

THE BODY & MIND | SIGNALS WORTH NOTING

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FIELD NOTES FOR TOP CHAPS

TIPS FOR
MAKING THE
NEXT DECADE
WORK BETTER
THAN THE LAST



KNOW THE NUMBERS

TAKING
CONTROL
WITHOUT THE
DRAMA

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LOOKING OUT
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MEN'S HEALTH 2026

A word on men's health

Men's health has come a long way from the days of "I'll be fine." But progress shouldn't mean pressure. It's not about running marathons, hugging strangers, or growing a heroic moustache — unless you really want to. It's about paying quiet attention to what keeps you ticking — mind, body, and the bits in between.

No grand gestures, just better habits.

Signals worth noting

Before the lights go red, most of us get an amber. It's the body's way of saying slow down, have a look around, not pull the emergency brake.

We're good at noticing warning signs in machines — a flashing oil light, a strange rattle under the bonnet — but far slower at spotting them in ourselves.

Fatigue becomes “just a busy week.” A bad back is “probably the chair.” Low mood? “Bit of a phase.”

The truth is, these little flickers are the amber lights of your system. You don't need a full-scale intervention to deal with them — you just need to acknowledge they're there.

A routine health check, a quiet chat, a change of pace — these are the equivalent of clearing the line before the signal hits red.

“Paying attention is just good maintenance.”

Worth paying attention to:

Sleep going off-track.

Sudden fatigue.

Unexplained aches.

Changes in mood or appetite.

Loss of focus.

Anything that feels “not quite right” for more than a week.

A green light doesn't mean ignore the track ahead.

Amber means think before you keep going.

The 10-minute honesty check

You don't need a therapist on speed dial — though there's no shame if you do. Sometimes, it's just about taking ten quiet minutes to ask yourself how things really are.

When did you last sleep properly?

Are you running on caffeine and habit?

Do you still find joy in the things that used to make you laugh?

We're not built to run on autopilot forever. You can only coast for so long before the fuel light flashes. That ten-minute honesty check is the pit stop — not the breakdown lane.

Talking helps too

It doesn't need to be a heart-to-heart under fairy lights; it can be a chat while walking the dog, or a quick pint with someone who gets it.

You don't have to pour everything out, just enough to stop bottling it up.

A good conversation isn't about solutions. It's about calibration — reminding yourself that you're human, not a machine, and that nobody's expecting you to have all the answers all the time.

*“Talking isn't time wasted.
It's calibration.”*





The numbers — stripped of drama

The prostate isn't something most men think about — until it makes itself known. It's a small gland with a big job, helping to produce semen and keep things working smoothly.

Around 1 in 8 men in the UK will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime — and for Black men, it's 1 in 4.

Age, family history, and ethnicity all play a part, which is why keeping an eye on prostate health matters long before symptoms appear.

That's where PSA comes in

The prostate-specific antigen test isn't a panic button. It's a simple blood test that helps track changes in your prostate over time. It doesn't give you a yes-or-no answer — it gives you information. Knowing your baseline now means fewer surprises later.

A raised PSA level doesn't always mean cancer. It can happen for lots of ordinary reasons — recent cycling, sex, even a long walk. That's why preparation matters as much as the test itself.

*“PSA isn't a diagnosis
— it's data.”*

Before you roll up your sleeve

Every man has some PSA — prostate-specific antigen — in his blood. A raised level doesn't automatically mean cancer. It simply means your prostate deserves a closer look.

If you're thinking about having a PSA test, here's what's worth knowing first:

Avoid vigorous exercise (especially cycling) for at least 48 hours.

Avoid sex or ejaculation for 48 hours before the test — it can raise your result.

Wait if you've had a urinary infection or prostate procedure recently.

Tell your GP about any medication or treatment, as these can affect readings.

A raised PSA should lead to a follow-up chat, not panic. Your GP may suggest repeating the test after a short gap, or arranging a scan before deciding what's next.

The aim isn't to create fear — it's to build a picture over time. Think of it as knowing your mileage, not your expiry date.

“Getting a PSA test is simple, free, and smart.”

If you're over 50, or 45 with a family history, ask your GP about a PSA test.



The quiet ones – those Crown Jewels

The boys don't ask for much — just a quick check now and then.

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men under 40, yet it's one of the most treatable when caught early. The trouble is, most men don't notice anything's wrong until it's staring them in the face — because nobody ever told them what 'normal' feels like.

Normal isn't a science. It's just what's usual for you. Most testicles feel smooth, firm but not hard, with one slightly different to the other. That's perfectly fine — one will often hang lower, or feel heavier. What matters is spotting change.

A lump, swelling, dull ache, or a sudden sense that something feels heavier or different is worth paying attention to. Pain isn't always present, so don't wait for that as your signal.

You don't need a mirror, a tutorial, or a medical degree. Just a quick feel once a month — easiest after a warm shower when everything's relaxed.

It takes less time than brushing your teeth.
And yes, you can even multi-task.

Check monthly. Know what's normal for you.

*“It's not awkward.
It's securing your assets.”*



Workload – The hidden drain

We keep an eye on heart rate, steps, sleep and diet — yet the thing that drains men fastest is workload. Not just the job, but the invisible stuff: responsibility, mental admin, the pressure to keep going because everyone else seems to be.

Overload has become a modern badge of honour. Long hours look committed. Being exhausted looks normal. But fatigue, poor focus and burnout don't make great wingmen.

Most men only notice the drain when performance slips — slower thinking, irritability, running on caffeine instead of energy. These aren't failings. They're early warning lights.

Your mind has a capacity limit just like your muscles. You can power through for a bit, but not forever. Every late night, every extra task, every "I'll sort it later" adds to the load.

A simple pause can reset the whole day. Five minutes in the car before work. A moment on the platform. A quiet cup of tea before the world starts. These aren't luxuries — they're maintenance.

Try asking yourself:

What's pulling the most energy today?

What truly can't wait?

What's just noise?

"Overload isn't a sign of strength. Managing it is."

You can't change what you don't acknowledge. But once you see the drain, it's easier to adjust the pace and get some breathing space back.

Movement as medicine

Forget the abs — think arteries.

Movement isn't about performance or punishment. It's about keeping the engine running: joints that don't creak, a heart that doesn't complain, lungs that don't argue on the stairs.

You don't need a boot camp, gym membership or a stopwatch. You just need to move more than you currently do. Walk the dog a bit faster. Take the long route to the kettle. Lift something heavier than your phone. It all counts.

Most of the benefits have nothing to do with looking a certain way. Movement sends oxygen round the body, keeps blood vessels flexible, and helps regulate blood sugar. It reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and even chronic pain.

And the mental shift is just as real. When you move, your brain releases the good stuff — endorphins, dopamine — the chemicals that help with stress, low mood and the general fog that creeps in when life gets too static.

*“Exercise isn't a punishment.
It's a prescription.”*

You don't need perfection. You need consistency. Twenty minutes a day makes a real difference — and it doesn't have to be in one heroic session.

The goal isn't to become a machine — it's simply to remind your body what it's built for: movement, not idling.



Hormones – the Quiet Rebellion

*“The Menopause isn’t a myth.
It’s momentum shifting.”*

Midlife isn’t chaos — it’s chemistry. When hormones shift, they change the tempo of everything: sleep, strength, drive, mood. Understanding them is half the battle.

The digital diet

Screens aren't the enemy — but they're not neutral either. Most men underestimate how much their headspace is shaped by what they scroll past, react to, or quietly absorb without noticing.

Online life can motivate, inform, entertain, and connect — but it can just as easily drain, distort, and distract. The trick isn't deleting everything; it's knowing what you're feeding your brain.

If you wouldn't invite someone into your living room to criticise you, why let them do it from your feed?

Comparison used to be occasional. Now it's constant. Everyone else's highlights, workouts, holidays, bodies, careers — all served in a steady stream that makes "doing fine" feel like failure.

And the mental load adds up. Notifications, news alerts, group chats, endless opinions... It's not noise — it's demand. Your brain treats every ping as something to handle.

Try asking yourself:

Who am I giving my attention to — and are they earning it?
Does this make me feel informed, entertained, or just inadequate?

When did I last go an hour without checking anything?
Is this connection, or just clutter?

*You don't need a digital detox —
you just need a digital boundary."*

A better digital diet doesn't mean going analogue. It means putting yourself back in charge of the menu.

Act now — your future self will thank you

Most men are world-class at “I’ll sort it tomorrow.”

But every delay — that appointment, that conversation, that tiny nagging worry — stacks up faster than we think.

Today doesn’t have to be dramatic. It just has to be something. A call. A check. A small shift in pace. The win is in the doing, not the waiting.

*“Later is where problems grow.
Today is where things change.”*

Your mate check — the field guide

- * Message someone you haven’t heard from in a while.
- * Suggest a walk, a coffee, a pint — no fanfare, no excuses.
- * Ask: “You good?” — and actually listen.
- * Share one thing you’re changing, even if it’s small.
- * Notice when someone seems a bit off-track. That’s your cue.
- * Spot the amber before it goes red — for you and for them.

Pick one small thing and do it today — not perfectly, just intentionally.

The rest can wait.



Help for you

“Small moves save big problems.”

Movember Foundation

An international organisation that funds research and initiatives for men's mental health, suicide prevention, and prostate and testicular cancer.

www.uk.movember.com

Men's Health Forum

An independent voice for male health, providing resources, research, and campaigning to improve men's health services.

www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Andy's Man Club

Runs peer-to-peer talking groups in over 150 locations across the UK to help men discuss their feelings and combat suicide.

www.andysmanclub.co.uk/

Prostate Cancer UK

Offers support, information, and services to men affected by prostate cancer, and funds research.

www.prostatecanceruk.org

Orchid

Raises awareness and funds research for prostate, testicular, and penile cancers. They also have a helpline and offer support.

www.orchid-cancer.org.uk

Samaritans

Offers a 24/7 helpline for anyone who needs to talk.

Call: 116 123

www.samaritans.org

This guide isn't medical advice — it's a reminder that paying attention is the most underrated skill a man can have.

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