

STAY HOME, STAY FIT

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Six feet. Quarantine. Sanitizer. These words have been ringing in our ears for the past few weeks. With cities looking like ghost towns, the virus has finally got its way with us locked indoors, washing hands 24/7, devoid of hugs and sunlight.

Even in these trying times, there is no excuse to lose all the gains from the gym. While a home workout can never replace intense bouts of pumping iron, it is guaranteed to work up your sweat glands and break the new-found sedentary lifestyle for amateurs and bodybuilders alike.

BACK TO BASICS

Binging on television series or surfing the internet can only go so far. Thus, beginners are welcome to start with the basics.

Push-ups, sit-ups and squats are at the core of any workout. Burpees are never an easy thing to do. And none of these require any equipment. There are already established workout routines such as, the 30-day fitness challenge, 7-minute workout etc. Getting started with these is a great way to enter into a fitness regime.

However, for pro-enthusiasts, try challenging yourselves with a set number of reps in a given time frame. For example, break the 5-minute plank record, try wall-



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

sits with weights and so on. Missing the benches and dumbbells? Use the chair for a set of tricep dips. Lift some filled water cans. You have all the creative freedom to use the furniture in your house however you like.

If not, spend some time researching.

There are hundreds of blogs and channels offering online workout lessons for free, specifically designed for home, with or without equipment. Narrow down your search depending on your needs and fitness level. Find a fitness personality you like, stick to the do's and don'ts. Start out with

the stretches. Make sure to not strain yourselves too far; pain does not always equate to gain.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

It's also a good time to try new things. For example, yoga. From relaxing poses to biting stances, pick some moves to try. There is meditation, too; not to forget, aerobics. To make things interesting, try a few dance workout classes. Say, Zumba?

Endorphins and exercise go hand in hand. Endorphins are neurochemicals in the brain that make you feel good and physical exertion is one big cause of their release. But they work with serotonin and norphenylephrine, feel-good chemicals that are released at varying times during workout and the reason behind "runner's high".

WHO recommends a weekly activity of 150 or 75 minutes of moderate and vigorous intensity respectively. Studies have found that exercise reduces anxiety and stress and helps in depression. In these dire times, when we run out of things to do, breaking out some sweat is the least we could for our well-being.

Hiya loves food that you hate by norm -- broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com

How predictive text is changing writing

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Open your smartphone keyboard and type a word. Do you notice the three suggestions? This is one good example of how keyboard developers use your word usage tendencies and conversation history to determine what you might type next or the words you used before.

Let's play a game. Type one random word and choose from the others from the word suggestions to see the resultant sentence. Is it funny? It could be. It often isn't.

Dependence on predictive texting

Dependence on anything has its own pros and cons. Text prediction immensely speeds up your conversation on a messaging platform. The typing experience is more streamlined than ever before and will only get better. For example, being an anime lover, it is quite common for me to use the word "Nani" (which translates to "what"). The keyboard knows when I will use such a word and brings up as soon as I type a "n". Another example would be when we exaggerate interjections such as "lol" to "loool", the keyboard predicts it yet again more often than not.

Just like most tech, there is an argument against this as well. Critics say that this undermines the cognitive skills of an individual that is used for writing. The argument against it is rather strong when the usage of this tech among kids



is brought into perspective. It can be said, without a doubt, that more kids are using smartphones than ever before. A child's experience of learning by writing using a pen is by no means equal to that of typing. Children who learn to write by typing do not have the same understand-

ing of character or letter forms as those who learned to write by hand.

A study done in China in 2010, estimated that almost 80 percent of people in China had problems remembering the spellings of words such as "cologne" and "enough" as dependence on auto-com-

plete got the better of them.

What lies in the future?

Predictive text algorithms are developing further, and for the first time in history, it has been quite an achievable task for a computer program to write a story. In a few more years, it is quite possible that our silicon friends, with the help of our data, will be able to write literary pieces almost indistinguishable to ours. Will they be as good? Perhaps better? Only time will tell.

As far as the usage of predictive text is concerned, it is a technology here to stay for all the reasons, good or bad. But for now, it is our imperfections that make us the best version of ourselves. As for the tech, it will never say "Time is monkey."

For us humans, unpredictability is in our nature where a computer is about all things perfect. This makes me grateful. Whatever lies in the future, none can beat the crisp and smell of paper, the loopy L's, grammatical errors, and the sudden depletion of the pen's ink.

Reference

South China Morning Post (January 5, 2017). *Is predictive text robbing us of our ability to write?*

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