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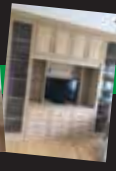
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**Dipika Mistry and Kathryn Ferris**  
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Head of the Family Law department, Kathryn Ferris is a qualified Collaborative Family Lawyer and offers the benefits of this revolutionary approach to her clients. Dipika Mistry, is an accredited Law Society Family Law solicitor. Kathryn and Dipika are both members of "Resolution", an organisation that promotes constructive, non-confrontational methods to resolve family issues.

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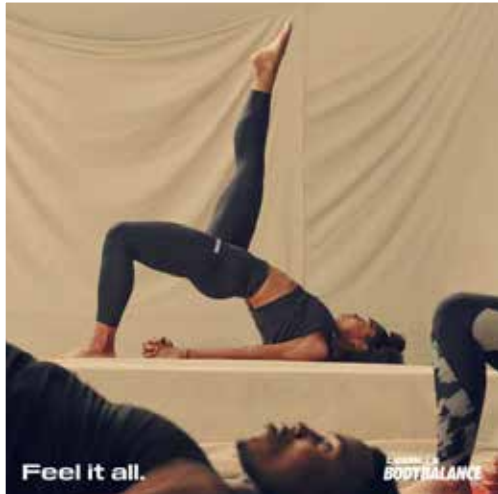
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## The perfect lockdown exercise

During the first lockdown I rather enjoyed the enforced laziness. I am a gym member, but I don't really love it. After a while though I noticed that while I didn't miss weights and running on the treadmill, I did miss the classes, and the rush of endorphins that followed. Then one day while idly flicking through YouTube videos I came across a 'hula-fitness' workout. It looked fun. I grabbed one of my daughter's neon hula hoops and had a go. Much harder than it looked but I enjoyed it. The next afternoon I had another go and my teenage daughter joined in. We laughed a lot (which was a bonus as anyone who has a teenage daughter will acknowledge) and afterwards we investigated hula-fitness a bit more.

Hula hooping is inexpensive, and you can do it practically anywhere, which was kind of the point back in lockdown. All you need to get started is a hoop and room to move.

Standard hula hoops are cheap as chips but after a few sessions we invested in weighted ones. Even they didn't break the bank. Ours cost about £15 each but even the more expensive ones were only £40.

It is important to find the right-sized hoop. Larger hoops are a little easier as a beginner because you spin more slowly. If using a weighted hoop, begin with a lighter one (around 0.5-1Kg) and increase the weight as you get more proficient. Correct form is more important than weight, and I did have a little accident where I pulled a muscle in my back for a few days because in my enthusiasm the first hoop I bought was too heavy.

There are a few online tutorials that talk you through how to hula hoop with proper form. To my delight I found our gym offered a beginner's online hula fitness class, so we signed up for that.

With hula hooping, you teach your body how to move the right way with the hoop while working your cardiovascular system. Shorter workouts are better at the start. We started with two ten-minute sessions a day and worked up from there.

### Basic form and posture

Feet should be a little more than shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other.

Your back should be straight, and your core engaged to protect your back.

Hold each side of the hoop around your waist, resting against your back.

With the hoop against your back, start spinning the hoop in whichever direction you find easiest. As the hoop starts to spin, move your waist in a circular motion to keep the hoop moving. Push your hips slightly forward as the hoop moves across your stomach and push back when the hoop moves across your back. **KEEP THE CORE MUSCLES ENGAGED – TUMMY TIGHT.**

If the hoop drops just pick it up and get going again.

Finally - If you have a back injury or chronic back pain, check with your doctor or physical therapist before trying hula hooping to make sure it's safe for you.

**by Tracey Anderson**

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# Garden View

## This month The Winter Garden

If I say 'winter garden' what do you imagine? A stately home? Evergreen shrubs? Topiary maybe?

It dawned on me a few years ago when I was out walking the dog on a frosty morning that winter gardens are really all about the light. From late autumn through the winter there is a pink-gold low slanting light in the morning and afternoon which makes frost and raindrops sparkle, casts interesting shadows and makes everything look magical.

Watch your garden throughout the day from the rooms you where you see it best. Watch where and when the sunlight falls and plan accordingly.

Grasses look beautiful when they are covered in frost and backlit. The red or yellow winter stems of Cornus (or dogwood) however seem to glow when winter sunshine illuminates them directly.

Most suburban houses have smaller gardens, easily visible from the house so it's important to choose plants which look good in more than one season.

As well as shrubs with good stem colour, look for smaller trees with pretty bark. There are plenty of small Japanese Maples which can be grown in tubs. If you have a little more space

a silver birch can look stunning, or even my favourite, the paper-bark maple, *Acer griseum*, which is a slow-growing small tree, pretty all year round with crimson leaves in the autumn then a characteristic chestnut bark which peels naturally to reveal bright orange red bark underneath.

Look for plants with architectural shapes such as one of the sculptural *eryngiums* (sea holly), *salvias* or *sedums*. All look beautiful in the summer and autumn but gain a second lease of life when covered with frosted cobwebs.

Plants like these will make you want to get out in your garden even in winter, so add a little scent with a winter jasmine or a *sarcococca confusa* (Christmas box) which has tiny white highly scented flowers. These late flowering plants provide a source of nectar for early pollinators.

I no longer tidy my flower beds. I leave piles of fallen leaves and debris in beds to provide shelter for wildlife. The leaves to rot down in the end which is good for the soil too. But I do spend time neatening the edge of the lawn and sharpening the edges of my borders. It's amazing how much smarter my garden looks with minimal effort.

I wish you a Happy New Year and happy gardening.

**by Rachael Leverton**





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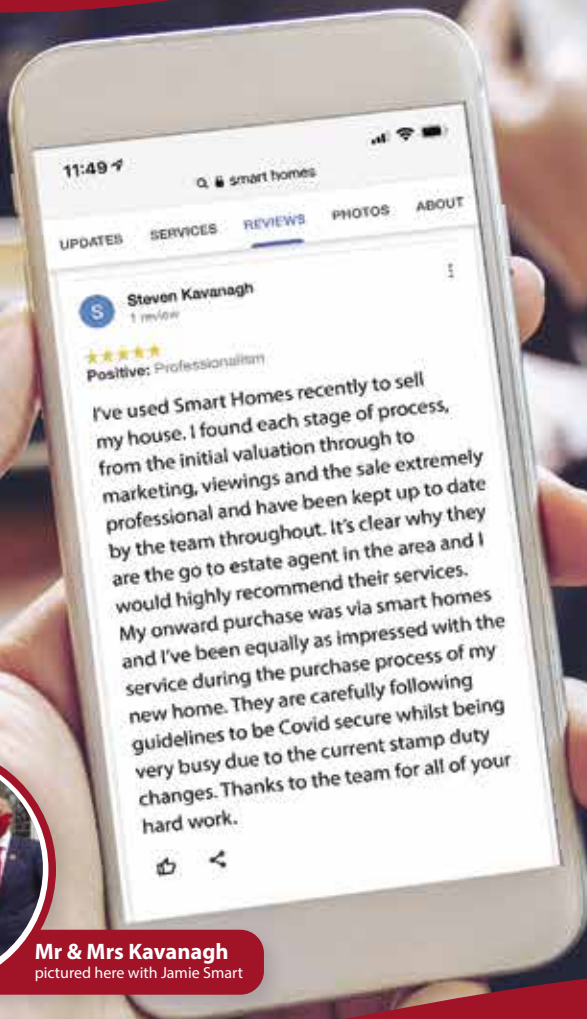
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