 15 seconds rest. You can create many versions of this and increase or decrease the number of exercise splits to include.

**Outcome:** Enhanced endurance, strength, and fat-burning – all-around fitness levels increased from flexibility and strength to stamina and energy!

## Advanced Pilates Progression

Start with intermediate Pilates exercises and progress to advanced moves. Focus on exercises that require core strength, balance, and flexibility, pushing your body to new limits daily.

Picture yourself preparing for the most significant performance of your life. Each Pilates session is a rehearsal where you perfect your moves, balance, and grace. By the end of the month, you're not just fitter and more flexible, but you're also ready to take the stage confidently, showcasing your strength and elegance.



**Outcome:** Improved core strength, flexibility, body awareness, mindfulness and breathing. You'll improve your ability to channel improved peace of mind before, after and during your workouts.

## Ultra-Endurance Cycling: "Tour de Force"



Set a cycling distance goal that seems just out of reach, and work towards it daily. Include days with steep inclines or longer distances to really challenge your endurance and commitment. Envision yourself as a cyclist in the world's most challenging race, the "Tour de Force." Every day, you cycle through different terrains - from the cobble streets of ancient cities to the sun-drenched hills of the countryside. Your endurance and willpower are tested, but with each passing day, you're closer to wearing the winner's jersey.

**Of course, no rule here says you can't just buy a Peloton bike and have someone shout out at you every day for a month on a screen.**

**Outcome:** Being part of the great outdoors – breathing and living daily while improving your cardiovascular health, leg strength, and endurance. I prefer the outdoor version here – but that's just me

## Powerlifting Progress: "The Titan's Challenge"

I have never been a weightlifting person. I do fancy this, but I doubt my personal ability to actually focus fully on it for a whole month! Here is the challenge: begin a powerlifting routine with a focus on increasing weight and intensity. Set weekly targets for squats, deadlifts, and bench presses. Ensure proper form and safety while progressively overloading the muscles.

To help you visualise, why not see yourself as a modern-day Titan, lifting the weight of the world.



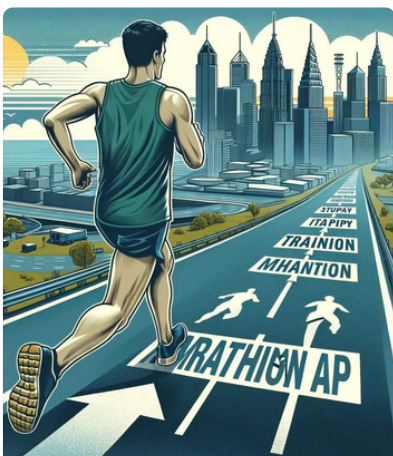
Each session in the gym is a mythic challenge, where you face off against legendary weights. Your strength grows physically and mentally as you lift heavier, standing tall like a Titan by the end of the month.

**Outcome:** I love the quantitative data that is produced here, demonstrating where you have improved and where there is little change. It becomes very easy to see increased muscle strength, power, and overall muscle mass.

## Marathon Prep Run: "The Long Road to Glory"

Train for a marathon with a daily running plan that progressively increases in distance and intensity. Include interval training long, slow, and tempo runs to build endurance and speed.

Your marathon prep is your odyssey, with the final run symbolising your arrival at a place of personal glory. Marathon running is regularly used as a metaphor for all life challenges, and the focus is that it's a long haul, not a sprint, so take it slowly, building and resting day after day!



Endurance training is very different, not other sorts; focus here on how you will entertain your mind when the going gets tough. There are many apps and online programmes that will hold your hand day by day through this challenge.

**Outcome:** Slow and steady – slow and steady. Go too fast, and you'll burn out; go too slow, and there is no progression or development! Improved running efficiency, endurance, and preparation for marathon distances.

## Boxing Bootcamp: "The Contender's Path"

Daily intensive boxing workouts combine heavy bag work, speed drills, and sparring sessions. Increase the length and intensity of workouts as the month progresses. It's a relatively low-cost challenge, as you only need access to a bag and some gloves! Consider yourself as a rising star in the boxing world. Each workout is a step in your journey to become a champion. The heavy bag is your opponent, the speed drills are your dazzling footwork, and the sparring sessions are your climactic fights.



By the end of the month, you're not just fitter and stronger; you're ready to contend for the title.

**Outcome:** Enhanced cardiovascular fitness, agility, hand speed, and hand-eye coordination.

## Triathlon Training: "The Ultimate Athlete's Trial"

Prepare for a triathlon with daily training sessions focusing on swimming, cycling, and running. Each week, increase the intensity and duration in each one of the disciplines, ensuring a well-rounded and challenging routine. My frustration in the world of triathlon is the disproportionate amount of swimming in the races – my strength but the average triathlete's worst event.



You're an athlete competing in the most grueling triathlon ever conceived. Each day, you alternate between swimming, cycling, and running, conquering different elements - water, land, and your inner limitations. This is the ultimate test of your endurance, resilience, and spirit.

**Outcome:** Improved multi-sport endurance, technique, and race readiness – don't forget the celebratory drink at the end will taste so good.

## CrossFit Challenges: "The Gladiator's Arena"

This is another level of training and not for the fainthearted! Incorporate daily CrossFit workouts with a focus on varied, high-intensity functional movements. Include challenges like the Murph, Fran, or Helen, which are renowned for their intensity and requirement.

You really can easily imagine yourself as a gladiator in ancient Rome, training for the grand spectacle in the Colosseum. Each CrossFit workout is a different form of combat training - lifting for strength, jumping for agility, and enduring for stamina. By the end of the month, you're not just in peak physical condition; you're ready to face any challenge in the arena.

**Outcome:** How far have you come? Like weightlifting, there is clear data showing where progress has been made and the ability to complete part workouts and full workouts.



### Rock Climbing Routines: "The Cliffhanger's Adventure"

How is your strength relative to body weight? Can you carry your whole weight in your arms? Start with indoor climbing and gradually move to outdoor rock climbing sessions. Focus on improving grip strength, endurance, and technique, setting more challenging weekly routes.



Where is your favourite mountain, cliff face or pinnacle? Visualise yourself as a daring climber, tackling the world's most formidable cliffs. Each session is a new cliff face, a different challenge. Your fingers and toes are your tools, body, mind, and resources. As you progress, the climbs get tougher, but so do you. By the end of the month, you're not just a climber; you're a master of vertical worlds.

**Outcome:** Improves strength-to-weight ratio, core, and flexibility – not forgetting communication skills, trust and a real zest for life in the outdoors.

Remember that each challenge you've encountered is more than a test of physical strength; it's a testament to your endurance, determination, and spirit. The journey through "Mountain Climber Madness," "HIIT the Ground Running," "Advanced Pilates Progression," and all the other exhilarating challenges is a powerful reminder that our true potential is often realised in the face of adversity. These routines are not just workouts; they're stepping stones to self-discovery, resilience, and a deeper connection with your inner strength. Carry forward your lessons learned, the boundaries pushed, and the triumphs achieved, as they are now integral parts of your fitness story and personal growth. Keep challenging yourself, growing, and, most importantly, enjoying every step of this incredible journey.

**If you fancy something more than a month, what about a 100-day builder!!!**

### Small Steps to Big Success:

#### My 100-Day Pull-Up Challenge as part of the Streak

To make the Streak a little more challenging, I added in the 100-day accumulator with Pull-Ups as the exercise! Yes, I did say pull-ups!! Each day, I committed to doing just one more pull-up than the day before. I could only manage three on day one, and it built from there.



#### The Incremental Improvement Strategy

The idea behind incremental improvements is simple yet powerful: small, consistent steps accumulate over time, leading to significant results. This approach is not about immediate, overwhelming change but steady, sustainable growth. You've seen the compound effect on your credit card bills when you don't clear them each month—this is the same thing but positive for you!!

#### Challenges and Setbacks

My challenge was demanding, and I tested my limits. I started on day one with just three pull-ups, gradually increasing my count each day. As the numbers climbed—30, 35, and eventually a maximum of 39 in a row—I encountered physical and mental barriers.

There were days when my muscles screamed in protest, and my energy levels plummeted, leading to a total wipeout when the bar gave way from the door, and I was left on the floor with bruising up my arm, back, and what felt like whiplash in my neck, luckily my head missed the basin behind me, just.. The physical toll was evident, but the mental resilience required to push through was just as challenging.

#### Scientific Backing

Research supports the effectiveness of such gradual improvement strategies. In fields ranging from athletics to business, small, continuous improvements are shown to lead to significant achievements over time. This approach aligns with the principles of marginal gains, where even a 1% improvement, when applied consistently, can yield remarkable outcomes. Going from just 3 pull-ups to 110 on the final day—that's successful cumulative growth!!!

#### Positive Outcomes

Despite the hurdles, the benefits of this challenge were clear. By the end of the 100 days, I had reached my goals and built a new resilience and understanding of my capabilities. I, seriously, never thought I would get above 20-30, let alone all the way. The discipline and consistency required to add just one more pull-up each day developed a mental and physical strength that transcended the exercise itself.

## A Call to Action

For those looking to transform any aspect of their lives—health, career, or personal growth—I am a real fan of this incremental improvement method and building positive habits. Start with one small, achievable change today, then add more tomorrow. The cumulative effect of these steps can lead you to achieve more than you might imagine.

## Conclusion

The 100-day pull-up challenge was a personal experiment in how small steps can lead to great achievements. It taught me about persistence, limits, and breakthroughs. Have a go - you never know what you might unlock!! In 100 days, I completed 5618 pull-ups!!!

### HARD 75 or the SOFT 75

A similar challenge you will find online now is the HARD 75 or the SOFT 75 – Again, a cumulative daily exercise challenge. The clue is in the title: HARD means Hard, and Soft means not quite as HARD as the other one, but still daily commitments and punishing on the body.

#### **75 Hard requires six commitments you must complete every day for 75 days.**

Two 45-minute workouts. One must be outside.

Adhering to a diet. You can pick the diet, but you can't cheat. No Alcohol.

Reading 10 pages of a self-help or educational book.

Drinking a gallon of water.

Taking a progress picture - start over if you skip a day.

#### **75 Soft requires 5 commitments you must complete every day for 75 days.**

One 45-minute workout – 6 days of activity – one day active recovery.

Adhering to a diet. You can pick the diet, but you can't cheat. Limited Alcohol.

Reading 10 pages of a self-help or educational book.

Drinking 3 litres of water.

Taking a progress picture.

As you can see, it is similar, in essence, to the challenge but a bit of a different variety for those who want it or need some other elements to stay on top of it!

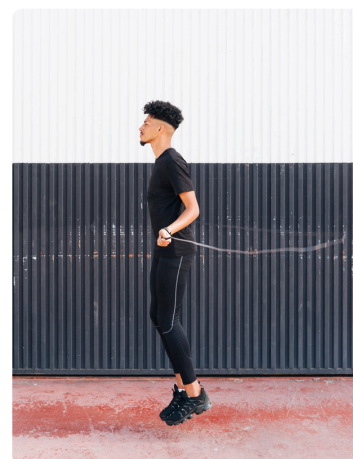
### Skipping – 1,000 skips

As strange as it may sound, I can vouch for the fact that a daily ritual of hundreds of skips can positively impact both physically and mentally. This was a ten-week challenge rather than just a month. However, you can always adapt it to one month; it's your choice.

The challenge is simple - 100 skips a day for ten weeks, which goes up on a weekly basis. In week two, it's 200 a day, week three it's 300 a day, and onwards up to week 10, when I hit 1,000 skips a day.

The maximum I could do in a row in the beginning was four! Setting myself a daily challenge meant I couldn't miss a day; I had to double the skips the following day if I did.

I never skipped as a child, and now I can. As the number of daily skips grew, I shared some observations to help those taking part. The counting often went wrong when I got distracted or tuned out - was it 42 or 52 skips in a row? Where am I up to now? Counting in bite-sized chunks or sets of 20s or 50s meant I only had to do a smaller number of sets, making it easier to keep track. Another option was to work out how many skips on average I did in a minute; it could be 25, 50, 100, so I was able to do the appropriate number of minutes to achieve the daily goal, plus a bit extra for good measure.



### **Bonus Challenge for you to try with friends**

#### **The Streak – Raise money for a friend in need or a charity!**

Exercise today, repeat every day for 100 days. Exercise to the point of sweat where a respectable person would need a shower every day, only you can honestly qualify if what you are doing is a push for you. Do chair squats through to HIT classes, and vary it daily; you decide.

For every day you exercise, you donate £1 or \$1 to the Streak Pot.

You will share in the spoils if you make it to 100 days. The pot will be split among those who have managed to keep their exercise streak going for 100 days. They will be known thereafter as Centurions.

The reward could be an event, a nice dinner, or an activity; the money will be spent on those still standing after 100 days. Please feel free to raise money for charity alongside this, but you still need to contribute to the pot out of your own money.

If you do not exercise for a day, the team will rely on your honesty to let them know, and you will fail the Streak. If you stop your exercise streak, you do not get any reward. You walk away from the pot; there are no refunds under any circumstances.

Bear in mind that 100 days, without a day off, is a great deal of activity. Do what it is safe and sensible for you, a balance of exercise activities will need to be chosen to allow parts of the body time to recover and other areas to build up. Always seek professional support and work with medical stresses that are relevant to you.

### Summary:

These techniques can be used in all areas of our lives, not just what I've shared here. Where else can you use them? As each new month arrives, you could choose a new challenge. Yes, some days will be harder, and that's where your mental wealth team comes into play. It's not just about sharing doom, gloom, and problems; your network will also appreciate the funny stories. Who knows? Maybe your life and monthly activities could be turned into a blockbuster movie in the future, covering all the amazing activities and experiences you have uncovered while completing simple monthly personal activities. Good Luck!



A photograph of three people meditating in a studio. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair is sitting in a lotus position on a dark mat, wearing a white t-shirt and dark blue leggings. Her eyes are closed, and her hands are resting on her knees in a mudra. Behind her, a man in a white t-shirt and a woman in a black tank top are also meditating. The background features large windows and dark wooden walls.

# MINDFUL CHALLENGES

# MINDFUL CHALLENGES

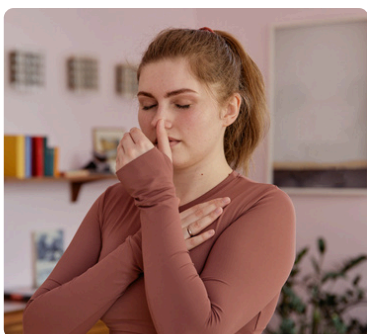
## Puzzle Peace Challenge

Enjoy puzzles with background music or silence. Relax and engage your brain.

How about jazzing up your puzzle time with some groovy tunes or enjoying the bliss of silence? Puzzles are like a mini-vacation for your brain – they're relaxing but also give your grey matter a nice little workout. Plus, it's kind of cool to see the picture come together piece by piece, right?



## Mindful Breathing Marathon



Practice deep breathing exercises twice daily. Explore techniques like alternate nostril breathing.

Start and end your day with a lungful of zen. Begin with simple deep breaths, and then maybe try out that fancy alternate nostril breathing or the 4-7-8 trick. It's like giving your mind a mini spa session twice a day. Feel the rhythm of your breath and let the calmness kick in!

## Sculpting Serenity



Try sculpting with clay for a relaxing and creative experience.

Remember those fun days in school, getting our hands dirty with clay? Let's bring that back! Sculpting's not just about making cool shapes; it's like a chill pill for your brain. Start simple, and who knows? You might sculpt your way to a masterpiece.

## Mindful Eating Month

Savour each bite of your meals, focusing on taste and texture.

Inspired by my mother-in-law, this one's all about savouring every bite. It's like turning every meal into a mini-flavour festival. Chew slowly, enjoy the taste – it's a game-changer, especially if you're usually a speed eater! 20-30 chews of every mouthful!



## Woodworking Wisdom



Engage in woodworking projects for a meditative experience.

Whether you're into whittling, fixing up that old bench, or crafting a birdhouse, woodworking is surprisingly zen. Measure, cut, sand, repeat – it's meditative, and you end up with something super cool and handmade.

## Yoga Nidra Nights

Practice Yoga Nidra for deep relaxation and improved sleep.

Roll out your mat each night and dive into the world of Yoga Nidra. It's like a first-class ticket to dreamland. Experiment with different versions – there's no one-size-fits-all here. Find your relaxation groove and enjoy the zzz's.



## Artistic Journaling Journey



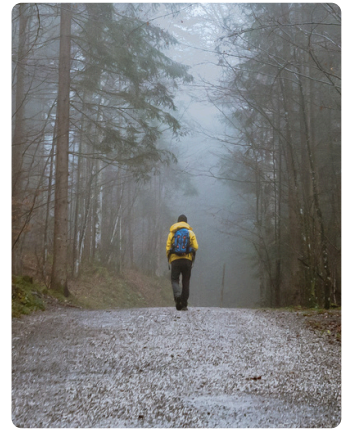
Combine drawing or painting with journaling to express yourself creatively.

Mix up drawing or painting with some journaling. It's like having a chat with yourself on paper. I've even thrown photography into the mix – it's a fab way to capture those 'aha!' moments and splash them with creative colours.

## Nature Connection Quest

5,4,3,2,1 - Take mindful walks in nature, paying attention to the sounds, sights, and smells. Look for 5 things to see, 4 to hear, 3 to touch, 2 to smell, 1 to taste – very calming.

Step outside and let nature do its thing. Go for a walk, but soak in the sounds, sights, and smells this time. It's like hitting the refresh button on your senses. And leave your headphones at home for this one.



## Zen Gardening Growth

Tend to a garden, whether it's a Bonsai or a cactus, for a calming activity.

Whether tending to a majestic Bonsai or a resilient cactus, gardening's the way for peace and quiet. It's about nurturing and growth – both for your plants and your inner self.



## Tea Ceremony Tranquility

Perform a Japanese tea ceremony for a peaceful and refined experience.

Have you ever tried a Japanese tea-making ceremony? It's like a dance with tea leaves—so calming and refined. Take your time, enjoy each sip, and let the tranquillity wash over you.



## Hydration Hustle

Set a daily water intake goal to improve hydration and energy levels.

We could all do it with a bit more water, right? Set a goal, track it, and watch as your energy levels soar and your skin starts glowing. It's like a health elixir that's just a sip away. Start at 1 litre, build 1.5, 2 +, and stick to it.



## Guided Meditation and Visualisation

Use guided meditations to relax and visualise your happy place.

Pop on a guided meditation and let your imagination take the wheel. Whether it's a beach, a forest, or a mountain top, find your happy place and chill there for a while. It's like a mental vacation!



## Gratitude and Goals Journaling

End each day by writing down things you're grateful for and your goals.

Doing this at the end of the day empties your brain of negativity and you might sleep better. By contrast, at the beginning of the day, it can help set intentions for the day and start the day more positively.



## Balance and Breathe

Combine balance exercises with deep breathing for physical and mental centring.

Mix up some balance exercises with deep breathing. It's not just about not falling over; it's about finding your centre – both physically and mentally. You'll be surprised how much fun standing on one leg can be!



## Ice Ice Baby

Try ice baths for muscle recovery, a refreshing experience, and breathing!

And yes, the ice bath! It's chilly, it's daunting, but boy, does it wake you up! It's great for muscle recovery and gives you bragging rights for being a total badass. Trust me; it's worth the shivers! Have a read online; there is lots to choose from - 2 minutes is enough to begin with!!



## Water Fasting :

There is a lot written all over the place on fasting from doctors and cleverer people than me. My world is simple. By dropping a meal now and again, you are, in effect, doing intermittent fasting; that was a show I started and reprogrammed my body and mind that feeling hungry didn't mean I was about to die. Therein lies the clue: hunger is not a bad thing - as I've built up to doing multiple days of not eating food, just consuming water because I'm not expecting food, the hunger cravings are far less. If at any time I felt I would have a seriously negative reaction, the fridge is only a room away, which means the experimenting is relatively safe. This subject is a whole other book – do your research and seek medical advice!

There you have it – a smorgasbord of activities to keep you chilled out and chuckling. Go on, give them a try, find your favourites, and make them a part of your daily routine. Remember, it's all about having fun and finding your zen. Stay cool, stay happy!



# **FUN AND LAUGHTER CHALLENGES**

# FUN AND LAUGHTER CHALLENGES

## Laughter Yoga Sessions

Join or organise daily laughter yoga sessions for spontaneous joy.

These involve a blend of playful laughter exercises with yogic breathing. The idea is to laugh without relying on humour, jokes, or comedy, promoting spontaneous laughter and joy. I've seen my wife and her BF doing this, and it's hysterical!!



## Dance Like Nobody's Watching



Have daily dance sessions to let go and have fun. Dance freely to your favourite tunes.

The goal is to let go of any self-consciousness and move in whatever feels fun and liberating. It could be in your living room, garden, or even a local park. When I was a young man, I danced often, but sadly, I was always fuelled by alcohol, which isn't the same thing as just dancing for the joy of dancing like nobody is watching!

## Comedy Movie Marathon



Watch comedy movies weekly for a joyful experience.

Organise a weekly comedy movie night, either solo or with friends/family. Choose films that are guaranteed to make you laugh out loud, creating a joyful and uplifting experience. You choose whether it's Ricky Gervais, Billy Connolly, Katherine Ryan, Michael McIntyre or Dawn French.

## Silly Sports Day

Engage in unconventional sports activities like three-legged races.

This was so much fun when you were a child—be a child again. Once a week, engage in unconventional and humorous sports activities, like three-legged races, egg-and-spoon races, or a fun obstacle course. These activities are physically engaging and a great source of laughter and fun.



## Fun Photo Challenge



Participate in photo challenges with humorous themes.

Create a daily or weekly photo challenge with a humorous theme, like making funny faces, imitating famous poses, or dressing up in silly costumes. Share these photos with friends or on social media to spread the laughter. It's so simple but so silly and can be very funny!

## Dance Breaks



Take daily dance breaks to reset and boost energy.

Press that reset button every day! Introduce daily dance breaks into your routine. Set a specific time to dance for at least 5-10 minutes each day. This can be any style of dance. The idea is to increase your heart rate, have fun, and change your mental state.

## Karaoke Nights



Host karaoke nights focused on fun, not vocal talent.

Everyone sings their heart out without worrying about how good they sound. The focus is on enjoyment and the fun of singing, not on vocal talent – it's not about being drunk and screaming down a mic!!

## Playful Pet Time

Dedicate time to play with your pet for spontaneous joy.

Animals do the weirdest things - If you have a pet, dedicate daily time to play with them. Pets often bring spontaneous joy and laughter; playing with them relieves stress. If you don't have a pet – babysit for someone and give it a go.



## Creative Cooking Competitions



Engage in weekly cooking challenges with a twist.

Make the most colourful dish, the weirdest sandwich, or the fanciest mocktail. Change the standard cooking ritual and recipes by stretching the comfort zones and experimenting – yes, there will be failures!! They are funny!!

## Board Game Bonanza



Play board games that encourage laughter and light-hearted competition.

Go to a board room café or get the old one out of your cupboard at home. Organise regular board game sessions with games encouraging laughter and light-hearted competition, like Pictionary, Charades, or Cards Against Humanity.

## Flash Mob Fun



Participate in or organise a flash mob for a thrilling experience.

This will stretch your comfort zones and be memorable and fun! Participate in or organise a flash mob. This could be a dance, a freeze mob, or something uniquely humorous. A flash mob's spontaneity and collective action can be a thrilling and joyful experience.



# DAILY ROUTINE REFLECTION



# DAILY ROUTINE REFLECTION

## Understanding Your Normal Working Day

### Do you understand your typical working day?

Here's a random idea – what does your standard working day look like? Reflect on your standard working day and break it down so you understand more precisely what normality looks like for you, when you are most productive and when you really need to be left alone in a quiet space in your own company.

### 6:15 am - Sunrise Awakening:

Greet the day with a large glass of water infused or straight – some say will add things like sea salt and lemon; I can't say that I do – I need to kickstart my hydration with water, not caffeine.

### 6:30 am - Morning Activation:

More often than not, I'm off to the gym or, on some occasions, to play golf – I'd love to say I'm great at taking it steady and building, but I'm not. I was on the cross trainer for 15 minutes, followed by a HIIT class for 45 minutes, beating myself up!

### 7:30 am - Post-Workout Recovery:

The one area where I am better, though, is after my activity at home, it's into the ice bath! It's all about breathing exercises and managing the brain chatter and the chill; this invigorates and prepares my body and mind for the day ahead. If that doesn't work, taking a reflective walk really helps set the day up well, enjoying the tranquillity of the morning.

### 8:00 am – What sort of breakfast:

I fluctuate here from whipping up a simple smoothie packed with fruits, protein, and a mandatory green element like spinach or kale. By contrast, I may skip breakfast entirely and count it as one of my meals dropped for the week ahead – some call it intermittent fasting; I prefer to focus on eating when I'm hungry or not eating when I know I've already consumed more than enough and missing the odd meal won't hurt me.

### 9:00 am - Dynamic Workday Beginnings:

With a peppermint, tea dive into work with energy and focus. I'm experimenting with a standing desk to encourage movement into my routine. I've always been a walk-and-talk kind of guy however – Zoom and Teams are always static, which makes it harder to move about. Mid-morning full-leaded coffee – gets me buzzing again when the early start endorphins begin to fade.

### **12:30 PM - Midday Mindful Meal:**

They say lunch is a time for another  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your daily quota of produce and protein – whatever the choice. If I avoid bread products, I feel less lethargic after lunch, and adding in a post-lunch walk of about 30 minutes really helps me to digest and reset.

### **1:00 pm - Afternoon Work and Wellness:**

Continue working from my standing desk, switching to green tea or, builders decaf tea or simple water. There are occasions when a cheeky power nap for 20 minutes comes into play, I sit for this bit! Not every day, but sometimes just enough to reboot and kickstart the rest of the afternoon.

### **5:00 pm - Evening Transition:**

The switch between work and home has changed so much now that I don't generally have a long commute to untangle my mind. My best solution, weather and location permitting, is an open water swim for an extra dose of exhilaration and connection with nature.

### **Followed by Culinary Creativity:**

I do enjoy cooking, and some days, I am far more creative than others. I prefer to be involved with others, so it's a fun experience. We are empty nesters; this happens less, but the principle remains. This is often a sit-down shared meal, reconnecting with others and discussing the day's events.

### **7:30 pm - Evening Unwind:**

After dinner is an area where I could do so much better – stepping away from the TV and watching random movies, sports or boxsets. Not generally done alone, but it's not very sociable and productive and happens too often rather than infrequently. An area for me to work on.

### **8:30 pm - Pre-Sleep Ritual:**

Technology off would be a goal, but it wouldn't really happen. My phone is charged downstairs and avoided as much as possible during the evening, so I'm not all bad here.

### **9:30 pm - Quiet Reading Time:**

My wife is good at doing this, but I'm not so good; when I settle into bed, I am there to sleep. I do enjoy it. On rare occasions, I do not go to the gym when waking up early and staying in bed to read, which is an absolute pleasure that I don't often do enough.

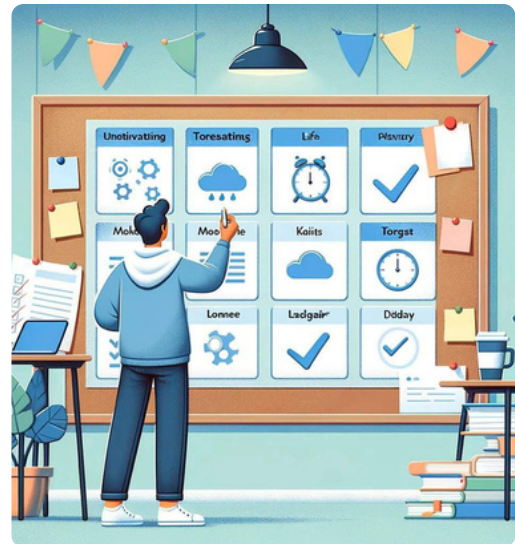
### 10:30 pm - Lights Out, World Out:

Sleep time. I do sleep well most of the time (subject to poor eating and drinking) without being a big dreamer. Maybe that is an area I can try to develop or does it just prove that I need my sleep?

### 10:30 pm to 6:15 am – 7.5 hours Restorative Sleep – on average:

Take what you will from this framework – it mostly works for me. Of course, this is an admin or office day, and it's not with travel to and from clients or events.

Hence, I call it standard. What nuances can you relate to here, and where do you differ?





# CONCLUSION

# CLOSING THOUGHTS:

## What's Next on Your Journey?

We've trekked through a world of monthly challenges, each designed to stretch your physical, mental, and spiritual boundaries. "So what? What's the point of all these challenges?"

The point is simple: these challenges are more than just a checklist of tasks. They are stepping stones toward a richer, fuller life. They encourage you to step out of your comfort zone, to push yourself in ways you may not have imagined, and to discover strengths you didn't know you had.

But do not do this on your own. It's about building a community, a support system, and the right team for you—a Mental Wealth Team—that encourages you, holds you accountable, and celebrates your successes.

## What Does This Mean to You?

This eBook is your toolkit, your guide to embracing a life filled with purpose and vitality. It reminds you that every step you take, whether it's a physical workout, a mindful moment, or a creative pursuit, contributes to your overall mental wealth.

But remember, it's not about perfection. It's about progress. It's about making small, consistent changes that add up over time. It's about recognizing that every challenge is an opportunity to grow, learn, and become a better version of yourself.

## How To Find Help?

You don't have to do this alone. Reach out to your Mental Wealth Team—friends, family, or a mentor—and share your goals. Let them know how they can support you and offer your support in return. Engage in open conversations about your challenges and victories. Lean on your community for encouragement and accountability.

If you ever feel stuck, remember that help is always available. Whether it's through a coach, a therapist, or a supportive group, seek guidance to keep you on track.

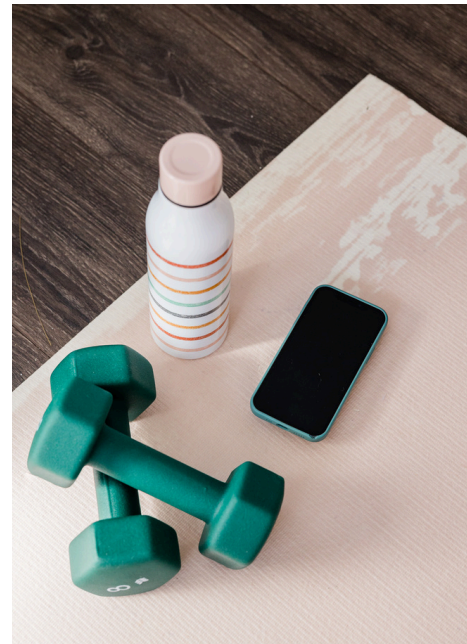


## My Commitment to You

I'm here to help you succeed. This eBook is just the beginning. Continue seeking resources, engaging with your community, and pushing your limits.

So, what are you waiting for? Dive into these challenges with an open heart and a determined spirit. The road ahead has opportunities to grow, connect, and thrive. Embrace it fully and remember—you're not alone on this journey.

Together, we can achieve great things. Let's make it happen.





# DISCLAIMER

## Disclaimer

The information provided is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek professional medical advice and support from a personal trainer before partaking in new programmes or activities. Never rely on this website's information instead of seeking professional medical advice.



We are not medical health practitioners or mental health providers and we are not holding ourselves out to be in any capacity. Instead, we serve as coaches, mentors and guides who help you reach your mental wealth, health and wellness goals.

### **Is your Mental Wealth Fit For Purpose for you and your business?**

Mental wealth comes from pursuing your true potential and positive well-being with a committed support network the Mental Wealth Team.

Focusing on looking after your mental and physical demands, with the support of others, will improve your psychological state and positively impact your mental health. Working individually can lead to introspection, procrastination and FAFFing about increasing the risk of failure to deliver. Build the right Mental Wealth team for you!



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# WHO IS MIKE PAGAN

## About the Author – Mike Pagan

Mike Pagan is an expert in helping you achieve positive mental wealth through building hand-picked support networks. Surround yourself with your personalised Mental Wealth team, become happier in life, be more successful in business, and be mentally and physically stronger to navigate the path ahead.



**The Book Mental Wealth is available for purchase here**

<https://www.mikepagan.com/mentalwealthbook>

**Details on LinkedIn**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mikepagan/>

**What is Mental Wealth?**

<https://www.mikepagan.com/wpcontent/uploads/2021/07/whatismentalwealth-c.mp4> Mike Pagan Website - [www.mikepagan.com](http://www.mikepagan.com)

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