

INFORM

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MALTA POLICE UNION



ISSUE 02



Right to COLLECTIVE BARGAINING & ACTION



1955 - 2022

67 YEARS OF SERVICE TO MEMBERS

Play Therapy

LGBTIQ Equality

Police Museum



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Time flies and we are already at the 2nd issue. We are thrilled with the feedback and suggestions received. All your proposals will be taken on board.

March/April 2022 was a busy period for our Union and in this publication, we will highlight these. The Union is continuing to enhance its services offered whilst delivering them in a more efficient and professional manner.

Several unprecedented initiatives have been taken by the Union, including the call for the Attorney General to resign in light to the withdrawal of the attempted murder of several Police Officers charges in the HSBC 2010 Heist.

The Union also filed a Constitutional Case for Police officers to be granted the right to strike, obviously taking into consideration public safety and national security.

Frequent updates on this case will be given on our social media, myMPU app and website.

 **Neville Mercieca**



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Adolescents VS Trauma: Using Play Therapy as a means of healing.

Silvan Magro, Registered Play Therapist

Complex trauma can lead to significant impairments in a wide range of critical developmental areas. While each child is different, and each profile of early trauma and its consequences in adolescence follows a unique trajectory, victims of early trauma often develop problems in developmental domains.

Adolescents who experience trauma as children often have difficulty forming meaningful bonds with others, including family, friends, and teachers. Complex trauma can cause dysregulation and impaired development in the immune system and stress response system. Victims of early complex trauma are also at increased risk of risky behaviour as adolescents, and developing chronic illnesses or physical conditions as adults. Adolescents who experience complex trauma often display unpredictable or volatile emotional reactions to external stressors that may appear minor to the outside observer. This is similar to the difficulties victims of complex trauma have in forming bonds with others. In this case, the adolescent is not disconnected from others, but rather from themselves and their own emotions. This can result in feelings of being cut off from their own bodies and experience, and may impact learning, behaviour, and peer interactions. Victims of complex early trauma, due to impairments in emotional regulation, may also have difficulty controlling impulses. They may display unpredictable, extreme, and oppositional behavioural patterns. These may include high-risk behaviours such as early sexual activity, experimenting with alcohol and drugs,

and engaging in illegal activities. Adolescents with a history of complex trauma may develop problems with rational thinking, problem-solving, risk assessment, and planning. In school, this can affect learning, language development, and high-order reasoning skills. Victims of complex early trauma often experience poor self-image, low self-esteem, and overwhelming feelings of shame and guilt that can affect all areas of their lives: physical health, mental health, academic achievement, and social functioning. These impairments can make adolescence extremely difficult. And if the trauma is not addressed and processed with the help of qualified mental health professionals, these challenges may persist through adulthood.

The games children play reveal volumes about what they're thinking, feeling, and experiencing. In many cases, their games are mirrors to their lives. The same is true for adolescents. Watch what they do with their unstructured free time, and you'll probably learn more about them than you will by asking direct questions. The advantage of play therapy for young children is that it speaks to them in a language they understand: the language of blocks, toys, Legos, dress-up, and make believe. The advantage of play therapy for adolescents is that it gives them a condition they crave: freedom. When adults dig down and unlock the secrets of play in both children and adolescents, they begin to understand that games are more than just games.

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Malta is doing great on LGBTIQ Equality – but why are we still lacking on the ground?

Clayton Mercieca - Allied Rainbow Communities

Malta, for the 7th year in a row, made it on top of ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Index_ list as the most LGBTIQ inclusive country in the world in terms of legislation and policy. In order to create such country ranking, ILGA-Europe examine the laws and policies in 49 countries using a set of criteria. From May 2022, the number of individual criteria used has risen to 74, divided between seven thematic categories: equality and non-discrimination; family; hate crime and hate speech; legal gender recognition; intersex bodily integrity; civil society space; and asylum.

This top ranking was achieved thanks to the political will of the Government and the expertise and experience of Civil Society which brought about these changes in such a short period of time. Without a doubt, equal rights for this minority were long overdue and many members of our community are grateful for such progress.

Headlines have been all over the Nation's newspapers and TV broadcasts in the past couple of days and I'm sure a big percentage of Maltese households got the news. People can now say they're living in the world's LGBTQ+ friendliest country. Is it though? Does this mean that LGBTQ+ NGOs in Malta have achieved their aims and can close shop?

As a representative of one of these NGOs, my answer is a big fat NO! Our work has only just begun and to be honest, the way the headlines are being spun, is of concern. National laws and what happens in real life are two parallel realities and no matter how much the law is in one's favour, attitudes and societal changes are far from ideal. Allow me to use real life case examples based on the work we do in the community:

1) People are still afraid to be openly comfortable with their sexual orientation; In a Utopia-like scenario, people don't have to go through the process of 'coming out'. Teenagers would be simply gushing on their crushes with their class mates, irrelevant of their gender, and no one gets bullied, or made fun of, for it. People would be introducing their romantic partner, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, to their parents without first having to go through the ordeal of coming out to them and enduring months and months of awkward family dynamics before they finally accept it, (if they do in the end).

Even in 2022, people in Malta are still getting married to partners who are not necessarily attracted to, just to keep the peace in the family or because they have suppressed their true sexual orientation. In brief, we are still afraid because rejection is a real possibility! We know for a fact that LGBTQ+ people in Malta are still risking homelessness or domestic violence.

2) We are the scapegoats of religious zealots; Whether it's River of Love or some factions within the Catholic Church, we are still considered perverse, sinners, disordered or in need of fixing. They blame every worldly problem on the gays and their ways, and we get so much hate for it in sugar-coated 'God Loves you But...' nonsense. Unfortunately, some people have a tendency to believe these people and I'm not seeing their following decreasing any time soon and the local media just loves giving them airtime to increase viewership.

3) What are we offering to LGBTQ+ visitors? ; Surely we can position Malta as an LGBTQ friendly country but from our own experience, we know that laws alone are not alone to offering LGBTQ visitors a special experience that makes them come to our Islands again and again. If it is not the independent organisers and NGOs planning LGBTQ-focused events, there is not much spaces where to meet other folks.

We often get asked if there are LGBT cafes, dedicated spas/saunas, LGBT beaches, entertainment. If they are lucky enough to be visiting during a gay party or some other LGBTQ+ event we oblige in sharing the information. Unfortunately, just one gay bar in Malta, doesn't make the cut.

Why do LGBTQ+ people need such spaces? Because in many mainstream spaces, we are looked at awkwardly, treated differently or worse harassed – especially if the victim is gender non-conforming. In addition, we still have yet to see a momentum picking up for the hospitality industry to be trained in diversity hospitality.

4) Schools are unwilling to introduce LGBTQ+ education; When a set of books comprising of 2 male penguins raising a little penguin and other stories were about to be distributed in Maltese schools, parents raised all the alarms at hand to the point that the Education Ministry retracted the decision and placed these books in the public library.

In addition, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as part of the Personal & Social Development classes is only discussed at the teacher's discretion and their capacity to know these things. In most cases, this means the knowledge is very limited and as a result, teenagers are left to resort to the internet to check things out.

We also know for a fact that a Trans student at post-secondary level was not being called by their chosen name but by their ID Card number by their teachers! The student ended up quitting their education as they could not endure this type of bullying.

www.gaymalta.com
info@arc.org.mt

The Constable ... who exactly was he?

SM Joseph Borg

The word constable originated about 700 years ago from Medieval Latin as *Comes Stabuli* which meant the Count of the Stables and refers to the chief officer in charge of the stables; a cavalry of Regiment, of rulers, kings, as well as of certain noble families whose palaces would be well equipped and armed with stables which might have clashed with those of the same rulers of the place.

In time, this was changed by the Sicilians and became a *Cuntistabili* who began to be used to describe a high-ranking Peace Officer; as the chief executive of the local court or village, as well as the man in charge of proper order for certain localities. Around 1830 in Malta, when the Grand Viscount who was in charge of the justice of the country, his assistants were also called Count Stabile.

From its history and etymology, this word, as a title, seems to have been of a much higher status than it is used today. As we now know the name of the rank of constable which is used only in certain western bodies; without diminishing the merit because his valuable work is the lowest rank in the hierarchy of the local Police. Like many other words, this word, as we have seen from the countdown and unfolding, also has a very interesting culture. On the other hand, the word 'Police' under which everything is gathered like a cap; as we shall see from its origins it is much older.

We can say that over time it has been used all over the world; under different linguistic forms. It comes from the ancient Greek 'Politeia' - etymologically meaning, working and serving the needs of the people; also resembling the word 'Polis' - the state of a city where man lives in order as we understand it today. From the same form and principle was used the word for politics and the politician - the work for both moral and material good to the people he is leading and caring for.

In the next article I will share with you some thoughts or reflections on which we don't necessarily always talk so directly, not because we are unaware of them, but almost more conveniently I think when it comes to others. So, we're going to ask, what do people think about us?!



DO YOUR PART

Join our Shopsteward team

The role of the union steward is to be a link and conduit of information between the Union members and the Union Executive Committee.

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MPU Directives



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Registered Disputed which have not been solved as yet;

- 1) Assistance given to other entities which have equivalent Police Powers (removal of parked vehicles)
- 2) Facial Hair
- 3) Call for Assistant Commissioners
- 4) Deteriorating Working Conditions
- 5) SDA and Shift Allowance (pro-rata) RPC's
- 6) Change in Police Districts

Directives applicable to all members of the Force;

1. Refrain from assisting other entities which have equivalent 'Police Powers' unless it is an emergency which may create danger or cause harm to any individual.
2. Police officers are not to hand any telephone set to non-police department staff, as a measure to protect their personal safety.



Directives applicable to MPU members only;

3. Male members, whether uniformed or plain clothes, may sport a beard as long as it is well groomed;
4. All members, whilst on all duties and at The ADF are not to wear their police cap;
5. Members may have their hair dyed (except in conspicuous colours) (M/F/X);
6. Nail polish of any colour may be used by Union members (M/F/X).
7. Tie is not to be worn (except for Court & tribunal)



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please note that Union directives may change from time to time.

Keep yourself updated with the latest updates on www.mpu.mt, myMPU app or social media.



"Uncleanliness, that is to say, if a member of the Force while on duty or while off duty in uniform in a public place is unshaven, or improperly dressed, or is dirty or untidy in his person, clothing or equipment."

The Malta Police Union has been requesting that this provision of the Second Schedule of Chapter 164 to be repealed for several years, however nothing changed and this antiquated provision is still in vigore.





1955 - 2022

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General Election 2022

The Executive Committee decided that for the General Election, a small refreshment as a means of appreciation to the members of the Force is given. This gesture was welcomed by everyone, irrespective whether MPU members or not. The Union rented a van to transport the items and the Secretary went around Malta and Gozo, visiting almost all polling places. Apart from delivering the token, this also served as a short meet and greet with members.



The Union also takes this opportunity to thank all those involved in the logistics as no serious complaints have been received. Seems that everyone did his part and members of the Police Force were treated well and no one was abandoned to his/her faith.

A special thanks goes to those who work behind the scenes like the Ops Rooms and the Control Room whose work is indispensable to have a proper outcome.



Right to Collective Bargaining & Action

Thursday 28th April 2022 will remain an integral part of the history of the Union, where for another time, it was pioneer to try and obtain full rights for its members. Police Officers cannot be considered 2nd class citizens with third world country conditions any longer. Police Officers are workers and have to be considered as such.

European Social Charter, Article 6 – The right to bargain collectively

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to bargain collectively, the Parties undertake:

- (1) to promote joint consultation between workers and employers;
- (2) to promote, where necessary and appropriate, machinery for voluntary negotiations between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations, with a view to the regulation of terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements;
- (3) to promote the establishment and use of appropriate machinery for conciliation and voluntary arbitration for the settlement of labour disputes; and recognise:
- (4) the right of workers and employers to collective action in cases of conflicts of interest, **including the right to strike**, subject to obligations that might arise out of collective agreements previously entered into.



In several reports done by EPSU/ETIU, when asked to state in relation to every service subject to restrictions with regard to strike, if and to what extent work stoppages may undermine respect for the rights and freedom of others or threaten the public interest, national security, public health or morals, the Government of Malta did not submit an explanation.

To this effect, in its report, concerning Police officers, an absolute prohibition on the right to strike can be considered in conformity with Article 6(4) of the Charter if there are compelling reasons justifying it. As the report does not provide any indication or compelling reasons justifying an absolute prohibition on the right to strike for the Police, the committee considers that **the situation is not in conformity with Article 6(4) of the Charter and the absolute prohibition goes beyond the limits permitted by the Charter.**

The Union will keep its members and all those interested, up to date with the Court Case.



Christian's lockdown masterpiece



"Bonbon loves exploring this room because he's not allowed in it! He's great to have around though and my partner and I loved working on this room with more time to spare during the lockdown. I picked up a bucket of Sigmacrilyl from B&G Hardware in Luqa in this shade and set about getting this beautiful blue on the walls. It really brought it all together!"

Christian Grech



Between the 26-28th April 2022, the Mr. Callum Steele, President of EuroCOP and Mr. Nigel Dennis, Head of Office of EuroCOP were in Malta following an invitation by the Malta Police Union.

On Wednesday 27th April 2022, MPU and EuroCOP had a very cordial and fruitful meeting with the Commissioner of The Malta Police Force Mr. Angelo Gafa' and later in the afternoon, another meeting with the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality Mr. Emanuel Psaila.

These meetings were about improving the working conditions and environment for the members of the Malta Police Force, together with the importance of having proper and meaningful dialogue, something which is still lacking.

Social dialogue is a key instrument for social cohesion and good governance. It plays an important role by promoting harmonious labour relations and decent working conditions.





On Thursday 28th April 2022, EuroCOP organised a seminar for the Executive Committee members. This was very interesting as having top EuroCOP officials highlighting several issues, and how to go around to resolve them amicably is not an everyday occurrence. Mr. Steele and Mr. Dennis are very knowledgeable of the subject and their thoughts and experiences are unique.

The European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) is the umbrella organisation for police unions and staff organisations in Europe.

It tackles issues from police cooperation across borders to a safer working environment for police officers on the street and are determined to contribute to European policy debates and provide added value by giving a practitioner's perspective.

The seminar was held at the newly refurbished MPU headquarters in Marsa.



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Your Union – 67 years of service.

The Malta Police Union was founded on the **26th July 1955** as the Malta Police Association and ever since, was the pioneer when it comes to safeguarding your rights as a police officer. Through its existence, the MPU progressed from an in-house association to a fully-fledged workers union within its own right and is also a member of EuroCOP so that it could be in a better position to see that the working conditions of its members are ameliorated and brought on par with other European Police forces. The MPU is an independent union and is not tied with any other Union and as such it is free and independent from any political agendas that such other unions may have. The sole interest of the MPU is the safeguard your rights and to give you a voice.

The MPU is led by the executive committee formed by 9 members and this committee is democratically elected by all the union's members in a vote which takes place every four years.

Past successes achieved by the MPU are the introduction of shift allowances, tax reduction on Extra Duty, adjustment in shift hours and other incentives. However, the MPU is also aware that there is much more to be done and that it cannot sit on its laurels, in fact, the MPU is continuously engaged in several negotiations to continue bettering the working conditions of its members. However, none of this would be possible without your support which is shown by joining ranks with us and becoming members of the MPU which is the largest local police union. Incidentally the MPU is also a non-profit seeking organisation and the subscription fee paid by the members is the cheapest available option and the sole intention of such a fee is to cover the expenses of the Union itself.

The Malta Police Union Protects and Defends the rights of its members according to its Statute. Such rights emanate, but not limited to Employment and Industrial legislation, Collective and Sectoral Agreements together with applicable government policies.

The Malta Police Union is an inclusive Union, which aims at defending the rights of everyone, especially minorities and works together with stakeholders to ensure the wellbeing of its members.



Content

CONTRIBUTORS

Send your interest on newsletter@mpu.mt



The Police Headquarters

Joseph Borda

The Police Depot, as it is known today was built by the Portuguese Grand Master de Vilhena in 1734 and at first it served as an institute called 'Casa d' Industria', a home for homeless women. They were taught basic skills and education such as reading, writing and some trades like weaving, carding and processing cotton.

In 1850, during the British occupation, this building was used as the General Hospital. Beneath this building, a shelter was dug at the beginning of the Second World War in order to tend wounded patients who could not be easily moved from one place to another. This space therefore provided a safer environment for patients during an air bombardment.

Imagine what would have happened during an operation, doctors would have to stop from their medical intervention on patients. That is why there are two operating theatres in this shelter. It is interesting to note that this is the only



shelter in the Maltese Islands used for this function. Furthermore, as far as we know, there is no other underground hospital in Europe that was built or dug out to operate in this way.

It was in 1954 that the Police Force moved into this building and turned it into its General Headquarters, from which it still operated today.

The Police Museum – Quo Vadis!

Gone are the days when we, as members of the Police Force were proud to take our foreign colleagues for a tour of the Police Museum. It is no more as this had to make way for quick fix solutions to host offices or workspaces.

On the 16th March 2022, the Malta Police Force issued a statement ' *In view of the current situation related to the COVID-19 and as a precautionary measure the Police Museum at the Police General Headquarters in Floriana is temporarily closed for visitors until further notice*'. Seems that there will be no further notices on the reopening.

Interestingly enough, the Malta Tourism Authority website still adverts this place as " *Housed in the building's hallway, the museum is a testament to the force's rich and colourful past.*"

The description goes further to explain that " *The first of the museum's two sections is a wealth of fascinating police-related memorabilia. Here, visitors can relive the glory of the force's magnificent 200-year history through the uniforms, badges, guns, and other intriguing items on display. The attraction's crowning glory, however, has to be its section devoted to the Island's grizzliest homicides. Though not for the squeamish, its displays are a series of realistic but gory crime scene re-enactment's, including relevant details of the murders, and the weapons used. A must for fans of murder mysteries and any aspiring detectives. A visit to the intriguing Police Depot is one trip to the station you definitely want to make!*"



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International Police Association Malta Section

The International Police Association is a friendship organization for members of the police force, whether in employment or retired, and without distinction as to rank, position, gender, race, language or religion.

We have around 372,000 members in nearly 100 countries, of which 65 are affiliated National Sections, and we are represented on 6 continents.

Our motto is '*Servo per Amikeco*' - *Service Through Friendship*'



Arthur Troop Scholarships

The Arthur Troop Scholarship, as a legacy to the IPA's founder, is a professional education and advanced training bursary, with the aim of aiding IPA members in their professional careers.

Every year, serving IPA members are invited to submit their application forms to their national section to be in with the chance of receiving a scholarship of up to €2,500 to be used for a seminar or training option of their choosing. Many of the awardees opt to attend a seminar from the wide range on offer at the IPA's Education Centre – IBZ Gimborn in Germany

Please be aware that the deadline for applications for the ATS 2023 has now passed. As the form is open for submissions all year round, we invite you to submit applications for the ATS 2024 award (the deadline for applications for the 2024 award is 31 March 2023).

Contact IPA Malta Section on ipamalta@gmail.com to apply.

Young Police Officers Seminars

Every other year, the IPA organises a Young Police Officers' Seminar, providing the opportunity for newer recruits to meet their peers and take part in a themed training programme. In recent years, the YPOS has taken participants to the UK (2019), USA (2017), Poland (2015) and Australia (2013). The majority of members attending these events are aged 35 or under, and the aim is to provide a global view of law enforcement and the IPA overall. A subsidy is provided to the organising section from the international budget to keep costs affordable.



Join IPA Malta Section
www.ipamalta.org



The Public Service Management Code

The Public Service Management Code regulates the conduct of public officers and is better known as PSMC. It provides for the organisation and administration of the public service, the regulation of the conditions of employment, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members of the public service, and matters connected therewith.

The Sectoral Agreement 2018 in Part II, Clause 2.5 [Employment Conditions and Benefits] that All employees are covered by the Sectoral Agreement and shall enjoy the salary, scales, career progression, the applicable benefits, allowances and conditions of work as provided for in the Agreement, The Public Administration Act, the PSMC, the Collective Agreement for Public Service Employees and the Code of Ethics.

The PSMC is complemented by a number of manuals which explain in more detail various subjects;

- Manual on Resourcing Policies and Procedures
- Manual Regarding Positions of Assistant Director in the Public Service
- Manual on the Procedure and Computation of Salaries
- Manual of Allowances
- Manual on Special Leaves
- Manual on Work-Life Balance Measures
- Manual on Transport and Travel Policies and Procedures
- Manual on Social Security Contributions, Benefits and Pensions
- Service Pensions Manual
- Manual on the Procedure of the Medical Board



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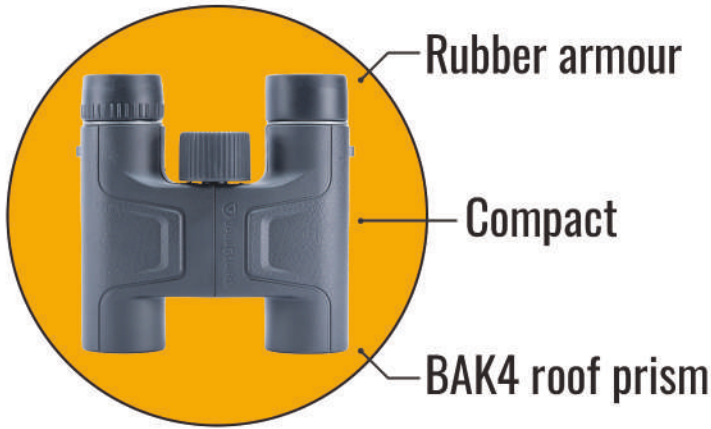
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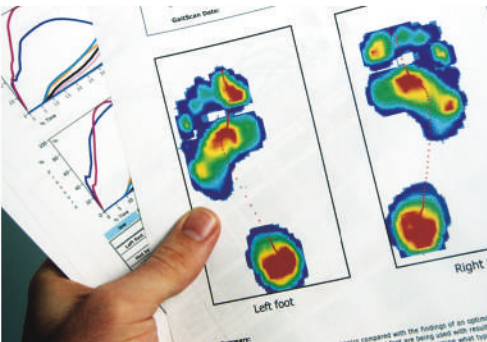


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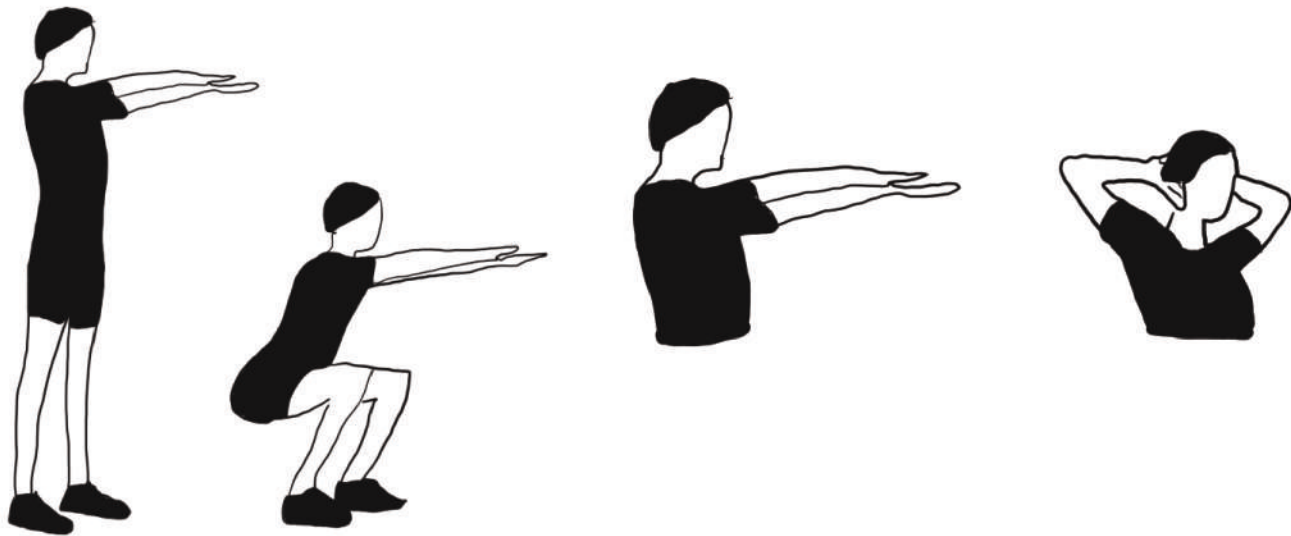
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Fitness Corner; The Squat

Darren Bezzina

The Squat is one of the most well-known exercises in the fitness community and for good reason. This simple exercise will work almost every muscle of the lower body including the quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, and calves. The core will also be activated. The Squat can be done everywhere and even without weights, as a bodyweight squat will still recruit the major muscles used in many functional skills such as running and jumping.

To perform a bodyweight squat, stand tall with the feet shoulder-width apart. Start the squat by pushing the hips back and bending at the knees and keep going down until the thighs are parallel or lower to the floor. Pause briefly at the bottom and then push yourself back to starting position. The body should be kept straight and the core should be contracted during the whole movement. The weight should always be on your heels and not on your toes. If you perform a good squat, you should be able to wiggle your toes. Finally, during the squat, your arms can be straight in front of you, or placed with the fingers behind the head, with the elbows pulled back.



The Squat is a perfect example of how easy it is to perform exercises, even when standing guard in a police box. Simply performing 3 sets of 15 repetitions can help you activate the muscles, avoiding the risk of the muscles becoming weaker over time.

Eat Right & Live Healthy

A healthy diet is essential for good health and nutrition. It protects you against many chronic noncommunicable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Eating a variety of foods and consuming less salt, sugars and saturated and industrially-produced trans-fats, are essential for healthy diet.



Hazelnut Granola Bars

Ingredients

- 2 Cups (300g) rolled oats
- 1 Cup (30g) puffed quinoa
- 1/2 Cup (120ml) honey
- 1/2 Cup (80ml) coconut oil
- 1/2 tsp. Sea Salt
- 1/2 tsp. Vanilla extract
- 1/4 Cup (30g) chopped hazelnuts

Prep Time

- Serves 10
- Prep: 10 mins
- Cook: 3 mins

Nutrition per Serving

- 258 Kcal
- 11g Fats
- 37g Carbs
- 5g Protein

Procedure

Line an 8X8 inch square baking pan with baking paper.

In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, puffed quinoa and half the hazelnuts & set aside.

Place a pot over medium heat, pour in the honey and coconut oil and heat gently until bubbles start to appear. Remove the pot from the heat and add in the salt and vanilla extract. Set aside and leave to cool for 1 minute.

Pour the honey mixture into the bowl with the dry ingredients and mix until well combined.

Pour the mixture into the baking tray and lightly press to even it out. Top with the remaining hazelnuts.

Place the pan in the refrigerator for 2 hours to firm up. Once chilled, remove from the fridge and place on a chopping board.

Slice into 10 bars.

Enjoy!



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