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I prefer to be contacted initially by email prior to any phone calls, thanking you.

How To Play Golf – H1

<https://www.golfdom.com.au/swing-tips/how-to-play-golf/>

It may come as no surprise that 'how to play golf' is the most widely used keyword search in golfing terms. More people Google this question than any other when it comes to golf related searches on the web. Thus, this truly is the starting point for many on their golfing journeys. For those of us who love the game and play often it is useful to ponder our own beginnings in this great pastime. I noticed quite a few beginners on the practice range at my local golf club the other day. I could feel their apprehension as balls flew in unexpected directions, as they endeavoured to make solid contact with their shots. We have all been there at one time or another, it is scary but fun embarking on the golfing challenge.

How Many People Played Golf – H2

Golf grew through the pandemic in many countries around the world. Lockdowns saw more players taking to the course when they were allowed to. Golf Australia reported a 21% [increase in year on year in rounds played](#) 2020-2021. Plus, a 6.4% rise in golf club memberships over the same period. This equated to 24, 000 more members joining clubs. There are 1.204 million people participating in golf in Australia. In the USA this figure was 25.1 million people played golf on a course in 2021. 66.6 million people played golf globally in 2021, according to R&A research.

Who Is Playing Golf – H3

So, if you are one of those people taking up the great game of golf or considering it, you are not alone. Golf participation demographics are more easily discernible for members of golf clubs, as they have more data on their members than social players. Club members are more likely to be male and in the back half of their lifespans. The average age of club members is 56.9 years. Males 55.3 years. Females 64.3 years. What we can deduce from those figures is that women are too busy working or doing all the work at home to play golf until a decade later than their male counterparts. Usually, women, also, already have better established social networks and don't need golf clubs to provide that so much in their lives. More women are taking up the game, however, with an increase of 1.9%. Around a third of new members were aged between 15 and 34 years. Golf remains a game that demands a large time commitment and this reduces its appeal to parents with younger families.

How to play golf - this was the question which kicked things off. I could say that [learning to play golf is a lifetime's journey](#) but that would only annoy a number of people. To optimise your golf make sure that your first port of call is with a PGA professional. Do the right thing and get schooled in the basics over a series of lessons, say 6 to start with. Guidance around the golf swing and technique is more important in golf than in any other sport. There are loads of ineffective swings out there in club land and they get it around but at what cost. You will be consigning your golfing life to struggle street and the lower grades. Get the good oil and establish sound fundamentals to work with going forward.

As in most things in life you will improve with experience. Golf is a challenging game to play. Accept this and don't beat yourself up too much when you are starting out. Practice the drills you are given by your PGA instructor. You need to slowly develop a feel for where your

club and body are during the golf swing. It takes time to develop some confidence in what you are doing. With confidence comes improved ball striking ability. You cannot be too thin skinned in golf. Don't be afraid of hurting the grass. Many beginners are overly tentative about digging up the surface. Carry a sand bucket and always fill in your divots. Your golf club is a tool designed to strike the golf ball by hitting down and through the grass, especially your wedges and irons. Practice this without a ball to get a feel for swinging through the turf without digging deep holes with the leading edge of the club. Get to know your clubs by studying them from a design perspective. Feel the grooves on the face of the clubs. Look at the different lofts, the inclinations from leading edge to the top of the club. We all learn in different ways, as befits our uniqueness, but a tactile approach to the tools of your golfing trade is a must.

Many great teachers began backwards, as in they start with putting on the green. Harvey Pennick was one such great. He recommends learning to putt the ball into the hole first up on your golfing journey. Spend some time stroking putts on the practice green. Become proficient in this the most important aspect of the game. Every hole concludes with putting the golf ball into the hole – remember that. This counterintuitive approach can rub some people up the wrong way, as they long to smash majestic drives down the fairway. You need to learn to walk before you can run folks.

Chipping around the green is next on the how to play golf agenda. Chipping with a variety of wedges and short irons will teach you about striking the golf ball. A chip is like a mini swing and it drills you in the solid contact between club face and golf ball. Practice chipping and experiment with where you place the ball in your stance at address. Placing the ball nearer your front foot will increase the altitude of your chip. Having the golf ball back in your stance delofts your club and promotes a lower chip, which will roll out longer on the green. This period is all about discovery and soak up all the data you are witnessing. Learn from your experiments and file this knowledge away for when you need it on course.

Pitching is done with wedges and your shortest irons. Pitching into a green is all about creating a high altitude shot from around 120m to land on the green as close to the hole as you can. The height of the shot contributes to the golf ball staying on the green rather than rolling off. Creating spin on the ball via your strike can also assist in keeping the ball on the green and this comes with practice and good technique. If you are pitching from the fairway with a wedge you will want to know how far you hit your wedges. You may carry a Pitching Wedge, Gap Wedge, Sand Wedge, and Lob Wedge – all of these wedges have different lofts and may have varying bounces. Your wedges are called your scoring clubs and you need to get to know them well. Through practice and experience you will learn how far you hit each wedge on average. Pitching and chipping are finesse shots in the game of golf and require feel and touch. These things come with regular practice and experience.

Short iron play involves your 9 Iron, 8 Iron, and 7 Iron. These clubs are most often used on short par 3s and approach shots to the green. Proficiency with these clubs is pretty important if you wish to enjoy your golf. These irons are considered to be somewhat easier to strike than the mid and long irons. The length of the shaft is shorter which means you stand closer to the ball and swing more upright. Golf gets harder, in terms of golf swing

proficiency the longer the shaft and further you are away from the ball. There are subtle adjustments required within your repertoire of swings with 14 different clubs in the bag. Many teachers like to stress that you make the same basic swing but I think that this is not exactly the case. Your PGA instructor will set you up with the fundamentals necessary to perform every required swing in the bag. Many people fall in love with their 7 iron, as their favourite club in the bag. Depending on the size of your local course you will discover which clubs you use most often during a round of golf. Make sure that you get better at these if you want to score well. These irons are usually used from 110m to 150m depending on how far you hit the ball.

Mid irons are your 6 Iron and 5 Iron, and I would classify your 4 Iron and 3 Iron as long irons. Of course, these are only names and you might classify some irons differently. Some folks carry 2 Irons, which are often called Driving Irons these days. The shaft is longer as the number goes down, which makes these clubs more challenging for the beginner. Your swing needs to be longer and flatter because you are standing further from the golf ball at address. Anxiety can be an issue in golf and the golf swing is all about timing. As a rough rule the longer the swing the more time there is for things to go wrong. In fact, when we get anxious we often speed things up to the detriment of the golf swing. Long and smooth doesn't usually go well with fearful and uptight. Practice your mid irons and long irons learning how far a well struck shot travels on average. There is joy to be had from becoming more proficient with your golf clubs. Developing competence with your ball striking ability increases your enjoyment factor in the game of golf. Practice makes perfect. Learning how to play golf with your mid and long irons can be enormously satisfying. These irons are usually employed from 150m to 200m+ depending on how far you are able to hit the ball.

Many beginners choose not to play long irons and carry hybrids instead. These clubs have been developed to provide similar distances but are easier to strike. These clubs usually have graphite shafts instead of steel, making them lighter, and their larger heads promote greater ease of use. You may carry a 5, 4, 3 Hybrid or a combination of these. Learn how far you hit each of these when successfully struck. These Hybrid clubs are played like a mid-iron in terms of address and shallow downward strike upon the ball. Like all golf clubs you need to spend time practicing and getting to know how these can perform. It can take time to develop a relationship with a particular golf club. Perseverance is rewarded with another weapon or instrument in your golfing arsenal. Hybrids have a similar distance to irons but are usually easier to hit higher. Some golfers find that they hit Hybrids longer than their irons. Find out via practice and experience.

Fairway clubs or woods. There are 9, 7, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 woods or fairway clubs. The 1 Wood is called the Driver. This is the mother of all clubs with a massive, oversized head, and longest shaft of some 44 to 46 inches made of light weight graphite. The Driver garners much of the sexy attention at the pointy end of golf. You know men and their obsession with shafts. Learning to drive the golf ball is almost a separate thing in itself, as it differs markedly from the iron swing. Firstly, you tee the golf ball up on the biggest tee and play the ball off the heel of your lead foot. This requires that the swinging motion strikes the ball on the upswing, sweeping the ball down the fairway. The ball position promotes this kind of

swing and the longer tee allows for the big club head. Your PGA instructor will devote a lesson for this club and this swing. It is important to learn to get off the tee successfully with the driver, as you may be using this club a lot on par 4s and par 5s. The length of the shaft and the different looking head on this club can pose challenges for some beginners and perseverance under wise guidance is the key to success. How far you hit it with the driver becomes a measuring contest for some golfers and can provide an advantage if you can get it out there off the tee. Golfers can hit the driver anything from 170m to 350m depending on ability and proficiency. It is not all about strength either good technique can deliver exceptional distance.

The 3 Fairway or Wood is the little brother or sister of the Driver. Some golfers prefer to use their 3 Fairway off the tee. The use of the term Wood comes from the time when the heads of these clubs were made of wood like persimmon. 43 to 42 inches is the average shaft length for the 3 Wood. Great distances can be achieved with this club as well. Hitting the 3 Fairway off the turf on a par 5 for instance as your second shot can be a challenging shot to learn for the beginner. The long shaft means a flatter longer swing is required. Practicing this shot on the range under the tutelage of your PGA instructor will assist in gaining competence with this long shot. Many beginners prefer to carry 4,5,7, and or 9 Woods as their shorter shafts and greater lofts make it easier to more consistently strike the ball effectively. All of these clubs offer distance for those par 5s and long par 4s. They can provide anything from 160m to 300m depending on how far you hit the ball. Some golfers prefer lofted Woods over long irons and Hybrids for the greater height they can offer in shot making and holding greens.

How to play golf, as you can see is a multi-dimensional affair. You can, however, only begin at the beginning as with most things. You will find plenty of helpful friends and playing partners in club land. Most golfers are always happy to offer assistance where required. We have all been on this beginner's journey. Nobody will begrudge your beginner status. The majority of golfers are enthusiastic about the game and want to see more people enjoying it. Never fear reaching out for any advice, as it will be well met. Find a good teacher to set you on your course. Most clubs have a few PGA instructors on staff and they are in my experience charming and helpful. Golf is a lifetime's journey no matter when you start. It is a game where technique and finesse can outdo raw athletic ability, which gives us all some hope. I hope to see you out there sometime. Happy golfing folks.

Robert Sudha Hamilton is the author of ***The Golf Book: Green Cathedral Dreams***.

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Do You Worry Your Credit Rating Has Incorrect Information That Is Impossible To Change

The seemingly secret machinations of the credit reporting system can appear to be like a Stasi file out of a Len Deighton novel. What gets written down is done without your tacit knowledge or okay. Do you worry your credit rating has incorrect information that is impossible to change? Is it akin to the tablet containing the ten commandments in Moses' hands, chiselled in perpetuity forever more? Will it follow you around crueing your chances to get essential credit when it really matters? Will it speak falsely of your reputation around money, thus assassinating your character in the eyes of bank managers and lenders everywhere? The power of the credit rating in the capitalist free enterprise system is astonishingly under appreciated by many of us, often, through being uninformed.

What Is On Your Credit Reporting File

If you think about it your credit rating is like your report card from your school days. This file lists all your applications for credit and your credit history. My school reports frequently used to say, "he has a *laisse faire* attitude to his studies and must learn to apply himself more assiduously." This was tough because I wasn't even studying French at the time. So, what is exactly in a credit reporting file. To begin with, a credit file includes all the defining personal details like full name, date of birth, driver's licence, residential address, gender, and employment information. Your credit report will include records of overdue debt and any court writs or bankruptcies. Your credit file can list a consumer default if a debt is more than \$150 and is overdue by 60 days. However, the credit provider of this debt must have sent you the required notices prior to listing your default. These defaults can and will remain on your credit reporting file for 5 years, even once the debt has been paid.

In 2014, after a push for more balanced credit reporting, comprehensive credit reporting was brought in. This allowed for positive information to be listed on your file along with the previously exclusively listed negative information. What was once a domain for crosses and black marks has become a shared space to let a little light in. Thus, if you were a good boy or girl and paid your loan, mortgage payment, or credit card on time you, perhaps, earned some Brownie points. Whether this actually counts much in the minds of credit assessors is a moot point. Of course, meeting your financial requirements on time is the name of the game if you wish to be a prime candidate for ongoing loans and lines of credit.

In addition, publicly available information can be included in your credit file. This means details regarding directorships, proprietorships, debt agreements, and personal insolvency information can be listed. Commercial credit information, can, also, be listed, meaning all applications and overdue commercial credit accounts pertaining to the holder of the file.

Can You Get A Copy Of Your Credit File?

Yes, you can get a copy of your credit file. There is a free service which despatches your credit report to you within 10 days. The determining factors which allow you to qualify for this free service are:

- You can request one free copy every 3 months.
- You can apply for a copy when your application for credit has been declined. You have 90 days in which to make this request from the date of your 'No' from a credit provider.
- You may request a copy of your file if you have lodged a correction to your file and been notified that your file has been corrected.

“The third factor listed above is important to note because it identifies the reality that mistakes do get made on credit reporting files.” - PULLQUOTE

We are only human after all and it is human beings and not computers that provide the inputted information on credit files. This is why it is essential that you check your credit file for mistakes regularly. Do not maintain a *laissez faire* attitude toward your credit rating because, as one who knows, this can only lead to bumpy travails on your journey toward your goals and aspirations. I will repeat – mistakes do get made on credit reporting files.

What Can You Do About Incorrect Information On Your Credit File?

In addition to jumping and down and getting angry you can contact the relevant credit provider and request that they correct the incorrectly listed information. You may choose at this time to seek the services of a credit reporting lawyer to ensure that your advocacy is in sure and capable hands. Especially if you are fobbed off by the credit provider or they dispute the validity of your request. These things are always best served by a professional with expertise and a calm understanding of the law. If and when the correction is agreed to it must be made within 30 days. You must receive written notice of the correction and they must disclose all and any parties that they have shared the incorrect information with. In the case where a credit provider disputes your request for a correction they must write and inform you of their reasons for this. You must, also, be informed of how you can access an external resolution scheme or make a complaint.

Understanding Credit Reporting Terminology

One of the many reasons that we engage legal counsel is because only lawyers can understand the dense jargon used in legalese. Each arm of the law boasts its own definitions and terminology. Credit reporting law is no exception and here is a brief explanation of some of the more pertinent terms.

- APP Entity – Can be a government or private sector organisation which is required to comply with Australian Privacy Principles (APP) in the Privacy Act of 1988.
- Australian Credit Licence – ASIC provides ones of these to credit providers, which offer particular types of credit.
- Australian Privacy Principles – APP, these are legally binding principles which determine standards, rights, and obligations for the handling of personal information.
- Commercial Credit – Credit which is not for personal, household, or family purposes. Inclusive of business loans, goods & services acquired via a business involving deferred payment.

- Consumer Credit – All credit used for personal, household, or family purposes. Credit associated with residential property for an investment. Refinancing consumer credit associated with residential property investments.
- Credit Eligibility Information – This is the credit reporting information & all information credit providers derive from it.
- Credit Information – The personal information regarding an individual in accord with Part IIIA of the Privacy Act. Includes amount borrowed, repayments, defaults, and identifying information.
- Credit Reporting Code – Privacy Code 2014 (Version 2.1) is the written code of practice dealing with credit reporting. The CR Code is supplementary to the credit reporting guidelines in Part IIIA of the Privacy Act 1988. A breach of the CR Code is, therefore, a breach of the Privacy Act. The code is included in the Codes Register.
- Credit Reporting Information – This is your credit report and credit score. The credit reporting agencies produce the credit reporting information.
- Credit Reporting Laws – These are the laws regulating all handling of personal information for consumer credit reporting in Australia, which are in Part IIIA of the Privacy Act 1988, the Privacy Code 2014 (version 2.1) and the Privacy Regulation 2013.
- Credit Provider – Defined by the Privacy Act of 1988 as: a bank; organisation or small business operator, which mainly supplies credit; retailer issuing credit cards for sale of goods and services; organisation or small business operator supplying goods and services where deferred payment for 7 days or more is granted; organisation or small business operator supplying credit for hireage, leasing, or renting of goods.
- Credit Reporting Body – An organisation that handles personal information for the specific purpose of providing another organisation information pertaining to the creditworthiness of an individual.
- Credit Score – A number used to indicate the credit worthiness of an individual. Calculated by credit reporting agencies and credit providers.
- Creditworthiness – Assessment based on eligibility to qualify for credit, consumer credit history, and capacity to repay that credit.
- External Dispute Resolution Scheme – A body designed to provide an impartial overview toward the resolution of disputes and complaints. Credit providers and credit reporting bodies must be a member of an EDRS, which is recognised under the Privacy Act 1988.
- Small Business Operator – Organisation with an annual turnover of \$3 million or less, as defined under the Privacy Act 1988. Health services, or those that trade in personal information are not considered to be small business operators.

Creditworthiness & Financial Literacy

It strikes me as jarring that the credit score and credit reporting file are not really taught at school. They may be mentioned in passing in relation to subjects like economics but creditworthiness is not emphasised as a standalone subject to study at school. This largely secret file is kept on all Australians who apply for credit of any kind. Things like utilities who provide power to your home or business use the credit file and score in assessing potential customers. Phone companies, likewise, rely on the consumer credit information contained

in their credit reporting files before making calls on potential customers. Banks and finance companies live and breathe your credit score and credit reporting file. Retailers offering credit on their goods and services check your creditworthiness. Our kids should be brought up on the knowledge that this is the bedrock upon which the capitalist free market economy works on. Instead things are left unspoken, as if there was a taboo against calling a spade a spade. The workings of the economy really should be drummed into our children before a lot of other largely useless things are. The education system in this country has a lot to answer for when it comes to levels of financial literacy in our society.

Do you worry your credit rating has incorrect information that is impossible to change? Well, your worries can be over. Communication is always the answer and by requesting information from the relevant agencies you can begin to assess the damage. Then, you can take steps to fix the mistakes. However, learn to differentiate government bodies from unscrupulous chancers pretending to offer you help.

“Always look at the web address, the URL, to ensure that it ends in a .gov.au to make certain that the information you are reading online is from a bonafide government agency.” - PULLQUOTE

There are financial shonks looking to exploit those in debt distress. These folks promise things like quick credit repair and other stuff. These companies are largely unregulated. Uninformed Australians are easy targets for these shonks and getting sound legal advice is the only way to protect yourself from further financial exploitation in many instances. In addition, you can call a free National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 to chat with a financial counsellor about your circumstances. Remember your rights around your credit file and credit rating. Don't let things drift aimlessly like an unmoored boat on the high seas of the free market economy. Take charge of your life, be empowered, and become informed.

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Anxiety & Depression Influenced by The Microbiome

The human condition is not something many of us ponder until something goes wrong upstairs. Whether it be within our own psyche or that of a loved one mental illness can be a black hole of unknown dimensions adversely affecting lives. Things like anxiety and depression are often frightening due to their impact upon relatively unexplored realms. Our minds are vast repositories of memories, thoughts, feelings, and sensations (Florey, 2021). When things go wrong in our lives, we can slip into a scary world of dark shadows seemingly immune to the warmth of the sun. Beyond Blue reports that anxiety is the most common mental health issue in Australia, with one in four experiencing it at some point in their lives. Therefore, the idea that these frightening states can be influenced by the trillions of tiny creatures inhabiting our gut is immediately arresting and thought provoking. Anxiety and depression influenced by the microbiome is something that is just beginning to be understood.

Microbiome Our New Understanding

It seems we are not truly alone in the greater scheme of things. Rather, we have, until now, neglected to look down and within. We are host to a colony of microbes called our microbiome (Berg, 2020). These trillions of bacterial cells located, in the main, in the colon are connected via the vagus nerve to the brain. The microbiome directly influences the production of important neurotransmitters, which are involved in mood- promoting chemical activity. Our understanding has come a long way since Sigmund Freud was getting patients to recline on his couch and talk about their feelings for their parents. We are beginning to comprehend the vastness of the true picture of what it means to be a sentient biological life form on planet earth.

The Anxiety Link

Some health writers have introduced the microbiome link to feelings of anxiety in human beings via those sensations of having butterflies in your tummy and/or feeling slightly nauseous prior to doing something like public speaking. This connects our body and its sensations to those feelings often placed in the intangible basket. We experience these psychological conditions in the physiology of our bodies. Stress manifests in our guts and affects our microbiome. Many people find it difficult to eat when they are very nervous. The Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) is a key molecule intrinsically involved in the plasticity of the brain as it relates to learning and memory. Healthy BDNF expression is anathema to mental disorders like anxiety and depression. Therefore, its role in regulating emotions and cognition via the Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal-Axis (HPA) is a crucial one (Dwivedi, 2009). A healthy diverse microbiome reduces pro-inflammatory cytokines and regulates the HPA axis.

Neuroscience & Nutritionists

Neuroscience and nutritionists are pulling together to provide a clearer and more inclusive view of the human condition (Zamroziewicz, 2016). Anxiety and depression influenced by the microbiome no longer appears a completely unlikely affair. The connection between the bottom and the top is not such a distasteful marriage as was once thought by those responsible for their specialised departments in the citadel of medical science. Everything is

connected, it seems, in a holistic web and reductionist scientific theories are a thing of the obsolete past. How you feel is not a mere matter of your thoughts, experiences, and beliefs. Why you may be anxious or depressed is no longer confined to nurture issues but is directly influenced via a much broader biological palette.

We Are What We Eat

We are what we eat. You may have heard this refrain in the singular or the plural. The truth of this statement grows daily with our more nuanced understanding of our own biology and that of the world we live in. Our discovery of DNA and our technological advancements in being able to read these codes have expanded our awareness of the biological universe in which we live. We are so much more than we first thought. Metabolism, which turns food into energy, involves trillions of these microbes in our gut, which are not essentially human cells but co-opted bacteria doing what they love. The types of foods we eat determine the make-up of our microbiome and these play their part in digestive inflammation and the permeability of the gut lining. If you eat a lot of highly processed foods, full of sugars, fats, etc you will attract the gut bacteria that breaks down these elements to the exclusion of health inducing microbes. Although everyone has a unique microbiome, they can be categorised into three distinct enterotypes based on which species of bacteria dominates. *Prevotella* species enterotype is associated with a diet high in carbohydrates. A high protein based diet will have a *Bacteroides* species enterotype (Clapp, 2017).

Macro & Micro Effects of Dietary Neglect

It is interesting to ponder the above so below paradigm. Consider the capitalist free enterprise system, as successful agents within this market their branded fast foods to you via advertising through the media. You consume their products in response to this input on your devices. In the macro world your affirmation of their brand delivers success and revenue so that they can increase their marketing and reach. They want you to eat the same things all the time, their products, which makes them more money. Fast foods are cheap, readily available, and constantly marketed to the general public. Inside of you a similar thing occurs, as your microbiome is shaped by your diet high in these highly processed foods. The gut bacteria which feed on these sugars and fats hunger for more at the expense of those bacteria wanting fibre, which die off. The microbiome then suffers from dysbiosis, which means balance and stability wanes due to a lack of gut bacteria diversity (Clapp, 2017). Lower levels of the short chain fatty acid butyrate stimulate inflammation. Inflammation is a direct cause of depression in human beings. Eating a fast food diet of the same highly processed foods is bad for your health and negatively impacts upon your mental health. There is a vicious cycle at play here, which is costing our communities billions of dollars in health expenditure and a great deal of unhappiness for individuals suffering from mental health disorders. Something to think about when you next watch one of those bright and bubbly commercials for the plethora of a fast food outlets here in Australia.

Poor diets are inextricably linked with a multitude of negative health outcomes, which we are now finding include conditions like anxiousness and depression. Large companies own many of the franchises for fast food operations locally and globally. Obesity, and childhood

obesity, are major problems for western nations like Australia and the United States (Jolly, 2010). The fast food industry spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually marketing their products in Australia. In comparison you would be hard pressed to find any ads for fruit and vegetables on any of the high traffic media channels in this country. Human beings are psychologically drawn to images showing smiling faces and bright shiny things (Fennis, 2020). Fast foods and sugary soft drinks are always advertised in association with these elements. Fast foods promise good times and immediate flavour hits via sugar, salt, caffeine, and fats. They are easy to consume and involve no work on behalf of the consumer. Fast foods are heavily marketed toward children with childlike imagery including clowns, cute animal cartoons, and lots of high energy scenes. Advertisements featuring these products portray fun things and happy times for those consuming these fast foods in their bright and colourful packaging. Everything is made easy for the consumer and they are encouraged to eat a diet rich in these fast foods. We now know that the party cannot last and that a diet rich in these highly processed foods is a recipe for mental health issues like anxiety and depression in addition to the very real dangers of obesity.

We Eat Fibre for Our Microbiome

Something to remember is the fact that we eat fibre not for our own nourishment but for the gut bacteria inside of us. The many trillions of microorganisms that feed on fibre do so to power themselves to do all the essential metabolic functions we need them to do. We are not alone, and we need to feed our colonies of gut flora with the right stuff – fibre. What is fibre? Fibre is the indigestible element of plant foods (NHMRC, 2006). This plant fibre can be sourced from fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Recent studies are identifying new sources of plant fibre, which provide higher prebiotic qualities to boost microbiome diversity (Comino, 2018).

It takes some time for new information and discoveries to reach a wider audience. The biological revelations regarding the gut brain axis are starting to filter their way down to the general public. YouTube is a portal for a plethora of video presentations explaining the connection between our microbiome and our brains. Many medical scientists, nutritionists, and psychiatrists are sharing the exciting findings for their fields from this ground-breaking new understanding. Various studies have shown the changes in gut bacteria when accompanied by stress related psychiatric disorders (Wilmes, 2021). Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is often associated with psychiatric conditions involving anxiety and depression in patients observed in these studies. This research finding suggests the potential for utilising treatments that target the microbiome in the management of these mental health conditions. Rather than treating the symptoms with the usual chemical arsenal designed to alleviate them, some psychiatrists are exploring therapeutic options in relation to the microbiome.

Key points to consider are that our microbiome can engender a range of neuroactive molecules which influence our mood, behaviour, and cognition (Wilmes, 2021).

Neurotransmitters like serotonin, GABA, and noradrenaline are functioning in both the gastrointestinal and brain regions. Serotonin is produced from the precursor tryptophan, which is an essential amino acid. Our microbiome directly modulates our levels of tryptophan and its metabolites. Low levels of serotonin are a key indicator in clinical depression. Research has found a preponderance of particular gut bacteria show up in depressed patients. These include the numerous species of the genus *Bifidobacterium*, which are *B. adolescentis*, *B. dentium*, and *B. longum*. A diverse microbiome is healthy and in contrast when increased levels of certain gut bacteria eventuate it is a bad sign for the health of that individual. Inflammation within the body is the cause of numerous health issues and disorders. In patients with IBS the metabolic products of the *Lactobacillaceae* and *Bacteroides* strains are thought to cause bloating and inflammation. Gamma-Aminobutyric-acid (GABA) is a neurotransmitter which inhibits neural activity inside the brain. GABA has long been associated with depression and other mental health issues. Researchers have discovered that GABA is produced by *Bacteroides* in the microbiome (Strandwitz, 2019). Studies at Weill Cornell Medicine have shown that patients with less of these bacteria had more prefrontal lobe hyperactivity, which is associated with severe depression. Philip Strandwitz and colleagues have filed a patent for packaging these particular *Bacteroides* as therapeutic products for the treatment of depression and other mental disorders (Pennisi, 2020). Could this be the beginning of a whole new raft of microbiome related treatments for mental health conditions?

It is the bidirectional communication between our microbiome and our central nervous system, which has turned our understanding on its head. Dysbiosis and gut inflammation are clearly associated with many instances of mental illness like anxiety and depression (Clapp, 2017). Trauma can be the catalyst for mental disorders but its impact upon the sufferer is also observed biologically via the state of the microbiome and related inflammatory gastrointestinal conditions. This can be why sufferers of clinical depression often manifest a range of other negative health issues. Increased intestinal permeability can result in infections and a depressed immune system.

Probiotic and prebiotic treatments are now being considered and employed as therapeutic approaches for anxiety and depression. Probiotics are living microorganisms, usually yeasts and bacteria, which are given as supplements to alter the microbiome of patients. Chronic inflammation has been positively treated with probiotics. Prebiotics are similarly altering the microbiome of patients to treat a range of mental health conditions (Ansari, 2020). Understanding the link between the microbiome and our central nervous system is providing more options in the treatment of these mental disorders and associated gut inflammation diseases.

Anxiety and depression are particularly prevalent conditions in our modern world, and we are beginning to comprehend how these mental illnesses are linked to our physiology. New levels of biological understanding have revealed the gut-brain-axis. The importance of

maintaining a healthy and diverse microbiome is becoming clearer day by day. We cannot ignore and/or neglect our diet if we wish to remain free of mental health issues over a lifetime. Fibre is an essential component of our dietary input if we are to optimise our wellbeing and feed our microbiome. New therapeutic approaches based on this exciting understanding of our gut health are emerging for those suffering from conditions like anxiety and depression. Positive conclusions can be drawn from this, as it is truly the most ground-breaking discovery in medical science this century. Natural therapeutic approaches based on a deeper understanding of our biology are now available.

By Sudha Hamilton

Sudha Hamilton is a natural health writer, historian, and chef. His published titles include: *House Therapy: Discover Who You Really Are At Home; Healing Our Wellbeing; and Sacred Chef.*

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Dentistry & Eating Disorders: Dentists Can Help With Detection & Care

Eating disorders are a terrible thing. Parents and loved ones who experience the destructive consequences of these modern scourges, often, find them heartbreaking. Dentistry and eating disorders: Dentists can help with detection and care. Today, we recognise eating disorders as serious illnesses, with psychological and physiological ramifications upon the health of individuals. Dentists can be the first port of call for those suffering from these potentially devastating conditions. Recognising the signs of an eating disorder is one of our responsibilities as dentists and health professionals.

The Dentist Identifying Eating Disorders

As clinicians, we are in the frontline for the detection of an eating disorder in our patients. We know, also, that early detection of an eating disorder can drastically improve the recovery chances of the individual. These conditions can affect people whatever their gender, age, and background. These are potentially life threatening illnesses and early intervention can save lives.

What Does An Eating Disorder Look Like?

They can involve eating too much and/or not eating enough. These conditions feature regular unhealthy and destructive eating habits. This can include restrictive dieting, compulsive eating, self-starvation, binge eating, self-induced purging, imbibing laxatives, and diet pills to name a few of the eating disorder manifestations commonly seen by dentists. You may be familiar with diagnostic names like Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder.

Who Is More At Risk of Developing an Eating Disorder?

It is important to remember that anyone can develop an eating disorder. However, children, adolescents, women, athletes, and those with a family history of eating disorders are at greater risk of developing the condition. Culturally, women have more pressure put upon them to appear a certain way in body shape terms. Women's bodies are, also, more susceptible to life cycle transitions during puberty, pregnancy, and menopause.

Dentists & Oral Signs of Eating Disorders

Peering into people's mouths puts dentists in the box seat to observe the oral signs of these illnesses. Not eating enough and eating too much all leave tell-tale signs for observant dental clinicians to recognise. There can be enamel erosion and erosive lesions present. Difficulty in swallowing is a red light warning in many instances. Sore throats, dry mouth, and burning tongue sensation are other signs to watch out for. Swollen salivary glands may be present. Mucosal lesions and pharyngeal abrasions further things to be aware of. Gum sensitivity and/or bleeding gingiva can be an indicator of issues related to eating disorders. The mouth is the portal where food is supposed to go in and neglect or overuse is, often, clearly apparent.

What Can a Dentist Do Once The Signs Are Recognised?

Initiating a discussion with the patient is the first step in providing care. Dental clinicians are best advised to point out the physical issues they have found and the long term consequences of leaving them untreated. Approach the situation in a non-judgemental way. Speak privately with the patient about the matter. Be positive and reassuring about future treatments to rectify the damage. Reinforce the message that the patient is not alone in dealing with this kind of thing. Provide the patient with information pertinent to their problems. Denial can be a common response for those with an eating disorder. Be patient

and avoid being critical. Encourage patients to seek help where appropriate. Have reliable information on hand for referrals to eating disorder counsellors, psychologists, and clinicians. Establish an ongoing clinical relationship for the treatment of the oral and dental issues.

Dentistry and eating disorders: Dentists can help with detection and care, which is just another community service we are proud to carry out to help those in need. The pandemic has shown all of us what we can do to help each other and how good that is for our communities. Together we are stronger and more resilient.

RIP Anthony Bourdain

by Robert Sudha Hamilton

When I was [asked to write something](#) about the recent passing of celebrity chef and raconteur, Anthony Bourdain, I realised that he had been a part of my own culinary journey. His death by suicide, whilst shocking, does fit with the narrative contained within his first book. I received, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*, his breakout bestselling memoir as a birthday present from my mother. It was a surprising choice and an equally surprising success. The book lifted the lid on the squalid and steamy underworld of commercial kitchens in the United States. Personally, I had been rattling the pans in restaurant kitchens for nearly 20 years, prior to the publication of *Kitchen Confidential* in 2000. Commercial kitchens, I suspect, are, and were, similar around the globe, especially in western cities like New York, Sydney, and London.

Anthony Bourdain's First Book an Expose

If you have not spent any serious time behind the closed doors of a commercial kitchen, particularly in the decades before the close of the 20C, then, the content of Bourdain's first book may be an expose for you. The line cooks who banged out the food under pressure in busy hotels and restaurants were, often, a mix of desperadoes and unsavoury characters. People, usually men, who, perhaps, did not fit in with much of the modern world but found a niche at the range. The conditions inside these kitchens were, often, hot, sweaty, and on a knife's edge. It takes a special kind of person to be able to bear up under this kind of pressure and in this sort of environment. There was a camaraderie among the denizens of these culinary stews.

There was a macho element, back then, of ribald humour in the face of the daily demands of hungry diners en masse. Surviving a service and successfully manning your station had some of the hallmarks of warriors in battle. Bourdain captured that rich and grimy world and conveyed its essence to a much larger audience.

The Kitchen Realm Studiously Ignored by the Literati

Prior to this, not much had been written about the real workings of commercial kitchens. George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* was one of the few that recorded the reality of the dungeon kitchens in places like The Savoy. There had been little interest shown in the topic by those who decide what gets published, those at the top end of town. I wondered about this myself, as a working cook, why for decades and centuries the kitchen realm had been studiously ignored by the literati? Was it the fact that in ancient Rome most kitchens were manned by slaves? As a western culture, we have derived many of our traditions from the Romans. The Romans enjoyed their food, especially their garum (fish sauce), but if cooking was the pursuit of slaves, it would not be acknowledged as a worthy topic of exploration by those who wrote things down.

Bourdain Shone a Light on the Inner Workings of Kitchens

The New Yorker Bourdain shone a light on the inner workings of the kitchens he was employed to run. He wrote a follow-up to the first book, called *Medium Raw: A Bloody Valentine to the World of Food and the people Who Cook*. His mother had been a staff editor on *The New York Times*, so, he, most likely knew his way around the written word. He attended Vassar College for a couple of years before dropping out. In 1978, Bourdain graduated from The Culinary Institute of America, and went on to run a number of restaurant kitchens, including becoming executive chef at the Brasserie Les Halles in Manhattan.

The best-selling books launched Bourdain into the realm of celebrity TV chef, where he starred in *A Cook's Tour; No Reservations; The Layover; Parts Unknown; and The Mind of a Chef*. More books, including cookbooks followed; and he was regarded in the same vein as a rock star in the culinary world of TV and publishing. He was, I suppose, a culinary journalist at heart, combining his two loves and creating a new form from their merging within him. My own brief experience in the media, creating recipe features and cooking magazine supplements jarred with what I intuitively understood hospitality to be about. I felt like a fake during the studio photoshoots, when my dishes were tricked up to look more real than real. I wonder if the glitz and glam of TV land, eventually got to Anthony Bourdain and he lost his way. Of course, one can never know why a person decides to take their own life, we can only speculate. Bourdain was a writer, a chef, a TV show presenter, a father and well-remembered friend to many in the hospitality industry. RIP Anthony Bourdain.

House Therapy is about the connection between our homes and ourselves. Our identities are reflected in the look and feel of our house and apartment interiors. Human beings are complex and we often underestimate this fact. Society can often do us an injustice on this score. The information within the pages of this book can provide a key with which to unlock who we really are. *House Therapy* via the insights of some great thinkers like Einstein, Freud, and Jung can point the way. Understanding and acknowledgement of the self can open the door for transformation. A change manifesto awaits within.

Sudha Hamilton writer, historian, and humanist delves into the connection between home and self. Exploring the origin of the house within our cultures and religions provides a portal toward greater understanding of who we really are. The journey of life can be challenging without insight to guide the way. Utilising some help from literary great's like Dickens, Dostoevsky, and others *House Therapy* shines some light on the real nature of identity in all its complexity.

<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B00KB289A0>

Aged Care On The Menu In Australia

The election is just around the corner and Anthony Albanese has put aged care on the menu in Australia. I would like to extend the restaurant analogy a bit further in looking at the aged care situation in this nation. Governments set up the current aged care system back in the 1990s. Private operators were encouraged to enter this sector with generous financial rules and regulations put in place. Property developers have made solid profits over the subsequent decades via the real estate component of the sector. The actual care provided to older Australians within the live-in system has been far from ideal, however.

[Violent & Drugged Aged Care in Australian Facilities](#)

Successive enquires culminating with a Royal Commission exposed the endemic problems within the aged care sector. Older Australians being drugged and beaten into submission by those working in the facilities, which are chronically understaffed, were on the menu in bold type. The workers in this sector are underpaid, both nurses and carers. It was made shockingly clear that vulnerable older Australians were, in many cases, not better off in the care of these facilities. In fact, the staff and nurse to inmates ratio was, often, woefully inadequate. The industry and the medical establishment have actively promoted placing elderly Australians within these aged care facilities.

[Images Of Aged Care Travesties Committed on Vulnerable Australians](#)

The outraged middle-aged children of these vulnerable older individuals living in these aged care facilities placed hidden cameras inside their rooms. These captured the neglect and sometimes violent interaction between aged care workers and their parents. Poorly paid and trained carers resorting to physical violence in their management of those elderly people in their care were exposed via footage of their heinous acts. The aged care facilities were not even spending enough money on food per inmate to provide meals of a reasonable standard.

[Dining Out in Aged Care No Stars Here](#)

I return to the restaurant analogy here because we pay specialists in hospitality when we choose to go out for dinner. The similarity is that a restaurant caters for multiple diners, as do aged care facilities with their live-in residents. We go out to dinner with the expectation that, although, the cooks and hospitality staff are preparing and serving lots of meals they will do it better than what is served up at home. It is factoring in the economic rule that specialisation will produce not only more cost-effective results but products of a consistently higher standard. The findings of the Royal Commission into aged care have debunked this expectation and delivered no stars for the industry on this basis. You will not get a great dining experience eating at a restaurant with too few trained staff. Indeed, if we correlate the restaurant's head chef with the aged care facility's registered nurse, as the fulcrum at the centre of the operation, the importance of nurses becomes crystal clear.

Outsourcing the care of your elderly parents or relatives to these aged care facilities is a high-risk strategy if your expectation is that they will be better off. The cooks and staff in these restaurants are not serving up five-star fare, indeed, food poisoning is a far likelier outcome. The Morrison government has failed to redress the problems in the aged care sector. They have backed the existing system and their party has historic links to the private interests within this industry. There is a labour shortage in the health for aged care sector, but the government is not backing substantial wage increases here.

Australia has an ongoing problem with not paying adequate wages for sectors like aged care. We have relied on the exploitation of overseas workers to do the bulk of this work. Australia does too much on the cheap, not investing nearly enough money in training, and not valuing the people doing this complex and sensitive work. Australia does not value the care of your elderly parents. Unless we as Australians do something about this it will continue on generation after generation. If we do not pay for a high-quality service in aged care, we will not receive this care for our parents and loved ones.

I would like to make clear that there are committed and capable individuals working in aged care. There are just not enough of them, and they are not paid well enough to encourage more of them. Unless the economic settings are really changed to recognise their importance within our society, we

will continue to suffer third rate results in this sector. You and I will be inside one of these facilities sooner or later, perhaps, this might prompt action on this matter when you cast your vote in the coming federal election. If you don't care, no one will care for you, when the time comes.

Robert Sudha Hamilton

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A Brief History of South Africa

Long before there were nations, the territory now known as South Africa was home to some of the first modern hominids. These anatomically modern humans were active within the Makgadikgadi-Okavango palaeo-wetland of southern Africa around 200 000 years ago. Archaeological evidence confirms this, and they were thought to have dispersed there from earlier east African locations. Africa is home to the emergence of human beings on planet Earth and this is evidenced via many studies of the human genome and DNA sourced from ancient bones. Hominin and australopithecine fossils have been discovered in limestone caves at Taung, Sterkfontein, Swartkrans and Kromdraai. A brief history of South Africa really begins here.

The First Peoples of South Africa

The first peoples of South Africa are collectively called the Khoisan, being made up of the Khoi Khoi and the San peoples separately. Sometime around 3000 and, then again, around 2000 years ago these inhabitants were joined by the Bantus, who spread from west Africa into, what is now known as South Africa. This migration of Ntu-speaking people may have displaced the pre-existing hunter-gatherers and pastoralists. The evidence for this is primarily linguistic and there are those who question the over-reliance on the use of language-based timelines in anthropology, especially in this instance.

European Exploration of Africa

Portuguese explorers began the European outreach into coastal Africa in the 13th century, as they sought an alternative to the well-established silk road for trade. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) established their trading post in 1652, at what had become known as Cape Town by this time. Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French and English ships stopped here regularly en route to the Indies, trading tobacco, copper and iron for fresh produce. Slaves were imported by the VOC from

Indonesia and Madagascar to fill labour shortages at the Cape in the 17th century. These people began the first coloured communities of Cape Town.

The British took Cape Town in 1795, when the Dutch had become the Batavian Republic – a vassal state of the French. It was returned to the Dutch in 1803 via a treaty but was captured by British forces once more in 1806 and became the capital of the South African colony in 1814. In 1910, the Union of South Africa was established by the British after unifying the two defeated Boer Republics with the British colony of Natal. The Anglo-Zulu War was fought between the British and the Zulu kingdom in 1879. The two Boer Wars were fought in 1880-1881 and 1899-1902. The Boers successfully employed guerrilla warfare tactics in the first war forcing the British to return with greater numbers in the second war. The British established concentration camps out of refugee camps to break the guerrilla campaigns being waged by the Boers. It has been estimated that some 27 000 women and children died in these camps from infectious diseases like measles. The captured men were transported out of the country overseas. In this, a brief history of South Africa, this is a very low moment for humanitarian ideals and behaviour.

The Union of South Africa achieved independent sovereignty in 1931. In 1934, a political coming together of Afrikaners and English-speaking whites occurred via the merging of the National Party and the South African Party to form the United Party. A split between the two factions occurred in 1939 over the entry of the Union of South Africa into WW2 in support of the British. The National Party adherents strongly opposed this. In 1948, the National Party was elected to govern South Africa. They imposed apartheid by strengthening the racial laws already in place under the colonial administration and institutionalising them. The National Party government categorised all people into three distinct classifications: whites, blacks and coloureds. Whites who were less than 20% of the population were the highest status group, followed by coloureds, and lastly Black Africans. Resistance to this politically and morally unfair system was perpetuated by individuals and activist groups across South Africa. Brutal reprisals by the National Party government resulted in thousands of deaths and imprisonments over some 40+ years. Global condemnation of apartheid and South Africa was voiced loudly, especially by the United Nations. International trade embargoes and sanctions were imposed upon South Africa to spur the nation to change its ways. The African National Congress (ANC) was the largest anti-apartheid group and their most prominent figure Nelson Mandela suffered incarceration for 27 years as a political prisoner.

In 1994, Mandela would become the first black African President of South Africa. Apartheid legislation was repealed in 1991, following lengthy negotiations between F.W. De Klerk's National Party government and the ANC over 6 years. The ANC won the 1994 election by a landslide and has been in power ever since. Mandela's presidency was celebrated around the world, as a civilising milestone moment for humanity. Of course, South Africa did not immediately become a perfect place to live on earth and it faces many economic and social challenges. It is a nation that experiences a large number of public protests. It is a nation involved in a transition, which may take many decades and involves multiple groups of people with various racial and tribal allegiances. In 2006, South Africa became the first African nation to legalise same-sex marriage. There have been many hundreds of xenophobically inspired attacks on people within its borders. As of 2015, some 1.4 million higher education students have benefited from a financial support scheme started in 1999. Education is the answer, as it is everywhere in the world. Violence is most often committed by stupid people holding onto simplistic opinions and beliefs. A brief history of South Africa can illustrate this fact.

[South Africa currently faces the global coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic](#), and this will test its humanitarian mettle like never before, but its people are resourceful. They have overcome huge obstacles on their journey so far and will continue to triumph in the long run.

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Asbestos Testing

Our asbestos inspection can sample any suspect material on-site to ensure, by NATA-credited laboratory, a correct assessment of your situation. Asbestos testing is a vital part of our service in assisting you in the management and control of asbestos. The reality is that the only certain way to know if a material contains asbestos is by testing it in the lab. Once you have the factual knowledge you can evaluate the best way forward in your particular circumstance. Science provides the clarity necessary to make the right decisions. We can advise you, based on our wide experience in dealing with asbestos across the board. We offer a free quote on our services.

What Does Asbestos Testing Involve?

Our qualified asbestos inspection team will diligently sample, bag, label and transport the necessary material to a NATA-accredited laboratory. There, Polarised Light Microscopy and Scanned Electron Microscopy analysis will be employed to ascertain the fibre composition of the material presented. In addition, we will test the air quality on-site for the presence of asbestos fibres. This testing is carried out prior to any removal or disposal activities. The data found will determine the most appropriate course of action to then be carried out.

What Materials Are Commonly Tested for Asbestos?

It is impossible to rule out conclusively any suspect materials without proper testing. The more commonly tested materials are: fibre cement sheets, corrugated fibre material, vinyl tiles, adhesives, cement conduits, covered cables, asbestos rope, electrical backing boards, bituminous membrane, carpet underlay, caulking, cement moulded products, compressed floor sheets, eaves, fire dampers, fire doors, fire places, flue pipes, fuses, wall panels, imitation brick cladding, insulation boards, lagging, millboard, roofing accessories, sealants, thermal acoustic spray insulation, vent pipes, window putty, woven insulation. There are more than 3,000 asbestos containing products employed in construction and industry. We can help you assess your risk and the risk to your employees and family from asbestos via testing.

Do You Have Asbestos in Your Home?

If you are not sure whether you may have asbestos in your home or workplace, we offer a testing service. Our competent and qualified testers can assess your risk and determine a safe solution. If your home or workplace tests positive for asbestos we can provide expert advice, quote on removal, and ensure the ongoing health and safety of all concerned. The prevalence of asbestos in Perth homes is extremely high and many people are unaware of the potential risks it poses to their health. Together we can do something about it!

Electrical Requirements For Nightclubs: What You Need if Setting Up a Club

You dream of running your very own nightclub and picture yourself amid a bevy of beautiful babes. The beat is booming and the dance floor full. Cocktails are being sipped and slurped across the room. Coloured lights and lasers create a kaleidoscopic backdrop for your big-time fantasy. But what about the electrical requirements for nightclubs: What you need if setting up a club in reality? Funny how dreams rarely touch upon this mundane stuff. Dreams are all about stroking egos and our sensual bits without the boring technical nuts and bolts.

Nightclubs Need a Bloody Good Electrician & A Generous Budget

Nightclubs involve banks of coloured lights, laser beams, a mirror ball, enough voltage for the DJ and massive speakers, pendant lighting for the bar, LED downlights for different rooms maybe, air conditioning etc. You may in fact require an entire switchboard upgrade to handle the extra voltage. Don't even get me started on ACDC and I do not mean the gender bending interpretation of that term. No, Ladies and Gents, electrical requirements for nightclubs: What you need if setting up a club is a bloody good electrician and a generous budget. There may well be time enough for immoral behaviour down the track, but first, let's get the lights working and the sound system pumping.

Get Your Pendant Lighting Swinging in the Right Direction

You close your eyes and see yourself Hoovering up things on mirrors with a silky friend on your arm laughing at your jokes. You are at the centre of a black hole universe surrounded by beautiful people having the time of their lives. The beat thrums deep inside your bloodstream and dopamine floods your consciousness. Your nightclub fantasy fulfills every molecule of your youthful body and brain. But what about all those electrical requirements to get from point A to point B? To synchronise all that electromagnetic high-tech equipment and current. To get your pendant light swinging in the right direction. Who you gonna call?

You may revamp the Neon signage to something that's more Instagram marketing friendly. There are so many considerations to entertain when setting out as a nightclub entrepreneur. So many I s to dot and t s to cross. So many details to get right and so much technical stuff to deal with. Is it any wonder we only dream about the good bits? The cool dude partaking in illicit things with a select few. The master of ceremonies at the heart of the darkness. The nightclub fantasy is a perennial one.

Real Hollywood Gun Death Hurts the Industry

The terrible tragic death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins at the hands of a prop gun is a timely message to an unhealthy industry. There are too many guns seen on the screens showing Hollywood films. Writers and directors seem to have an obsession with creating stories featuring guns and gun deaths. The American film industry portrays gun violence as nauseum in its product and regales viewers with ever more unrealistic depictions of these weapons in action. Whether the industry is being funded by the gun lobby is a moot point. The celebrity realm is peopled with actors who make their make-believe livings shooting and killing characters on screen. It may just be entertainment but with human beings spending ever more time in front of screens it sends a message and makes an impression on viewers. This real Hollywood gun death hurts the industry and might send a message to the movie industry.

Let's Stop Revelling in Crap Via Our Entertainments

Western democracies seem to revel in crap, with their citizens spending large amounts of their time indulging in entertainments telling sensational stories involving gun violence. Many people work in jobs, which offer little intrinsic meaning, like the gig economy. The demise of organised religions, although a good thing in many ways, removes meaningful frameworks in many lives. Millions of lives are left bereft of inspiration and aspirations toward higher ground. Education remains a beacon for self-improvement through learning. Discovering the meaning of life in the 21C is no easy thing. People are looking for answers in stories. Hollywood is like a lolly shop shovelling out sugar laden offerings to a public made up of children and young adults. Isn't it time for this industry to start taking some responsibility for the content it serves up to a world needing something more than sensational crap?

Guns Make Killing Easier

Guns make killing human beings easier. Massacres occur in a matter of minutes due to the technology inherent in automatic weapons. Movies that revel in gun violence on big screens are not

helping our world. Actors that make celebrated livings from portraying characters involved in stories depicting gun violence are doing us all a great disservice. Writers who continue to tell stories featuring gun deaths and violence are letting us all down as a community of human beings. Producers who want to make these movies are similarly complicit in this unhelpful activity. Nobody can deny that there is a glut of violent films and TV on our screens. It has been so for many decades and the childish appetite for smash bang shoot em up scenes shows no sign of abating. The movie business seems to be a very immature affair. It is easier to tell stories with gross actions and violent scenes than anything nuanced. The entertainment industry is like a child out of control on creaming soda making a lot of noise with very little meaning at its core.

A Real Hollywood Gun Death Hurts

This real Hollywood gun death might send a timely message to the movie industry about its preoccupation with violence. Alec Baldwin has made a celebrated living portraying characters involved in gun violence. Americans and guns it is time to grow up and put away these deadly toys. Guns do kill people easily, too easily. American society needs to grow up and rein in the orgy of violence. The claims that movies reflect the reality or dreams of a society are way out of line here. The infantile obsession with crash bang violence depicted in American movies is dangerous and needs to be tempered if this civilisation is to survive going forward. Guns have no place in human society. Guns are not the answer. Violence is not a smart move in any circumstance. Human beings will not continue under the aegis of the gun. ©Midas Word

The Art of Blogging

I want to make a confession first up, which is that I hate the word blog and all its extensions – blogging, blogger, blogged and blogs. Short for ‘web log’ apparently, blog, is an ugly word let’s face it. It sounds to me like a colloquial term fit for acts of defecation. Thus, the art of blogging is akin to a ballerina farting loudly throughout a performance of the Nutcracker Suite. OK got that off my chest. I wonder who came up with the term in the first place? I Googled it and according to a Wikipedia entry ‘weblog’ was so named by one Jom Barger in 1997 and one Peter Merholz reduced the two words to ‘blog’ in 1999 via a phrase posted on his blog. Now you know.

Blogging is an Emerging Genre

Blogging is writing, a form of written communication in the digital age. Blogs are most commonly websites carrying posts containing opinion pieces. This emerging genre of written communication has been influenced by something called search engine optimisation (SEO). Very many blogs are written to improve the ranking and traffic to associated websites. This poses serious credibility questions about many of the blog postings that you may read on the internet. Of course, there are blogs written without recourse to SEO, but they are definitely in the minority.

The 400-Word Blog Post

The 400-word post has become a stand-alone genre in the 21C. This word length can generally satisfy the sampling spiders of search engine algorithms. There are rules that writers of these posts must adhere to if they are to attract the positive attention of search

engines. Content on websites, in the form of text primarily and images to a lesser extent, is regularly searched by Google, Bing, Safari etc. The art of blogging must enhance the chances of keyword searches coming up with quality results for those end users seeking specific information.

[In my role as a professional blogger](#) I have written 400-word posts on just about every topic under the sun. My mother always said that I had the gift of the gab and I have channelled this talent for bullshitting into the written digital medium. I use the term bullshitting not to mean outright lies but rather the willy nilly casting of authoritative opinions. In fact, my modus operandi is to always tell the truth in my blogging wherever possible. I have described myself as a hack journalist of the digital age – a paid writer churning out endless 400-word posts for the direct benefit of clients I usually never see or hear. To keep my sanity, I focus on the message contained within my penned 400 words (no actual pen is involved). If I can communicate a sage message to the readers of my posts, then, I can walk away with some modicum of satisfaction.

Two topics that have more in common than you might think are subjects I have been commissioned to write on a lot – sex and plumbing. Both practitioners of these ancient occupations, it seems, are either not great with words or are simply too busy to write their own copy. The two areas share concerns with couplings and both charge like wounded bulls. I was once critiqued by a phone sex operator client and censured for writing content that was too dirty. There are degrees of indecency and obscenity, even in the art of blogging. Dentistry is another demanding client of my blogging and I can detail great swathes of dental lore for those who may wish to know of these things. Superannuation and those who deal in such financial products and insurance, also, regularly call upon my skill set. Lawyers have recently come to the party and especially those who dabble in compensation law. Money lenders, whores, electricians and plumbers are all members of my art of blogging SEO family. DJs and wedding singers have joined the club, and now that I think about it, a bouncy castle provedore, vape shops, landscape gardeners, builders, conveyancers, plasterers, carpenters, healers, chiropractors, herbalists, bookies, locksmiths, security specialists, lighting shops, air conditioning contractors, speciality food stores, natural health providers, debt collection agencies, phone sex operators, life coaches, personal development seminars, sound therapy, disability advocates, and my apologies to all those I can no longer remember. I did, however, at the time compose authoritative text upon the concerns of all these agencies. Research is an important factor in the art of blogging. Knowing where to look and knowing how to discern the valuable from the hot air is of paramount importance.

I think about the demise of old-world genres like letter writing and diarising. Emails purport to having replaced the letter but these two written expressions of communication have very different characteristics. Emails in my experience are generally written with an air of haste and target an immediate response from the reader in the main. The instantaneous reality of the medium permeates the content a lot of the time. Personally, I primarily associate emails with work, probably because this was the realm in which the medium was first introduced into my life. To this day, I have difficulty in dealing with very personal emails. Diary entries

are a better fit with digital web logs and many owners of blog sites would consider their blogging as public diarising. Diaries were usually private affairs until their publication post-mortem for the celebrated and famous. The digital age, especially via social media, has reduced the realm of the private self, our inner worlds. Thoughts once kept private are splashed out on Facebook, Twitter and in blog posts. More recent generations of us seem compelled to list their lives on social media platforms. Things are more real for them when they can see them on the screens of their ubiquitous phones.

The art of blogging is now a prerequisite for the modern human being. Being able to compose a readable post on a topic, most usually autobiographical, is an essential 21C skill. We are all asked to write our own profiles for an abundance of digital mediums deemed necessary for work and personal activities. Self-promotion is a basic requirement of the modern world. This means that a grasp of your own language in the written form is more important than ever before in the history of humanity. Alas, there is a surfeit of bad copy on the web. There are very many poorly written posts and pages among the trillions online. Whether this is due to incompetent software programs, digital copywriters in the third world, and/or illiterate website owners it is not a great cache of written communication by human beings. The world wide web lacks a good editor.

Our kids, are, and will be, looking to the internet for their written language learning. Let us hope that they quickly learn to become discerning in their perusing of these billions of blogs and web sites. The digital realm is now our global library of text and images. The art of blogging is having its 21st birthday. It is a young entity and, perhaps, should be judged accordingly. In time, like most things, it may well evolve into something worth watching. I will be doing my best to sustain the genre into the 21C. Perhaps, vlogs will replace the blog, with hacked human beings too busy to bother with something as boring as reading. Watching and listening may well be the way forward into the future. The death of writing and reading something worth reading will be an awful shame in this blogger's opinion. Life may well become so pre-digestible that all information will be masticated prior to consumption by the children of tomorrow. The glazed look in his and her eyes while hovering over their screen was a harbinger of the demise of Homo sapiens. If only the art of blogging could have saved us from our deletion from the main game in time. I will write a 400-word post on this and hold my breath.

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I prefer to be contacted initially by email prior to any phone calls, thanking you.