

Get back on your hobby horse

Autumn is the time we're most likely to try a new class or hobby. **Helen Russell** has a few ideas

WHETHER it's DIY or dancing, it's in the autumn – not the new year – when Brits are most likely to take up a new hobby, according to a new study from British Military Fitness. Hobbies have been shown to boost levels of wellbeing, while researchers at San Francisco State University found that having a pastime can improve your performance at work and make sure you get out of the office on time. Already on the hobby horse? Fist bumps to you. For everyone else, here's how to get extracurricular with the hottest hobby trends and the best ways to find your tribe.

The Hipster Crafters

Whether it's bookbinding, baking or candle making, the rise in traditional folksy hobbies shows no sign of abating, with a resurgence in real ale brewing, beekeeping, photography, pickling and even taxidermy.

Many of us crave an artistic outlet and, in our technology-obsessed times, it can be comforting to go offline and create something tangible (and I speak as a woman who recently took up pottery – with mixed results).

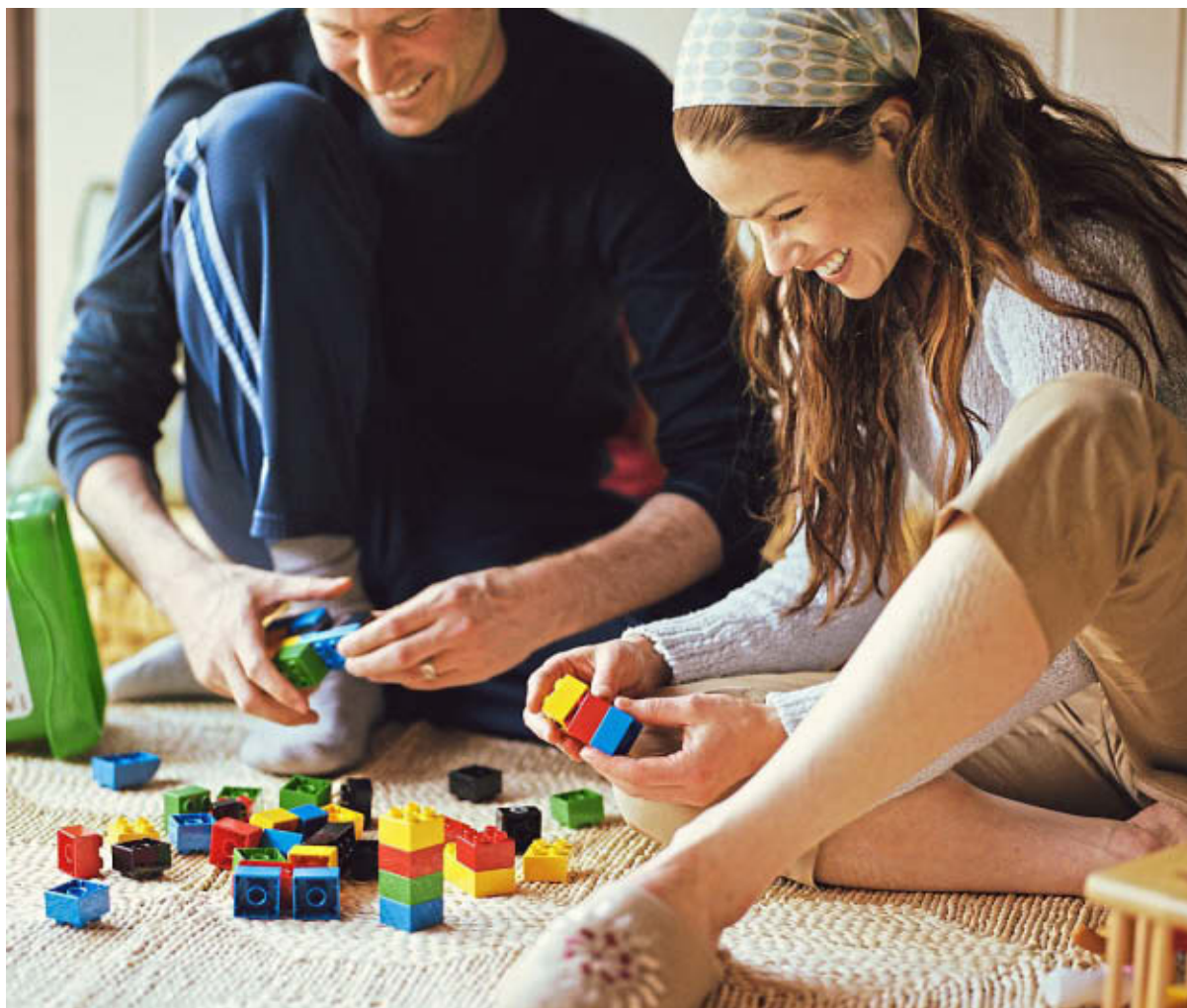
Neuroscientists have found that crafting helps the brain achieve a 'flow state' and can offer some of the same benefits as meditation. Hipster beard and tattoo sleeve optional.

Do say: 'I love a locally sourced artisanal pickle...'

Don't say: 'Did you get these at Lidl?'



New horizons: Ever tried pickling?



Find your tribe: Try checking out the reclaimed cork noticeboard of your neighbourhood coffee shop/juice bar, get on Instagram or strike up an 'actual' conversation with anyone who happens to be sporting a man bun/stuffed owl/full Elizabethan beekeeping garb...

The Retro Players

Retro gaming is dead. All hail the retro players. Instead of tinkering with ancient arcade or console games, the new playerati are revisiting the physical

games and toys of their youth. Lego has found its way back into the hands of grown-ups and a growing community of Afols (adult fans of Lego) have their own forums, events and even a magazine.

However, if yellow minifigures with U-shaped hands aren't your thing, a huge variety of board and card games are enjoying a resurgence, with community groups and players' nights city-wide.

Playing IRL (in real life) is more sociable than the video or online equivalent and there's nothing like playing like it's 1988 to make you feel young again. Ease yourself in with easy games such as Risk or Monopoly before going deeper with something like Railways Of The World.

Do say: 'What are we playing today?'

Don't say: 'Aren't toys for kids...?'

Find your tribe: The Brickish Association is a community of Afols, brickish.org; London On Board is a club that meets to play board and card games, londononboard.com

Park-land adventurers

More than ever, adventurous spirits are bonding with like-minded adrenaline junkies to get fit in public rather than in the gym.

Project Awesome leads the outdoor exercise pack with free 'badass' workouts come rain, shine or rail strike. Newbies and old hands are encouraged to #JustShowUp at 6.30am for running, jumping and press-ups (occasionally



Game on: Release your inner child by getting creative with Lego, left; quench your thirst with some beermaking, above; and take your keep-fit session out of the stuffy gym



on someone else's back...) in return for high fives, hugs, killer abs and post-workout coffee with your new friends.

For the less extroverted, Park Run offers weekly 5km runs while Londoners can sign up for free open-air fitness classes delivered by qualified coaches at Our Parks.

Exercising in a group makes us more likely to stick at it while spending time outdoors all year around makes us happier, more energetic and less stressed. Race you to the park...

Do say: 'Who's for another burpee?'

Don't say: 'Duvet day, anyone?'

Find your tribe: Project Awesome, projectawesomehq.com; Park Run, parkrun.org.uk; Our Parks, ourparks.org.uk

SURPRISING CELEBRITY HOBBIES

Claudia Schiffer
Bug Collecting



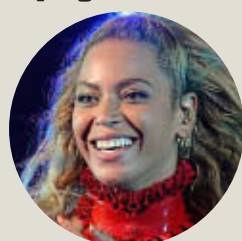
The German supermodel is a self-confessed spider addict and likes to study insects. Really. She loves arachnids so much that they feature in her clothing line.

Simon Cowell
Climbing Trees



Now we know why he tucks in his tees and wears his trousers so high: the music mogul's favourite pastime is shimmying up trees – a ritual he performs on a daily basis.

Beyoncé
Playing Connect Four



When she's not busy running the world, Bey loves a nice sit-down with the classic 1970s disc-dropping game – and once beat Kanye West nine rounds to one.

Ryan Gosling
Knitting



The Oscar-nominated father of two learned to knit when filming 2007's Lars And The Real Girl and since then has apparently been hooked. 'Hey girl – I made you a scarf...' *swoons*

Mila Kunis
World Of Warcraft



A massive Star Trek fan and proud geek, Mila loves playing World Of Warcraft and was once so addicted she had to delete the online role-playing game from her laptop.