

# BEYOND PAR LIFE

GOLF, FITNESS & WELLBEING  
AFTER 50

Family, Travel, and Living Well  
for the Years Ahead



## Beyondparlife Blog Collection

Welcome to **Beyondparlife Blog Collection**, a curated anthology of golf, travel, wellness and lifestyle pieces for readers over fifty.

Whether you're looking to sharpen your swing, discover new destinations or simply enjoy a laugh at mid-life mishaps, this collection brings together the very best of Beyondparlife.com.

### Why this book?

- **Inspiration:** Find motivation to stay active, learn new skills and embrace life after fifty.
- **Practical tips:** From maintaining fitness on the fairway to planning unforgettable holidays, these chapters provide actionable advice rooted in real experience.
- **Humour and honesty:** Written with wit and candour, each story invites you to see the lighter side of ageing, travel and relationships.

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## ***1. What Will I Do at Christmas?***

**Published:** 28 November 2025

**Categories:** Golf, Travel, activities, Christmas, holidays, lifestyle, over 50, travel, UK  
Christmas

Christmas can be a delight or a disaster depending on how you plan it. Once you’ve surpassed the half-century mark you’ve earned the right to opt out of the mad scramble and design a holiday season on your terms. Below is a wry guide to making the 25 December (and the whole festive period) memorable without losing your sanity – or your sense of humour.

## ***Embrace Alternative Traditions***

The season doesn't have to be about television and turkey. In many coastal towns across Britain there's a tradition of braving the cold and running into the sea in fancy dress – often to raise money for charity. Pack a wetsuit and a Santa hat and you might discover that an invigorating dip is far more memorable than sweating over a roasting pan. If diving into icy waves isn't your idea of merriment, then volunteer instead: charities always need extra hands at Christmas, whether serving lunch to the homeless or providing telephone friendship to older people who would otherwise be alone. Lending your time to organisations like Crisis or Age UK transforms the holiday from a consumer frenzy into something meaningful.

## ***Choose Company Wisely***

Not everyone wants to spend Christmas sandwiched between generations. If you'd rather skip the family drama (and the sarcasm of your teenage grandkids), consider spending the day walking a dog. Borrow My Doggy allows you to walk someone else's pooch if you don't have one. You'll get fresh air, canine companionship and an excuse to dodge second helpings of dried-out turkey. Alternatively, hop on your bicycle; roads are blissfully quiet on the 25th. A brisk ride keeps you active and justifies that second slice of Christmas pudding.

## ***Explore The Great Outdoors***

Tourist hot-spots are deserted on Christmas Day. UNESCO-listed sites like Avebury and Lulworth Cove, usually crowded with selfie-stick wielders, are peaceful and photogenic. Put on sturdy boots and head out with a thermos; you'll capture spectacular photos without a stranger photo-bombing you. If you prefer culture to countryside, check local listings for Christmas

concerts. Many churches hold carol services on the 25th and Canterbury Cathedral live-streams its service. Two hours of Handel's "Messiah" will restore a festive mood – and give you an excuse not to cook.

### ***Give Animals Their Own Feast***

Shelters are open year-round, and Christmas is the perfect time to help. Animal rescue centres welcome volunteers to dish up dinners for cats and dogs waiting for homes. You'll meet fellow animal lovers and end the day smelling of kibble instead of sprouts. Just don't come home with a puppy unless you're prepared for 2026 walkies at 6 a.m.

### ***Gardeners' Delight***

If you're happiest with soil under your nails, spend part of Christmas in the garden. Winter is an ideal time to plant garlic, rhubarb and strawberry crowns or pop tulip bulbs. The tasks are simple, the fresh air is refreshing, and you'll have something beautiful (or edible) to show for it when spring arrives. Gardening is also a peaceful alternative to listening to Uncle Bob explain cryptocurrency for the tenth time.

### ***Take a Historical Walking Tour***

Cities on Christmas morning are eerily quiet. It's the perfect time to wander through their streets with a guidebook. Whether you're in London, Oxford, St Andrews or any other historic town, pick a walking guide tailored to your interests. With shops closed, you're free to appreciate architecture, canals or literary landmarks. Walking tours are available as inexpensive ebooks if you don't want to carry a heavy tome. Think of it as a self-guided workout with cultural benefits.

## ***Escape on a Christmas Holiday***

If you have zero patience for turkey and tinsel, run away. Swapping Britain's drizzle for Caribbean sunshine (or even a cosy Swedish lodge) is entirely acceptable. Destinations like St Barts, Sydney, Tenerife or Lapland offer everything from beach BBQs to Northern Lights safaris. Prefer something closer? Explore European Christmas markets or head to a British stately home decked out for the season. National Trust properties host everything from winter light trails and visits with Father Christmas to historic houses decorated from medieval to modern times. There are also craft workshops, festive markets, and choirs performing carols. A short break with mulled wine and gingerbread in a new setting might be the gift you really need.

## ***Visit Britain's Best Christmas Markets***

The UK's festive fairs aren't created equal. According to consumer magazine Which?, the top Christmas markets in 2025 include Bath, Chester, Durham, Winchester, Wells, Liverpool, Edinburgh, York and Belfast. Each offers its own charms, from architectural backdrops to local delicacies. If you want more detail (and an excuse to turn your visit into a weekend away), here are some highlights:

- **Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market** – Often ranked among Europe's best, it takes place in the cathedral's Inner Close and features exhibitors selected for quality, along with a performance stage. The market runs from 21 Nov – 22 Dec 2025.
- **Bath Christmas Market** – Set amid Georgian architecture, this market boasts over 170 chalets and emphasises local artisans (over 80% of stallholders are from the South West). It runs from 27 Nov – 14 Dec 2025. Shop for handcrafted gifts, then warm up with mulled wine while

admiring Bath Abbey's lights.

– **Southampton Christmas Market** – Combining traditional stalls with modern attractions like a Ferris wheel and a spectacular light show projected onto the historic Bargate. It runs from 13 Nov – 4 Jan 2026.

– **Oxford Victorian Christmas Market** – This four-day event on Broad Street recreates 19th-century charm. Stallholders dress in period attire and sell crafts and sweets inspired by Victorian times.

– **Blenheim Palace Christmas Market** – Held in the palace's Great Court, this market features around 50 wooden chalets, designer-maker stalls, an Illuminated Light Trail and a new ice rink. It runs from 14 Nov – 3 Jan 2026.

– **Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market** – The largest authentic German market outside Germany and Austria, with over 100 stalls offering pretzels, schnitzel and glühwine, plus. It operates from 1 Nov – 24 Dec 2025.

– **Chester Christmas Market** – This charming market surrounds a sparkling tree and features more than 70 wooden chalets. It focuses on local produce like regional cheeses and wines and is situated near the city's medieval 'Rows'.

Whether you visit one or all of these markets, choose cosy accommodation nearby, indulge in seasonal foods and support local artisans. Don't forget to pack comfortable shoes – and a pair of stretchy trousers.

## ***Plan a Festive Get-Together***

If you aren't travelling far, bring the fun to your own living room. Hosting doesn't mean slaving away for hours; it means thoughtful planning and plenty of laughter. Here are some ideas inspired by care-home activity coordinators who know how to engage older adults:

- **Music quiz & dancing** – Create a playlist of holiday classics and challenge guests to guess the song title or artist. Even seated dancing lifts spirits.
- **Decorate jars** – Collect empty glass jars and decorate them with paint, glitter and ribbon. Add a candle or fairy lights for a cosy glow.
- **Mince pies and sherry** – Bake (or buy) mince pies and serve them with sherry or mulled apple juice. It's a relaxed way to reminisce about past holidays.
- **Gentle exercise** – Incorporate chair-based stretches or gentle yoga to keep everyone fit and happy. A short routine before the main meal helps justify seconds.
- **Wreath arranging** – Use poinsettias, holly and ribbons to craft simple wreaths. It's both creative and therapeutic.
- **Bake and decorate gingerbread** – Baking is a wonderful shared activity. Make gingerbread people or cookies and decorate them with icing and sweets.
- **Festive bingo** – A game of bingo with small prizes like chocolates or novelty socks always entertains.
- **Pet visits** – Invite a friend with a gentle dog to drop by. Animals provide comfort and joy.
- **Shopping trip** – A short visit to a local market or high street to admire decorations and pick



up last-minute gifts can be enjoyable 【8.

– **Baileys smoothies & Christmas films** – Host a movie afternoon with classics like *It's a Wonderful Life* and serve Baileys smoothies or hot chocolate.

– **Live music or carols** – Attend a local concert or stream a performance. Singing along unites everyone.

– **Decorate the tree** – One of the simplest pleasures is hanging ornaments together and sharing stories behind each decorations.

These activities keep the day light and engaging without requiring Olympic-level stamina.

### ***Stay Active on the Fairway***

Golf courses aren't typically open on Christmas Day, but that doesn't mean you should neglect your swing. Use the holiday lull to practise indoors with a putting mat or visit a driving range on Boxing Day. Many UK golf resorts host special Christmas packages: practise your short game between turkey meals and then relax by the fire with a glass of port. Remember, moderate exercise is the antidote to endless mince pies.

### ***Make Space for Reflection***

Amid the festivities, carve out a moment for gratitude. Reflect on the year's highs and lows, write a journal entry, or spend time in quiet meditation. Volunteering and simple acts of kindness can be more satisfying than any material gift. Combining a walk with reflection allows you to appreciate crisp winter air and the fact that you're not stuck in a crowded shopping centre.

## ***Final Thoughts***

Christmas after fifty can be whatever you want it to be – conventional, adventurous, charitable or rebellious. The only rule is to do something that genuinely brings you joy and to avoid mindless traditions that feel obligatory. Whether you're plunging into the sea for charity, strolling through a nearly empty UNESCO site, volunteering at a shelter or sipping Baileys while watching a film, remember that the holiday is yours to design.

You've spent decades perfecting your sarcasm and resilience; put those talents to use by crafting a Christmas Day that suits you, not someone else's expectations. The only person you need to please is yourself – and maybe the dog you volunteered to walk.

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## ***2. Healthy Habits for Golfers Over 50: Strength, Flexibility, and Nutrition***

**Published:** 28 November 2025

**Categories:** Fitness, Golf, flexibility, healthy habits, nutrition, over 50, strength

Getting older doesn't have to mean giving up the game you love. By adopting healthy habits that support strength, flexibility, and overall well-being, golfers over 50 can continue to play confidently and reduce the risk of injury.

**Build and maintain strength.** Muscle mass naturally declines with age, but targeted strength training helps preserve power and stability. Focus on compound movements that engage multiple muscle groups, such as squats, lunges, and push-ups. Incorporate resistance bands or light dumbbells for arm and shoulder exercises that mirror the golf swing. Core work like planks

and bridges improves posture and balance, helping you maintain form throughout 18 holes.

**Prioritise flexibility and mobility.** A smooth, consistent swing relies on supple muscles and joints. Begin each round with a dynamic warm-up: gentle torso rotations, hip circles, and leg swings prepare your body for the motions of golf. Off the course, consider yoga or Pilates classes to stretch tight muscles and build body awareness. Regular stretching of your hamstrings, hip flexors, shoulders, and lower back can alleviate stiffness and enhance your range of motion.

**Keep your heart healthy.** Walking the course is already a great form of low-impact cardiovascular exercise. To boost endurance, add in other moderate activities during the week, such as brisk walking, swimming, or cycling. These activities improve circulation, stamina, and overall energy levels, making it easier to stay focused and strong throughout your round.

**Fuel your body wisely.** Nutrition plays a critical role in sustaining energy and supporting recovery. Emphasise lean proteins (fish, poultry, beans) for muscle repair, whole grains for steady energy, and plenty of fruits and vegetables for vitamins and antioxidants. Stay hydrated, especially on hot days—dehydration can sap concentration and strength. Nutrients like calcium and vitamin D support bone health, while omega-3 fatty acids from sources such as salmon, flaxseed, or walnuts can help reduce joint inflammation.

**Respect recovery time.** Rest is when your body rebuilds. Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night and schedule rest days between intense workouts or rounds. Incorporate active recovery activities—light stretching, easy walks, or gentle swimming—to promote circulation without adding stress.

**Look after your mental game.** Golf is as much about mindset as muscle. Practices such as mindfulness, meditation, or simple deep-breathing exercises can help you stay calm under pressure. Maintaining social connections through golf keeps the game enjoyable and supports mental health.

By investing in strength, flexibility, nutrition, and recovery, golfers over 50 can continue to thrive on and off the course. These habits not only enhance your performance but also improve your overall quality of life, ensuring that every round is both enjoyable and sustainable.

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### ***3. Top Golf Destinations in the UK for Golfers Over 50***

**Published:** 28 November 2025

**Categories:** Golf, destinations, golf, over 50, travel

As we grow older, staying active and exploring new places remain essential to our well-being. For golfers over 50, combining travel with the pursuit of the perfect round offers a chance to enjoy beautiful landscapes, historic courses, and a leisurely pace that suits mature players.

Start with the birthplace of golf: St Andrews in Fife, Scotland. The Old Course is legendary, and the town itself offers history, charm, and accessibility. The gentle links terrain is friendly on aging joints, while local caddies and amenities make the experience comfortable.

Royal Dornoch in the Scottish Highlands is another gem. Its remote location encourages a slower pace of travel, allowing you to soak up dramatic coastal scenery and warm Highland hospitality. The course's natural layout demands strategy without excessive physical strain.

On the west coast, Turnberry's Ailsa course provides breathtaking views of the Firth of Clyde and the Isle of Arran. The resort offers excellent accommodations, spa facilities, and dining—perfect for couples or groups looking to balance golf with relaxation.

Heading south to Wales, Royal Porthcawl offers a challenging yet fair test of links golf with ocean views. Nearby, the Gower Peninsula provides walking trails and picturesque villages, making this trip ideal for those who want to mix golf with coastal exploration.

In England, Sunningdale's Old Course combines mature woodland with open heathland. Just outside London, it's accessible yet secluded. The club has an inviting atmosphere and a storied history, with wide fairways and manageable rough that cater to seasoned golfers.

When planning your golf holidays, factor in travel times, local weather, and rest days. Consider mixing marquee courses with hidden gems to avoid fatigue. Many resorts offer special packages for seniors, including cart hire and spa treatments. Make sure to build in time for sightseeing and local culture—great golf trips are as much about the journey as the scorecard.

Whether you're revisiting the home of golf or discovering a new corner of the UK, these destinations provide the perfect blend of challenge and charm for golfers over 50. By choosing courses that value tradition and comfort, you'll ensure every swing is accompanied by enjoyment and fond memories.

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#### ***4. "Wives, Wedges and Weekends Away: The Over-50s Guide to Mixing Marriage and Golf"***

**Published:** 10 November 2025

**Categories:** Uncategorized

Here's the thing about being an over-50 golfer with a wife: you're not just playing golf anymore, you're running a full-time political campaign for Permission To Swing. Every round requires negotiation, strategy and the sort of diplomacy the United Nations would be jealous of.

At 25, you could disappear to the course for six hours, crawl home sunburnt and smelling like stale lager, and nobody cared. At 55, if you're out for six hours and didn't tell her exactly where, when and with whom, you're one missed call away from a missing person report and a passive-aggressive Facebook post.

So, can you mix wife and golf? Yes. Should you? That's... complicated.

First, let's talk about The Points System. You know the one. Not written down anywhere, but it rules your life. You want 18 holes on Saturday? That'll cost you: one midweek supermarket run, a DIY job you're going to bodge twice before paying a professional, and at least one night of watching a TV series where absolutely nothing explodes and nobody sinks a 20-foot putt. You're not a husband anymore, you're a loyalty card.

And then, one day, you make the ultimate rookie mistake: you say the words, "Why don't you come with me, love? You might like it."

Congratulations. You've just opened a portal to an entirely new level of chaos.

If she doesn't play golf, the first thing she'll notice on the course is not your swing. Oh no.

She'll notice the pace. "Why are we waiting again? Didn't you just wait?" Try explaining handicaps, etiquette and fourballs to someone who thinks Ready Golf means "hurry the hell up,

Brian, I'm cold." By the fourth hole she's asking why you don't just "go round the slow group" as if it's the M6 and you can just nip into the fast lane.

Then there's the commentary. You've spent 30 years perfecting your shot routine. Deep breath, couple of waggles, eyes on the ball, gentle practice swing. You step up to the tee and just as you're about to pull the trigger you hear: "Why do you stand like that? You look like you're trying not to fart."

Shot destroyed. Ball in the trees. Marriage hanging by a thread.

Of course, some wives decide to "give golf a go". This is both brilliant and terrifying. Brilliant because it's now a joint hobby and you've technically won the argument that golf is a proper sport. Terrifying because within six months she's got better clubs than you, a coach on Instagram, and is suddenly "just popping down the range" without you.

The first few times you play together are crucial. You rock up looking like a crumpled extra from a Sunday league match. She arrives in fresh golf gear, coordinated from hat to shoes, and actually reads the scorecard.

You're there muttering, "If I can just keep it in play today..." She's there asking, "So, is it strokeplay or Stableford? And what's the slope rating again?"

You haven't thought about slope rating in your life. You pick tees based on how close they are to the car park and whether your back can handle the walk.

Then you get the classic couples dynamic on the course. She hits a decent drive straight down the middle: "Oh my God, that's awful, I thinned it."

You, meanwhile, have just launched a majestic 230-yard slice that has crossed two fairways, a hedge and is now somewhere near a dog walker in a different postcode: “Yeah, struck that alright.”

And now we come to the “Golf Holiday That’s Not A Golf Holiday.” You know the one. “Let’s do a little break, just the two of us,” you say, casually. “Somewhere nice. Bit of sun. Maybe... I don’t know... somewhere with a spa. And... completely randomly... a championship golf course.”

She spots it instantly. “We’re not going away just so you can play golf.”

You deny it, obviously. “No, no, it’s for us. Romance. Quality time. Thought we could... reconnect.”

Fast-forward three months and you’re stood in reception of a “luxury resort” where she’s being handed a spa brochure thicker than the Bible, and you’re getting a tee time, buggy key and a quiet nod from the golf pro that clearly means: “We both know why you’re really here, mate.”

Here’s the catch: once she’s seen what golf resorts are like, she starts enjoying this little arrangement far too much. While you’re grinding over a 5-footer for bogey, she’s having a facial, a massage, and a Prosecco, and posting “recharging with hubby” on social media when you’re actually on the 13th swearing at your wedge.

Mixing wife and golf also gets dangerous around your golf mates. There’s always that one guy whose wife plays off single figures, hits it past him, and “never moans about his golf” – which means the rest of us have to pretend that’s normal while our own wives are texting, “Are you



still there? It's been four hours. You said NINE holes."

If your wife comes to watch you play, it reaches new levels of pressure. You're already over 50, your back sounds like bubble wrap when you bend down, your knees creak on every tee, and now your wife is stood by the green while three strangers and a dog look on as you attempt the world's worst chip shot.

You blade it across the green, nearly decapitate the flag, and she loudly says, "How is that the same sport you watch on TV?" Because those guys don't have to put the bins out on a Thursday, that's why.

And yet, for all the whining and chaos, there's something brilliant about it. Because mixing wife and golf forces you to grow up a bit. You can't stomp around the course like a toddler because you've duffed your 7-iron if she's there watching. You can't pretend it's all "serious practice" when you've also booked a couples massage at 4pm. You're over 50 – you're allowed a soft robe and a steam room as well as a three-putt.

Somewhere between the bad backs, lost balls, spa breaks and arguments over who left wet towels on the bathroom floor, you realise that mixing marriage and golf isn't about perfection. It's about compromise. You give up the odd Saturday, you do the DIY, you sit through the crime drama she loves where nobody smiles for six episodes, and in return you get your little four-hour escape with a bag of sticks and a vague belief that "this year I might actually get down a shot."

And when she does come along, it's not the worst thing in the world to have someone there who laughs when you whiff it, takes the mick when you talk to your ball like it can hear you, and

reminds you that it's supposed to be fun. Over 50, you're not chasing the tour, you're chasing a half-decent swing, a pain-free round, and a bacon buttie that doesn't taste like regret.

So yes, you can mix wife and golf. Just accept a few basic truths.

You will never win the argument about how many clubs you really need. You will never convince her that that hideous shirt was "on sale so basically free." You will never explain handicaps properly. You can, however, build a life where she gets her spa, you get your tee time, and you both get a story to tell over a drink later.

And if you're lucky, one day you'll both be out there together: you, creaking your way down the fairway with your "classic" clubs that went out of fashion in 2009, and her, striping it down the middle while you pretend you're "just working on something".

That, my friend, is the over-50 dream: happily married, occasionally forgiven, permanently confused by your own swing... and still chasing that one pure shot that makes all the negotiations worth it.

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## ***5. Embracing Tranquility: The Art of Taking a Relaxing Holiday***

**Published:** 28 October 2025

**Categories:** Uncategorized

Holidays are the perfect escape from everyday life, offering a chance to unwind, explore new places, and recharge in beautiful destinations worldwide. Whether you're seeking adventure or relaxation, taking a holiday provides an ideal opportunity to step back, relax, and immerse

yourself in new experiences.

Discovering new cultures and landscapes is a highlight of any holiday. From the serene beaches of Thailand to the historic streets of Rome, each destination offers its own unique charm and allure. Embrace the chance to explore diverse surroundings, enriching your experience with breathtaking views and local flavors.

Beyond sightseeing, holidays are about indulging in leisure activities and enjoying quality time. Whether it's lounging by the pool with a good book, treating yourself to spa treatments, or savoring delicious local cuisine, holidays allow you to pamper yourself and recharge your batteries.

One of the joys of travel is the opportunity to learn and grow. Immerse yourself in local traditions, visit iconic landmarks, or try your hand at new activities. Whether you're hiking through national parks or learning to cook regional dishes, holidays offer a chance to expand your horizons and create lasting memories.

Socialising and making connections with fellow travellers adds to the richness of holiday experiences. Join guided tours, participate in cultural workshops, or simply strike up conversations with locals. Share stories, insights, and laughter, fostering new friendships and gaining fresh perspectives along the way.

As you plan your next getaway, consider sustainable travel practices and responsible tourism. Choose accommodations and activities that support local communities and minimize environmental impact. Respect local customs and traditions, leaving a positive footprint wherever your travels take you.

Ready to escape and explore? Research destinations, book accommodations, and plan your itinerary to make the most of your time away. Whether it's a solo adventure or a family vacation, thoughtful planning ensures a smooth and enjoyable holiday experience.

Holidays offer more than just a break—they're a chance to rejuvenate, discover, and connect with the world around you. Whether you're seeking relaxation, adventure, or cultural immersion, embrace the opportunity to unwind and explore new horizons. Start planning your next holiday and embark on a journey of discovery and relaxation!

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## ***6. The Gym—Because Rain Doesn't Touch Dumbbells***

**Published:** 24 October 2025

**Categories:** Uncategorized

Beating the rain starts in your head, not in the forecast. If you wait for a clear sky in Britain, you'll be waiting until the next Olympics. The trick is to shrink the decision. Promise yourself a short burst. Lace up, step out, move for a few minutes, and give yourself permission to quit if you still hate it. The sneaky part is you rarely quit. Momentum does its quiet magic. You don't need motivation. You need motion. Start there.

Now let's talk kit, because yes, it matters. You don't need something designed for climbing Everest, you just need honest waterproofs, shoes that grip, and a hat that keeps the drama off your face. Keep the gear by the door so your lazy brain has no excuse. If your coat lives in the

wardrobe behind holiday suitcases, you've already lost. Make it easy to win in the first twenty seconds. That's where most people fail.

Walking is the winter superpower nobody wants because it isn't glamorous. It also quietly repairs your mood, your sleep, your joints, and your sense of control. Walk the block when the sky looks like wet cement. Walk the prom when the wind's trying to rearrange your eyebrows. If the heavens properly open, go rogue and walk indoors. Malls, big supermarkets, train stations, covered car parks. Yes you'll look like you're training for the strangest Olympics event ever invented. You'll also rack up steps and feel smug all day. Carry on. The world needs more harmless weirdos who look after their health.

If you need a cheat code, bribe yourself with a favourite podcast or playlist that you only allow while walking. Suddenly the rain becomes a gatekeeper to the latest episode and you find yourself marching out the door because you simply must know how the cliff-hanger ends. Pair the thing you should do with the thing you love, and watch your discipline soar.

Now, the gym. The rain can howl all it likes, dumbbells do not care. You don't need a complicated programme with exercises that sound like something a sadist dreamed up. You need big, basic moves that make you stronger and sturdier. Squats that wake up your legs, presses that remind your chest it exists, pulls that teach your back to hold you tall, hinges that make your hamstrings useful again, a bit of core work so your middle stops wobbling when you climb stairs. Wrap it with a simple warm-up and a short blast of cardio you can finish without consulting your will. Get in, focus, get out. Strength gives you weather insurance. When the pavements are slick and the wind is cross, a stronger you is a safer you.

If you've spent years avoiding the gym because you feel out of place, here's the truth the mirror-posers will never admit: nobody's looking at you. Everyone is trapped in their own tiny universe of insecurities and playlists. Put your headphones in and claim your square metre of floor. Sweat a little. Smile at nobody. Leave feeling taller. Repeat that a few times a week and watch your body stop arguing with you.

On the home front, make movement unavoidable. Pick a doorway and every time you pass it, do a handful of squats or a few wall presses. Is it daft? Completely. Does it work? You'll be mildly horrified to discover that it does. Park a little farther away from everything. Take stairs with intent rather than dread. Treat elevators like cheating unless your knees are staging a mutiny. Movement isn't a two-hour saga. It's a hundred tiny nudges that add up to a better version of you.

Family life can help, not hinder. Call a storm stomp and drag the household out for a brisk loop. Promise hot chocolate on return. Make a game of it. Who can spot the grumpiest dog, the biggest puddle, the bravest seagull. You're not simply ticking off exercise; you're building a family culture that says bad weather doesn't own us. Your kids won't remember the Netflix menu. They'll remember the time you marched through sideways sleet and laughed about it.

When your brain starts the usual negotiations, short-circuit it with easy rules. If you're still in your house after lunch, you owe yourself fresh air. If you've been under a roof for a whole morning, step outside and walk until your cheeks feel alive. If the day has been a write-off, roll your shoulders, stretch your hips, do a little breathing, and go for a brisk ten. You're never more than a handful of minutes away from a better mood. Act like it.

Make it fun or at least less miserable. Change your route. Chase a view. Take a photo on every walk and chuck it into a folder called proof. Watch it grow into a quiet gallery of days you didn't bottle it. Benchmark a simple loop and try to beat your time by a sliver each week. You're not competing with the internet. You're out-running last week's version of you, and he is very beatable.

None of this works without the boring bits that actually matter. Eat like someone who gives a toss about their future. Get protein in at every meal so your muscles have something to rebuild with. Put vegetables on the plate because you're not a toddler. Drink water that isn't disguised as coffee. Go to bed before your phone convinces you to scroll your brain into paste. Recovery isn't indulgence. It's the fuel that lets you keep showing up.

There will be days when the sky looks like it lost an argument with the sea, when your energy is flatter than a British lager, and when the sofa sings a siren song. Those are the days that count most. Go anyway, even if you go grumpy. A short, honest session beats the mythical perfect one you never do. The body respects consistency. The weather respects nobody. That's fine. You don't need its respect. You need your own.

So here's the plain truth. You're not made of sugar. You're made of habits. Build ones that thrive in drizzle. Walk when it's dark. Lift when it's loud. Stretch when it's cramped. Laugh at the absurdity of training under a sky that can't decide between rain and more rain. Then count the quiet victories. The trousers that fit better. The stairs that no longer win. The mood that lifts before the kettle boils. That's the good stuff, the kind that sticks.

You don't need to be heroic. You just need to be relentless in small ways. The storm will pass.

The season will turn. By the time the fair-weather exercisers reappear in their shiny gear, you'll already be moving like someone who didn't wait for spring to get their life together. Be that person. Coat on. Head up. Out you go.

Or be really on it book a holiday with BPL....

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## ***7. Daily Mental Health Resolves***

**Published:** 21 October 2025

**Categories:** Fitness

Daily Mental Health Resolves: A 21st-Century Survival Guide

Mental health isn't a New Year's fad; it's the daily grind of keeping your mind as strong as your driver on a windy links course. Too many people treat mental wellbeing like a once-in-a-while detox or a list of resolutions that gather dust by March. If we truly want to stay sane, motivated and happy after 50, our "resolves" have to be built into every single day. That doesn't mean chanting mantras while bathing in a Himalayan cave. It means simple, repeatable habits that support resilience, joy and connection. Consider this your no-nonsense guide to daily mental health resolves—things you can do without burning incense or going broke on self-help retreats.

### **1. Make human contact a priority**

People who spend quality time with friends and family have better mental wellbeing because relationships build a sense of belonging and self-worth. Resolve to speak to at least one person you care about every day. Meet your sister for a walk, have lunch with a colleague, call your



golfing buddy or volunteer at a local charity. It's too easy to hide behind texts and emojis, so ditch the phone and get face-to-face. Real conversations spark laughter, empathy and perspective—three things no algorithm can deliver.

## **2. Move your body—your brain will thank you**

Being physically active isn't about fitting into skinny jeans; it's a science-backed way to change your mood. Exercise boosts self-esteem, sets goals and triggers chemical changes in the brain that make you feel more positive. Aim for 30 minutes of movement most days: a brisk walk, a few holes of golf, a swim or a yoga class. If you're strapped for time, break it into ten-minute bursts. Just don't use "I'm not a gym person" as an excuse. Your mind needs motion as much as your muscles.

## **3. Keep learning**

Learning new skills isn't just for kids. Research shows it boosts self-confidence, builds a sense of purpose and helps you connect with others. Challenge yourself to cook a new dish, take a language class or finally figure out how to use that fancy camera. When you master something new, your brain forms fresh neural connections, your confidence soars and you have something to chat about besides the weather.

## **4. Give something back**

Acts of kindness create positive feelings and a sense of reward. Resolve to do at least one generous thing each day—hold a door, share your expertise, check on a neighbour or volunteer your time. Giving doesn't have to mean writing cheques to strangers; it's about being useful. Helping others reminds you that you have value beyond your own worries and keeps you

grounded when life gets stressful.

## **5. Practise mindfulness without the fluff**

Mindfulness is simply paying attention to the present moment. It can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. You don't need Himalayan salt lamps to get there. Spend five minutes focusing on your breath, noticing sensations in your body and letting thoughts float by like clouds. The goal isn't to "empty your mind" but to create space between you and your thoughts. When you step back from the mental chatter, you're less likely to spiral into worry about past mistakes or future what-ifs.

## **6. Sleep like it's your job**

A regular sleep schedule regulates mood, focus and stress hormones. Treat sleep as a non-negotiable. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends. Create a wind-down routine: turn off screens an hour before bed, dim the lights, read a book and keep caffeine for the mornings. Quality sleep isn't a luxury; it's the foundation that makes all other resolves possible.

## **7. Build in "blow-off-steam" time**

Stress is inevitable, but bottling it up will chew through your mental health like termites. The Penn Foundation recommends having daily stress-relief habits such as meditation, journaling, walking or any activity that proactively manages tension. Think of it as releasing steam from a pressure cooker—you have to let it out before it explodes. Personally, I swear by walking the dog and yelling at my favourite football team on TV. Find your own healthy outlet and stick with it.

## **8. Prioritise your to-do list**

You can't do everything, and trying to will drive you mad. The Penn Foundation advises doing the most important things first rather than the easiest or quickest. Each morning, write down three tasks that will make the biggest difference to your day. Focus on those before checking email or doom-scrolling. When you tackle priorities, you feel accomplished rather than overwhelmed, which reduces anxiety and clears mental space for more meaningful activities.

## **9. Cultivate meaningful relationships**

Meaningful relationships are powerful antidepressants. Family dinner, date night, coffee with a friend—these routines foster emotional support and belonging. Don't assume relationships just happen; schedule them. If you're far from loved ones, video chats and letters still count. Make sure your resolves include nurturing connections that matter, not just networking for business or likes on social media.

## **10. Enjoy simple pleasures**

Your routine should include things that make you happy. A cup of tea, scented candles, music or a hot bath can relax you and improve your mood. Don't postpone pleasure for weekends or special occasions; sprinkle it throughout your day. Humans are wired to respond to sensory experiences, so treat yourself to small delights that remind you life isn't just about chores and obligations.

## **11. Set boundaries like a boss**

Setting boundaries at work and in your personal life prevents burnout and helps maintain balance. Learn to say no without guilt. Protect time for yourself and activities that support your

mental health. Remember, you teach others how to treat you. When you respect your own limits, others are more likely to respect them, too. This resolve is about preserving your energy for things that matter and avoiding resentment.

## **12. Practise gratitude**

Appreciate what's good in your life. Each day, note five things you're thankful for, whether it's a supportive partner, a juicy peach or a well-struck putt. Gratitude shifts your focus from what's lacking to what's abundant. It rewires your brain to seek positive experiences and reduces the tendency to ruminate on negatives. Keep a gratitude journal or simply say your thanks aloud. It feels cheesy at first but, like stretching, it works.

## **13. Check in with yourself**

Self-reflection helps you catch problems early. Carve out a few minutes each evening to assess how you felt, what triggered stress and what lifted you up. Adjust your routines accordingly. If you notice signs of anxiety or depression—sleep problems, irritability, hopelessness—speak to a healthcare professional. Mental health maintenance isn't about perfection; it's about course correction.

## **14. Balance positivity and honesty**

Staying positive doesn't mean ignoring negative emotions. You need to feel anger, sadness and frustration to process difficult situations. The trick is to hold positive emotions alongside the negative and not let the latter take over. Limit consumption of bad news and social media debates. Curate your environment to include uplifting people and experiences. When negativity rises, remind yourself of your strengths and past resilience.

## **15. Fuel your brain with nutritious food**

What you eat affects your mood. A balanced diet supports mental health by stabilising blood sugar and providing essential nutrients. Aim for whole foods—vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, whole grains and healthy fats. Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can exacerbate anxiety and disrupt sleep. Hydrate properly; dehydration can mimic fatigue and irritability. Your brain is an organ, not a disembodied soul; feed it accordingly.

## **16. Connect with your community**

Humans are social animals. Besides close relationships, engage with your broader community. Join a club, volunteer at a shelter, teach a class or organise a neighbourhood clean-up. These activities provide purpose and strengthen your sense of belonging. They also expand your support network, making it easier to ask for help when you need it and to offer it when others are struggling.

## **17. Find meaning and purpose**

Having a sense of meaning and purpose contributes to mental wellbeing. This can come from work, hobbies, volunteering or spiritual practices. Reflect on what makes you feel alive and fulfilled. Then, build time for that into your schedule. Purpose anchors you when life gets chaotic, giving you a reason to get out of bed even on tough days.

## **18. The take-home message**

Mental health isn't something you "fix" once and forget; it's something you cultivate every day. By connecting with others, moving your body, learning, giving, sleeping, setting boundaries and practising gratitude and mindfulness, you're investing in your brain's long-term health. It's not

glamorous but it's effective. And remember: there's no shame in seeking professional help if you're struggling. Therapists, counsellors and doctors exist for a reason. You deserve to feel good.

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## **8. *Work, Life, and the Golf Between on the Fylde Coast***

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### **The Three or(4) FAAT Boys on Tour**

#### **Work, Life, and the Golf Between on the Fylde Coast**

##### ***Overture: Wind off the Estuary***

The wind off the Ribble estuary has a voice. It is old and salt-rough, and when it speaks across the dunes it says: be honest. It says: don't pretend this shot is easier than it is. It moves your ball half a club without apology, pushes weather under your sleeves, and leaves a thin crust of salt on lips that forget to smile.

We came to the Fylde Coast because we live here and, in the strangest way, we wanted to see it. I mean really see it—like visitors who pay attention. The four of us: Andy with his impossible calendar and salesman's grin; Tommy, who can hold three problems in one hand and make them all feel lighter; Alex, who sells toilet seats to half the nation and carries himself with the slow,

deliberate courtesy of a man who's learned the value of small hinges; and me—Franklyn—keeper of notes, curator of the WhatsApp, the one who writes things down so they don't get lost in laughter.

We called it the FAAT Boys Tour—Fifty And Trying—because the joke made us braver. We made a week of it: St Annes Old Links, Fairhaven, Fleetwood, and Royal Lytham & St Annes when fortune and tee-sheets allowed. We promised ourselves to work when we must, live while we could, and play until the light drew a line under it.

Everything important came true in the wind.

### ***Andy — The Salesman's Swing***

There is no silence like the seconds before a first tee shot. The body is an orchestra pit: strings of memory, brass of pride, the quiet tick of wrists setting, hips waiting for the conductor. Andy addressed the ball on the 1st at St Annes Old Links with a practiced calm that fooled no one. He travels so much his suitcase smells like airports; he sells promises to people who think they want things yesterday. He'd printed an itinerary for the week—colour coded blocks of time with tee-times, pub-times, contingency plans for biblical rain—and I could see the corner of it peeking from his waterproof pocket like a hymnbook.

The wind came in off the right, the sky a pale pewter that made everyone honest. He took the club back, smooth and full, and sent a low, obedient drive scudding into the middle stripe. A salesman knows the value of a first impression. He stepped away grinning, a man briefly free of meetings.

His phone rang in his pocket before Tommy had even teed a ball.

“Answer?” Tommy asked, casual as a man with a new wedge.

Andy looked at the screen like it was a small, sharp animal. He shook his head. He let the call go. The second ring arrived when we were walking down the fairway.

“Take it,” I said. “We’re not sprinting.”

He did, falling behind two paces, wind pushing his voice into little shreds of apology and laughter. When he caught us, his eyes were bright and wet with cold, the long-distance relief of a solved problem. He had that look he gets after a good call: the world aligned for a minute, the deal not quite done but dancing in the light.

The round became a negotiation between weather and memory. The fairways were winter-lean, the humps of linksland rising like old, friendly shoulders. Andy’s 7-iron at the 8th drew against the breeze with the authority of a man who has once or twice made the impossible sound easy. He walked after it with his head up, the outline of the itinerary blurring in his pocket.

Later, at Fairhaven, we learned that good intentions have edges. On the 4th, his phone rang again, then again—client, colleague, flights, delays. I saw his shoulders narrow, a salesman’s body remembering it was built to carry. He took a deep breath, handed the phone to me, and said, “If it’s not on fire, tell them I’ll ring at lunch.”

I held it a long moment while the wind argued with my fingers. The call ended. The next one never came.

On the 9th, he made a par that felt like a quiet vow, a little putt that fell in with a tap you could hear from ten paces. He didn’t fist-pump. He nodded at the hole as if to say thank you for being



reasonable. On the 14th he made a five from a place you only find if you've angered gods—out, sideways, a punch piledriver under the breeze, a wedge that clipped the back fringe like a whisper, a putt from twelve feet that never thought of missing. I watched him breathe out. Sometimes a man's exhale is a prayer and a promise.

Evenings, on the promenade, he carried his phone in his left hand and his pint in his right like two truths he could finally hold together. The itinerary lived in his pocket, softening at the corners, its inked certainties made kinder by weather and laughter. If work called, he called back. If it didn't, he didn't summon it.

On our last day at Royal Lytham & St Annes, he stood on a tee that has frightened better men and hit the ball as if he were writing a line he'd rehearsed for years—firm, fearless, threaded low into the wind's teeth. He looked at the flight, the way it held its nerve, and he laughed as if the world had just proved something he'd long suspected: choose the moment, keep your head still, swing when you mean it.

In the clubhouse he unfolded the itinerary one last time and pencilled three notes on the back:

- Silence the phone on the back nine.
- Carry two gloves; trust one.
- Plan like a saint, play like a sinner, forgive like the sea.

### ***Tommy — The Project Manager's Weather***

Tommy manages construction the way good men manage families—by making space for other people to be messy and still get where they're going. He wears worry lightly. His hands are square and capable; his eyes are kind; his laugh arrives early when it should, late when it has to,

and never falsely. He is also, as became clear on the first morning, a man capable of packing everything except the one thing that keeps rain off thighs.

No trousers.

He said it quietly in the car park at Old Links, as if the wind could use the information against him. He held up navy chinos like a surrender flag. We teased him—of course we did—and then he wore them, and the sky, briefly merciful, held its water until the 5th.

The rain came like a story you've heard before: politely at first, then with zeal, then from the side. By the 7th green he was a dark, dripping statue. At the turn he gave in and bought a pair of waterproofs from the pro shop that cost more than his first car. He put them on in a corner with the dignity of a man changing armour. He emerged transformed and made par at the 10th with a grin that could light a boiler room.

Work followed him like weather. He had three sites in different stages of becoming. Concrete will not cure faster because a man is on a tee. Inspectors do not prefer Wednesdays because golf does. His phone buzzed with small fires and damp timber; he tapped replies with thumbs that knew the names of foremen, suppliers, problems that have learned to disguise themselves as favours. But he also did something I had never seen him do: he put the phone away in the middle of the 12th fairway and left it there until the 18th.

That nine holes wanted his attention and he gave it. The wind accepted, and for two hours they shared custody of his head. He drove the ball with a rhythm you could build things to, fat and straight, a good sound. He made a mess of the 15th and laughed because the ball had done exactly what he told it to do and it turned out he'd asked wrong. He rescued a four from a place

where fours go to die and didn't celebrate because decency doesn't crow.

That evening, we walked Lytham Green and stood by the windmill while the sky did its long summer bruise. He mentioned—carefully—the tiredness that sits behind a man's eyes after too many months of being the person who answers. He didn't call it burnout. He called it “the feeling of always being stolen from.” The wind carried the words away and gave them back softer. We stood there long enough for honesty to feel less dangerous.

At Fleetwood the next day, he discovered a new truth: a perfect 3-wood into a gale is better medicine than whatever you stand at the chemist's counter asking for. He hit it off tight turf with a swing that trusted the ground and sent the ball forward as if it were a hot coal he could not hold. It ran to the heart of the green and stopped with a thriftiness that matched his smile. He bent to pick up his tee and his phone stayed in his pocket. The wind approved, as wind will when men set their own terms.

By week's end, the new waterproofs had earned their keep and a permanent place in his wardrobe. He had not solved work. He had, however, gifted it a shape. He learned that deadlines cannot be kept by blood, only by order; that rest is part of duty; that trousers, like plans, are best tested early and often.

On our last night, over curry, he raised his glass and said, “Next time, I'll pack the trousers first.” Then, quieter, “And leave the phone alone until the turn.” It wasn't a declaration of independence. It was a schedule written in weather and kept in joy.

### ***Alex — The Quiet (not) King of Toilet Seats***

Alex's industry has no glamour unless you've lived without it. He sells toilet seats. Not a few;

not occasionally; a business of them, national accounts and independent merchants, warehouses and white vans, a dozen varieties of hinge and fixings in bags that rustle like rain. He talks about them the way a violin maker talks about wood: with respect for the thing's quiet purpose and the people who trust it.

"Everyone sits," he once said, and shrugged like that was joke enough. "Comfort is a kindness. Stability is dignity. We help more than we know."

He carries himself like his products: understated, reliable, built to last. When he swings a club, he looks like a man putting a shelf up properly. He does not rush. He sets his feet like a promise. He uses a hybrid he calls Mildred, and the name softens a club that, in lesser hands, would misbehave. In his hands, it is a kind instrument that finds the safe part of the fairway more often than not.

At Fairhaven, under a sky the colour of honest steel, Alex conducted a small clinic in sufficiency. On the par fours that asked questions, he laid back to a number and answered from there. When the pin was mean, he took his par like bread and water. When we got chatty about shapes and carries, he smiled and put Mildred back in the bag as if to say: another time.

Work called him twice, both times about a pallet of soft-close fittings that had taken the long way around the M6. He listened without irritability, asked two precise questions, and gave a solution that involved a borrowed van, a detour past a friendly stockist, and a promise he would keep tomorrow. Then he turned the phone face down on a bench and stood on the 7th tee.

You could see the wind as it crossed the fairway, a visible hurry in the grass. He set the hybrid behind the ball with a kindness that bordered on affection and made a swing that would not

scare a bird. The ball left like a well-raised child and ran forever, checking up at the place he had imagined. He exhaled like a man who had just put an invoice in the right tray.

We played Fleetwood in rain that spoke several languages at once. I watched Alex grow braver as the weather grew worse, as if the storm gave permission to be the kind of man he is when no one is looking. On a long par three that most men were under-clubbing, he took a club more and made a swing that would have suited a milder day. The ball flew heavy and correct, hit the front collar, hopped once, and released to fifteen feet. He didn't make the putt. He smiled anyway, the particular smile of a craftsman who knows the job was done right even if the customer never notices.

At night, walking between pubs, he told us—careful as a man explaining wiring—that he likes his work because it makes bad days easier for strangers. He told us about an order for a care home that needed fifty seats by Friday because a flood had taken the old ones, and how he drove them himself because whimsy should sometimes be routed around. He told us he likes that you can fix things, actually fix them, with a hinge and a screwdriver and patience. He did not say “in a world that feels unfixable.” He didn't need to.

We teased him, because the world needs both levity and hinges. He took it all and laughed with us and then, the next morning, quietly parred three holes in a row into the wind while we were still talking about sauce on chips.

On the final day, at Royal Lytham, he played the way a good business runs: no flourish for flourish's sake, a steady hand when nerves would be understandable, the courage to lay up when arithmetic says ego is expensive. He finished with a five that felt like a signature: firm, legible,

and entirely his own.

“Everyone sits,” he said again, when I asked him why he loves what he does. “If you can make that simple part of the day comfortable, you’ve done your bit.” He patted Mildred as if to thank her for understanding.

He gave us a new definition of success that week—one that wears no shine until you look closely. He reminded us that the quiet, ordinary things are the load-bearing ones. The seat that doesn’t wobble. The friend who doesn’t either.

### ***Franklyn — The Ledger of Days***

I kept the scores because someone has to keep something. But when I look back at the card from that week, I don’t see numbers. I see pictures. Andy’s itinerary folded to the size of a confession. Tommy standing in a pro shop doorway, half-in, half-out of his new trousers like a saint trying on armour. Alex on a tee with Mildred behind the ball as if he were being introduced, not in command.

We talk a lot about balance in our fifties, as if life were a tray we carry at shoulder height across a crowded room. But as the wind signed its name across the dunes each day, I suspected balance is less a pose and more a ledger. We don’t make our lives level. We book the entries carefully and forgive the rounding errors.

There were entries I wrote down without ink:

- The 7-iron Andy threaded through a crosswind at Fairhaven as if selling a cloud on the idea of being gentle.

- The way Tommy's shoulders dropped, not in defeat, but in release, when he put his phone on Do Not Disturb and let the back nine belong to itself.
- The soft click of Alex's hybrid at impact—work done right, once, and then again, and then again.

We took the promenade slowly each evening, as if miles could be counted in conversation. The air had that marine cool that makes a pint taste cleaner. The lights along the front blinked their patient code. We talked, as men do when time grows interesting: about sons and daughters, about backs that complain and refuse to give notice, about work that asks for more than it needs and about the moment you realise you can refuse without the world ending. We did not make speeches. We made sentences and let the wind edit them.

On our last afternoon, Royal Lytham's bunkers yawned like hard lessons. I stood in one up to my knees and remembered a hundred small occasions on which I'd said yes when maybe no was the truer word. Sand has a way of asking for humility and returning it as progress. I got out first time, not well, not pretty, but out. The bogey I made felt like a line paid down on an old debt.

We finished as we should, with chips that burned our tongues and pints that cooled them. The clubhouse chatter around us was the kind that has always soothed me: weather, scores that might have been, a man at the next table telling a story that had gained a stroke every winter since it happened. We let the week settle around us like the good fatigue that follows honest play.

I looked at my friends and saw the work that would resume on Monday: Andy with his clients and calendars, Tommy with his sites stubborn or splendid, Alex with his pallets of soft-close kindness and his vans routed like arteries. The wind had taught us to keep what we could. It had

taught us to choose the hole on which to be unreachable. It had taught us that trousers matter and itineraries help and that some swings are promises to ourselves.

When we stood to go, the light pressed low and gold against the windows. I folded the scorecard and placed it in my wallet behind a picture of my family. I don't keep cards, usually. They're honest, and honesty can be heavy. But this one felt like a ledger that would help me remember which entries count.

We walked out into the brisk, bright afternoon, the air tightening our cheeks, the sea making that low sound it makes when it is pleased with itself. Andy checked his pocket and let the itinerary be. Tommy patted his new trousers with theatrical affection. Alex rested a hand on his golf bag where Mildred slept. I reached for my phone and did not take it out.

The wind off the estuary spoke again and, this time, I could make out the words: play first, for once; work will wait if you make it; life is not a tray but a walk. We turned our faces into it and went on together, steady as men who finally understand the weather.

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## ***9. Benidorm : The full story !***

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## ***Benidorm: The Mature Ryder Cup (with worse knees and better stories)***

### **Day 1 — Friday 10 October 2025 — Travel: Men, Bags, and Dubious Promises**

There's a flavour of honesty unique to 2 a.m. outside a golf club: no peacocking, just men, bags, and the distant memory that stretching used to be a thing. Green Drive glowed under sodium lamps while trolleys clanged into the coach with the grace of a cutlery drawer being mugged. Our organiser—clipboard calm, thousand-yard stare—counted heads like a headteacher who's seen every excuse and all the sequels.

The WhatsApp sprang to life (planes, beers, golf balls, one unexplained aubergine). At the airport: two tribes—those attempting nutrition (one yoghurt, five pastries) and those conducting a peer-reviewed lager-as-hydration study. Jet2 clocked the snore triangle forming in rows 16–18 and got us off on time out of pure self-preservation. Tactical naps commenced: heads back, mouths open, a woodwind section of regrets.

Alicante greeted us with a sky the colour of unpaid invoices. Perfect: cooler air means fewer excuses. We did the ritual where grown men pretend to recognise their own black suitcase, then saluted the coach driver like he'd rescued us from a small war. Benidorm rolled into view—neon eyebrows raised, already writing our reviews.

At Sandos Mónaco, the all-inclusive wristband clicked on and common sense left through a revolving door. Rooms became boutique pro shops hit by a tidy tornado. "Take it easy tonight," we swore. Ten minutes later we'd discovered the bar staff were weapon-grade efficient and "reconnaissance" meant karaoke, neon, and the birth of Unlicensed Travolta: hips on a mission,

feet on strike. There is video. It will outlive us all.

Alarms set. Outfits laid out like parade kit. A rehearsal waggle in the mirror. Tomorrow: golf.

Tonight: denial. Sleep arrived like a three-putt—late, annoying, ultimately our fault.

## **Day 2 — Saturday 11 October 2025 — Levante: The Tax on Ambition**

Breakfast theatre: omelette zealots, pastry poets, caffeine clergy. Pairings read with courtroom gravity. Dirty Den vs Mick's Marvels. Smirks sharpened. Caps lowered. Today mattered.

Levante (Villaitana Levante) is a beautiful liar. From a distance: skyline drama; up close: fairways that pinch mid-flight, greens that roll like truth serum, wind that lies and then changes its story under oath. The practice green dished out character development—three from four feet buys humility; a dropped 25-footer buys delusion.

First-tee hush. Driver pops. Some balls soar nobly; one performs a low, interpretive negotiation with the ladies' tee marker and receives parole. Supportive heckling commences.

Levante asks: can you commit to a line, can you miss on the correct side, can you love a boring four more than a heroic six? The sensible looked clever; the theatrical learned Spanish for "unplayable." Individuals did their day-one chaos routine—purple patches, therapy holes. But the team told a simple truth: Dirty Den played grown-up golf; Mick's Marvels had moments; restraint banked points you don't brag about but remember. No scores, no decimals—just the feel: Dirty Den ahead.

Evening wobble: two wallets/phones evaporated—misaid, lifted, or sacrificed to the gods of neon. The group tightened. Cards cancelled, trackers pinged, hotel staff sainted. Prize-giving,

marshalled by the ex-lead firefighter (parade-ground voice, surgical timing), restored order and laughter. Pockets were double-checked before bed. Evolution! (At last.)

### **Day 3 — Sunday 12 October 2025 — Alenda: Chess, Not Boxing (and the clincher)**

Alenda looks friendly in photos. That's the trap. What you can hit isn't what you should hit, and every slope is a quiet nudge toward consequences. Breakfast split us into two sects: Fairways & Greens FC (lay up to a number, two-putt like a metronome, call a par "handsome") and YouTube University (driver where 4-iron begs, hero corners, thumbnail wedges). By the 4th, smugness and horticulture were evenly distributed.

A mid-iron actually sat pin-high like a well-trained spaniel. A bunker shot clipped the lip, reconsidered its life choices, and finished kick-in. A three-putt delivered a TED Talk on hubris. Par became a personality; those who adopted it prospered.

This was the day the main rivalry ended. Mick's Marvels threw honest punches; Dirty Den answered with metronome golf and zero ego. By the clubhouse, everyone knew: Mick's Marvels had lost the team match after the second golf day (today). No scoreboard plastered on a wall, just the shared understanding that the big fight was over. The banter pivoted from "we'll get you tomorrow" to "see you in the side events." Same volume. Different key.

Evening: lighter shoulders, louder stories, and a solemn vow to behave. Which we immediately broke.

## **Day 4 — Monday 13 October 2025 — Poniente: The Short Assassin & The Andy Moore Trophy**

Poniente posts a short yardage and then mugs you with elevation. It's a lie detector with views.

Elevated tees tempt your ego; par-threes purr "go on then" and invoice you in sand.

No ribbons, no speeches—that's not our style. Everyone knew what Monday meant. The Andy Moore Trophy would appear after the golf: the gloriously cheap, slightly wonky, obviously glued-back-together relic that becomes the heaviest thing in Spain for one minute a year.

On course, modesty beat swagger. Club down; swing normal; putt bravely. A lay-up that looked cowardly paid out with a stone-dead wedge. A punch-out threaded a gap so small it needs planning permission. A chunked chip redeemed itself with a ten-footer that made a man believe again.

Back at Sandos, our ex-lead firefighter kept prize-giving tidy: no sermon, no violins—just a blunt line about a mate from trips past, a nod that said "we remember, we crack on," and the handover. No names, no scores (not for the public page). A handshake, a grin, and the Andy Moore Trophy—a bit battered, a bit off-centre, very clearly acquainted with glue—changed hands. Exactly right.

## **Day 5 — Tuesday 14 October 2025 — Individuals Day: One Flag, Twenty-Odd Agendas**

With the team title settled, the day belonged to the Individuals: one trophy, many delusions. The hotel breakfast looked like pre-exam snacks—bananas for virtue, pastries for courage, coffee for survival. Micro-routines appeared: coin placed tails-up on the ball, glove pulled on like it owes you money, the whispered swing thought ("don't be a hero," which everyone promptly ignored).

The course (still Alenda-Poniente headspace in our skulls) rewarded grown-up golf: fairway, green, two-putt; the sort of round you can't brag about but can't argue with. Yet there were auditions for highlight reels. On a par-five, a lay-up turned into a laser-guided wedge. On a short four, someone tried to drive it and found a postcode usually reserved for goats. A lag putt travelled through three zip codes, hit every footprint between here and Tuesday, and cozied up to the hole as if tipped.

The comedy was premium. A man announced "smooth eight-iron" and swung like he was starting a lawnmower—somehow pin-high. Another declared "no hero shots today" then attempted a 60-yard flop over two bunkers and an existential crisis. We applauded the theatre, then quietly made par the boring way.

Back at base, the ex-lead firefighter executed a no-nonsense ceremony: a few clean gags, a tidy nod to the day's composure merchants, and zero faff. The Individuals champ (name withheld, because that's the gag) wore the expression of someone trying not to smile too widely in case it scares the gods of golf. He failed. Good.

## **Day 6 — Wednesday 15 October 2025 — Four-Man Teams: Chaos, Tactics, and a Texas-ish Scramble**

Today was the four-man event with local rule: if anyone tries a Bryson line, the rest must laugh first. Four brains, one decision, and a committee meeting on every tee. It was glorious.

The rhythm is addictive: best drive (cue arguments), best approach (cue diplomacy), then everyone gets a go at glory with the putter (cue betrayal). Team chemistry mattered. Some pods hummed—one talker, one calculator, one realist, one chaos merchant. Others were four chaos

merchants pretending to be two.

Strategy highlights:

- The “two safe, two silly” tee-shot policy that produced a career 3-wood and a lost ball within six seconds.
- The agreed “no hero over water” rule abandoned instantly when someone saw a green you could nearly reach.
- The putt read by committee that went in because no one touched it—accidentally perfect.

We saw a bunker shot that should be in museums, a recovery that snaked under branches like a trained ferret, and a drive launched with the encouraging shout “send it” followed by the clarifying whisper “where?” Laughter did the miles today. The golf wasn’t bad either.

Scores? None published. Memories? Abundant. The podium shared a photo that will look more athletic every year it’s re-told.

## **Day 7 — Thursday 16 October 2025 — Font del Llop: The Curtain Call**

Font del Llopis a stunner with a spine—rolling land, framed shots, greens that nod if you’re polite and shrug if you’re lazy. It’s the right place to finish: honest, pretty, unforgiving if you fake it.

By now we’d remembered who we are. Drivers exhaled. Irons behaved. Wedges either floated like butterflies or clattered like saucepans; both produced stories. A fairway wood off a skiddy downslope actually listened for once and got applause usually reserved for musicals. A bunker shot clipped the flag and stayed out purely to keep us humble. A timid putt fell dead centre and shamed all its braver cousins.

The team story had already been written—Dirty Den beat Mick’s Marvels convincingly, clinched back on Day 3—so today was for punctuation: a tidy finish, a last clean strike, a final sensible lay-up that felt like wisdom. Prize-giving on the terrace mixed village-green warmth with drill-hall timing. The ex-lead firefighter did his thing—brisk, funny, sorted. Tokens handed, nearest-the-pins applauded, longest drives honoured (and lightly doubted, as tradition demands). Fines were merciful. Toasts landed perfectly: to the organiser, the birthday, the bar-staff saints, and mateship—the only reason weeks like this work when life throws a wobble.

We ate like champions and talked like grown-ups. One last pocket inventory, one last wrestle with a suitcase zip, one last balcony look at a city that tolerated us with suspicious grace.

## **Day 8 — Friday 17 October 2025 — Home: Wheels Down, Stories Up**

Airports again, but different faces: less pallor, more peace. Bags carried a smidge of contraband sand and a suspicious amount of confidence. Jet2 whisked us home while the group chat detonated into a museum of the week: swings, plates, sunsets, and a dancefloor clip we’ve all promised to delete and absolutely won’t.

Back home, people asked, “How was it?” We said, “Brilliant,” because that’s faster than explaining the programme. We learned—again—that a par can be louder than a brag, that clubbing down is a love language, that inventorying pockets is cheaper than therapy, and that the best part of a golf trip isn’t the golf. It’s the chorus you bring, and the certainty they’ll still be there when the next invite lands.

Final word: No scores needed. We all felt it: Dirty Den beat Mick’s Marvels convincingly, clinching the team match after Day 3. Everything after was gravy—glorious, chaotic, hilarious

gravy—held together by a glued-up trophy, a few good choices, and a lot of good people.

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## ***10. Recharge, Reconnect, Rediscover: Why Wellness Travel Is Booming After 50***

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There comes a point in life where holidays stop being about ticking places off a list and start being about something deeper. It's not just where you go anymore — it's why you go. And for millions of travellers over 50, that "why" is increasingly simple: to feel good, stay active, and make every moment matter.

Welcome to the age of wellness travel— a movement that's reshaping the way we think about holidays and giving people a whole new reason to pack a bag.

### **Why Wellness Matters More Than Ever**

The truth is, we're living longer, healthier lives — but many of us aren't satisfied with simply adding years. We want to enjoy them. That's why wellness travel has exploded in popularity among people in their 50s, 60s and beyond.

Gone are the days when a getaway meant two weeks on a sun lounger followed by a guilty glance at the bathroom scales. Today's travellers want experiences that boost their bodies, calm their minds, and nourish their souls.

Wellness holidays might include gentle yoga overlooking the ocean, hiking through pristine



national parks, spa retreats that actually fix your stress levels, or nutrition-focused escapes that reset your lifestyle. It's about feeling better when you return home, not worse.

## **A New Definition of Luxury**

For decades, luxury travel meant five-star hotels, champagne on arrival and endless buffets. But ask most people over 50 what they really value now, and you'll hear a different answer: time, space, and peace of mind.

Wellness travel is redefining luxury. It's about personalised experiences, small details and meaningful moments. Think:

- Morning meditation on a clifftop terrace
- Locally sourced meals designed to boost energy
- Guided nature walks that reconnect you with the outdoors
- Spa therapies focused on longevity, mobility and recovery

These are the kinds of experiences that go beyond “holiday memories” and become genuine turning points in how you feel.

## **The Science Behind Feeling Good**

This isn't just a travel trend — there's solid science behind it. Research shows that regular physical activity, nature exposure and stress reduction can slow ageing, reduce chronic disease risk, and even improve cognitive function.

Wellness travel is a way to stack the odds in your favour. A week spent hiking, eating well and sleeping deeply isn't just a break — it's an investment in your future self. And because many

wellness holidays are designed for mature travellers, they're tailored to your needs rather than assuming you want to run a marathon or climb Everest.

## **From Slow Travel to Soul Travel**

One of the most beautiful things about wellness travel is that it encourages you to slow down — not because you have to, but because you want to. It's travel without the rush. No frantic sightseeing schedules, no trying to cram six cities into five days.

Instead, it's about depth over distance. It's lingering in a forest hot spring in Japan. It's exploring the vineyards of Tuscany on foot. It's swapping digital noise for the sound of waves and birdsong.

This slower, more mindful style of travel is deeply satisfying — and it often becomes the most memorable trip you'll ever take.

## **How to Choose the Right Wellness Holiday**

Wellness travel isn't one-size-fits-all. The best trip for you depends on your personality, goals and lifestyle. Here's a quick guide:

- For stress relief: Look for meditation retreats, forest bathing experiences or spa-focused escapes.
- For health & nutrition: Choose resorts that include consultations with dietitians, cooking classes or detox programmes.
- For active rejuvenation: Go for walking holidays, cycling tours or yoga-and-hiking retreats.

- For mind & soul: Try mindfulness workshops, creative retreats or “digital detox” programmes in nature.

Explore wellness-focused holidays here

## **The Couple That Travels Together, Stays Together**

Wellness travel is especially rewarding for couples. Shared experiences — like sunrise yoga, forest hikes or thermal spa days — build deeper connections. They’re a reminder that wellbeing isn’t just about your body, but your relationships too.

Many resorts now design programmes specifically for couples over 50, balancing together-time with individual treatments and activities. It’s a chance to grow closer while also focusing on your own self-care — and that’s a rare gift in today’s busy world.

## **Rediscovering Yourself After 50**

There’s another layer to this movement — one that’s harder to define but even more powerful. Wellness travel gives people the space to reconnect with themselves.

For many, the years after 50 are a time of transition — children leaving home, careers winding down, priorities shifting. A wellness holiday isn’t just a trip. It’s a reset button. It’s a space to ask: What do I want next? Who do I want to be?

That’s the magic of it. It’s not about escaping life. It’s about building a life you don’t want to escape from.

## **The Future Is Wellness**

The travel industry is changing — fast. And the over-50s are driving that change. They’re

demanding holidays that do more than entertain. They want them to transform.

At Beyond Par Life, we're committed to finding and sharing the most inspiring wellness travel experiences on the planet. Because we believe that life after 50 isn't about slowing down — it's about going deeper, feeling stronger and living better than ever.

So, whether you're dreaming of a spa retreat in the Alps, a walking holiday through the Scottish Highlands or a restorative cruise across the Mediterranean, the future of travel is clear: it's wellness.

Start exploring wellness escapes today

Recharge. Reconnect. Rediscover. This isn't the end of your story — it's just a new chapter. And it starts with your next trip.

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## About the Author

Paul Thomson is a British writer, golfer and wellness enthusiast with decades of experience on and off the course. After a successful corporate career, he turned his passion for golf, travel and healthy living into BeyondParLife.com, where he shares tips and inspiration for staying active, exploring new destinations and making the most of life after 50. When he's not teeing off or writing, you'll find him travelling with his family, experimenting with fitness routines and encouraging others to embrace the joys of midlife.