

New initiative launched to inspire local exploration to support mental health amid pandemic

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MERRELL LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO INSPIRE LOCAL EXPLORATION TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

Merrell (https://www.merrell.com/UK/en_GB/home) has launched a brand new campaign in aid of Mind (<https://www.mind.org.uk/>), the mental health charity, that encourages and inspires people to get outside and explore their local area to support their mental health during a difficult year.

The initiative follows a survey by Mind of more than 16,000 people during lockdown* which revealed the scale of the impact of the pandemic on people with mental health problems. Two out of three (65 per cent) adults and three-quarters (75 per cent) of young people aged 13-24 with an existing mental health problem reported worse mental health. Over half of adults (51%) and young people (55%) without experience of mental health problems also said their mental health has got worse during this period.

Merrell is supporting Mind to promote the benefits of time and experiences in the outdoors on mental health, something that has increased in importance during 2020. The new initiative entitled Hike From Home, inspires everyone to explore new, local walks from their doorstep as a means to enjoy time outdoors during the pandemic as well as supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Science reveals that exercise and time spent outside can aid both physical and mental health. Research into ecotherapy, a type of therapy which involves doing activities outside in nature, has been shown to help with mild and moderate depression.

The results of lockdown, social distancing and travel restrictions have laid the foundations for a rise in micro-travel, opening the door to doorstep discovery - uncovering new routes and hidden gems near home that may otherwise have remained undiscovered.

MistaJam, DJ, radio presenter and father of three who has lived experience of mental health problems is supporting the initiative: "As someone who has experienced depression, anxiety and suicide attempts, it has always been important to get to a place where I understand myself more and take care of myself. The focus on self-care has certainly amplified during the pandemic as it has brought about many new challenges, worries and responsibilities - from child-care to having our movement restricted.

"For me it's been about giving yourself timeout, space to decompress and getting out into nature. Being in a place where you can reconnect is vital and in my experience, during the height of depression, you feel disconnected to everything.

'I've been reconnecting through walks with the family, for us, it's been discovering new routes from our doorstep and spending quality time with the kids. When the treadmill of normal life stops, it has afforded us more time to explore new things, and we've found walking around our local area, finding new cool places a necessary break from the same four walls."

To help facilitate people to Hike From Home, Merrell has partnered with Komoot (<https://www.komoot.com/discover>), Europe's biggest digital community of outdoor enthusiasts and acclaimed route planning and navigation app, to get people outside for their mental health throughout October. Participants are invited to tag Merrell (<https://www.komoot.com/user/merrell>) and #HikeFromHome in their activity title on Komoot to take part.

To soundtrack participant's Hikes From Home, MistaJam has created a bespoke playlist (<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0WbTX2o6bbljo2QKZapVKk?si=AeOFFJoOSaSr4algMhD-GQ>). Speaking about his musical passion, MistaJam added: "I listen to lots of soundscapes, music that goes really well with nature and the natural environment. Getting out for a walk is also a great opportunity to listen to albums too, immersing yourself in a body of work".

The campaign extends Merrell's ongoing partnership with Mind. For more information visit the website (https://www.merrell.com/UK/en_GB/merrell-mind/) or to make a donation, visit the JustGiving page (<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/merrellxmind>).

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For more information please contact Joe Murgatroyd - joe@brandnation.co.uk or 0207 940 6254

NOTES TO EDITOR

* For the full statistics and information about Mind's research into coronavirus and mental health, go to mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you/

ABOUT MERRELL

Founded in 1981 in Vermont, United States by Randy Merrell and Clark Matis, Merrell is now the world's No. 1 rugged outdoor footwear brand with products distributed in over 190 countries. Merrell products are built on our heritage of quality and performance. Our stylish product and innovative technologies deliver ready to wear comfort and performance.

About Mind:

Mind, the mental health charity, provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. They won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect. mind.org.uk
Mind has a confidential information and support line, Mind Infoline, available on 0300 123 3393 (lines open 9am - 6pm, Monday – Friday)

For information and support on staying mentally healthy at this time, visit www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus
The online mental health community is a safe space where anyone aged 18 and over with experience of a mental health problem can share their story, connect with others, access Mind's wider information and resources, and give support in return. Find out more at mind.org.uk/community

Mind's income has been affected by the outbreak of coronavirus, largely due to the closure of our 160 charity shops across England and Wales, and the cancellation or postponement of major fundraising events. To help them continue their vital work, donate to our emergency appeal: www.mind.org.uk/donate
Mind offers free resources for employers to help improve mental wellbeing. For more information, visit

