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THE TEAM



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Allison Jacobs

We could all do with a boost now and then - turn to page 103 to read our confidence special



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Emily McMullin

Got a holiday coming up? Now's the time to get working on your cellulite - find out how on page 84



HEALTH AND FITNESS WRITER
Jody-Ann Miller

Lifeless locks are my number one bug bear, so this month I asked a panel of salon experts for their top hair-transforming tips (p 80)



CONTENT WRITER
Lauren Godfrey

Need to quieten the chatter in your mind? Check out our handy guide to anxiety-busting remedies on page 96



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WELCOME...

...to the April issue of *Natural Health*.

It's no exaggeration to say that as humans we're obsessed with trying to hold on to our youth. The Romans and Greeks famously bathed in crocodile dung, a Countess from Hungary reportedly smothered herself in the blood of her murder victims in the 17th century and today women across the world invest in the latest anti-ageing creams and serums designed to reduce fine lines and banish wrinkles. For as long as civilisations have existed and the effects of time have shown on our faces and bodies, we've tried to hide our age. But what I've come to realise is that there is no one secret for longevity or a miracle cure for younger-looking skin, instead it's a culmination of things – including eating well, exercising regularly and being kind to yourself and others. This last one may not be something that immediately springs to mind when youth is in question, but as experts Elizabeth Blackburn and Elissa Epel explain on page 59, your relationship with yourself and with others can have an impact on your resilience to stress – a known contributor to premature ageing. So it's more important than ever to strengthen close relationships and ensure we live in creative and supportive environments.

We've got all sorts of other youth-boosting tips in this issue – from how to look after your liver on page 50 and beat joint pain on page 74 to the best spring beauty buys on page 83. Happy reading!

Claire

Claire Munnings,
Editor, *Natural Health* naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk





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Win Tints of Nature hair products, a hamper from the Groovy Food Company and a spa break



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April OVER TO YOU...



APRIL'S STAR LETTER

Jayne Goddard's article, *Is this why you are always tired?* (February issue, p22), really struck a chord with me. 2016 got off to a nightmare start as my father passed away on new year's eve, and in the months after I suffered from crippling anxiety due to doing a teaching qualification, moving house and grieving all at the same time. I was always tired and unenthusiastic and my relationship suffered. I now believe I had adrenal fatigue and am glad to have dealt with it healthily by learning to say no and nourishing my body.

Asta, via email



THIS MONTH'S STAR LETTER WINS...

an Organic Goji Superfood Cleanser and Beauty Balm worth more than £45 from Rawgaia! Packed full of goji berry goodness, geranium and frankincense floral waters, both products are also bursting with nourishing essential oils as well as moisturising cacao seed butter. Rawgaia hand-makes pure, plant-derived skincare by gently blending the highest quality botanical ingredients together, and all of its products are certified organic, vegan and cruelty-free. (rawgaia.com)



KICK THE CRAVINGS

I've been trying to reduce my sugar intake but was finding it really difficult and had started to lose hope. As a last ditch attempt I picked up a copy of *Natural Health* for the first time after seeing the cover line 'smart ways to cut sugar'. Reading Ian Marber's article (*Slashing your sugar intake isn't always as easy as it sounds*, February issue, p59) really opened my eyes as to where I've been going wrong. Thank you!

Georgina, via email

LIVE AND LEARN

I'm not yet 30 and I have a condition which seems to get continually worse.

Over the last few years I have begun to exercise regularly and eat more healthily, but when I read February's issue I realised that my idea of healthy was somewhat misled. After following your advice and reading the articles on adrenal fatigue and detox yoga (p35), I have been able to improve my understanding of my illness.

Nicole, via email



BACK ON TRACK

Thank you for creating such an inspiring magazine. February's issue did not disappoint and I particularly enjoyed the articles by Ian Marber and Jayne Goddard, which made me determined that 2017 will be the year that I take control of my health by cutting my sugar intake and looking after my kidneys, which aren't fully functioning anyway. It feels great to have my motivation renewed!

Julie, via email

SEND US YOUR LETTERS: Write to us at letters@naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk, tweet us @natural_mag or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/naturalhealthmag](https://www.facebook.com/naturalhealthmag) for your chance to win our star letter prize!



This MONTH

APRIL IS THE MONTH TO
QUIT SUGAR

Choosing to omit the white stuff from your diet will give your body a boost – you'll have more energy, and lower your risk of chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, not to mention get in better shape for summer. "I first quit sugar back in 2011 because I had an autoimmune disease that seriously mucked with my ability to enjoy life," says Sarah Wilson, author of *I Quit Sugar*. "I wanted a better life, a richer life, a well life, and so I tried going sugar-free. It worked a treat."

A top-down view of a white ceramic plate with a fluted rim. On the plate is a piece of roasted salmon with a golden-brown, herb-crusted skin. Next to it are several stalks of roasted asparagus and leeks, showing charred edges. The dish is garnished with fresh green herbs, including flat-leaf parsley and basil, and a single bright red tomato. The background is a soft-focus purple and white pattern.

ELIMINATE TOXINS

"When you quit sugar, you essentially quit processed food and all its associated nasty additives, which means you benefit not only from the absence of sugar, but also from eliminating a stack of other toxic chemicals, crappy fats and low-brow carbs," says Sarah. "Quitting sugar, by necessity, steers you to the right outcome."



TRY SARAH'S SUGAR-FREE RECIPES TONIGHT...

Greek Lamb Salad

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 bunch massaged kale or 300g baby spinach leaves
- 50g kalamata olives
- 250g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 75ml olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
- 500g shredded roast lamb
- Full-fat organic plain yoghurt

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Toss gently and top with the yoghurt.

CAULI POPCORN

Ingredients

- 50g coconut oil, melted
- 1/2 tsp paprika (smoked or sweet) or ground turmeric
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 large head cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the oil, spices and salt in a large bowl. Toss in the cauliflower and coat well. Transfer the cauli to a baking tray and bake, tossing once, for 30 minutes or until golden brown and popcorny.

Make it cheesy: Add 3 tbsp of nutritional yeast powder or grated parmesan and omit the cinnamon.

For more
healthy recipes
turn to page 69

The latest in NATURAL HEALTH

Homeopathy ABC

Mani Norland, principal at the School of Homeopathy (homeopathyschool.com), tells us:

Yis for Yohimbinum #1 remedy for impotence

Yohimbinum, derived from the bark of the Yohimbeha tree in Africa and considered to be a homeopathic viagra, is known to act as a powerful aphrodisiac for men and is used to treat erectile dysfunction and loss of libido. The remedy is also thought to help with diabetes and blood pressure problems, and can be used to counteract the physical side effects of antidepressants.



WELLNESS WARRIOR

Meet Beata Aleksandrowicz, a massage expert and founder of the Pure Massage Spa Training Method (spatraining.global)

NH: Can you tell us a bit about the 12 principles of massage?

BA: The 12 principles of massage are based on my almost 20 years of experience and are the fundamentals on which therapists can build their skills in effective and injury-free techniques. The principles include emotional wellness, posture and mental awareness.

NH: What benefits can massage offer to people?

BA: Put simply, a massage makes you feel good. However, it can also help to regulate the different systems within the body and enable it to heal itself. Even a one-off massage will make a difference to your health – it can boost the immune system, reduce blood pressure and release muscle tensions, as well as making you feel more relaxed and positive.

NH: How and why have you combined your work with charity?

BA: In a sense I have become an ambassador for the power of touch. After seeing the effect that massage can have on people, I wanted to share the benefits with others – those who are disconnected or less fortunate. I've established several charity projects, such as 'touch a heart', which offers massages to the elderly, and 'young mothers', a source of support for teenage mums.

SUPP SPOT

Fay Higginbotham at Solgar (solgar.co.uk) on the benefits of artichokes

Not only do globe artichokes taste good, but research has shown that they offer a number of health benefits too. One of these is the ability to settle digestion in people with sporadic irritable bowel symptoms, which can be difficult to overcome without an obvious trigger.

Artichokes are also known to support the liver by increasing levels of glutathione, a compound that is important for detoxification. As our livers have to process medications and alcohol in addition to a range of dietary components that can contain high levels of fat and carbohydrates, it's no surprise that we sometimes feel sluggish (an effect that is often reflected on the skin). So, not only can the vegetable help us to achieve a healthy complexion, but it's also thought to have an anti-ageing effect. Not bad for a flower bud!



"It's not just physical silence that we seek today – mental and digital silence are now of equal importance" – p79

WHAT'S THE BUZZ ABOUT? SORGHUM GRAIN

If you've found yourself getting a bit bored of quinoa, you'll be pleased to hear that there's a new kid on the block. Sorghum, a cereal grain from the dry African plains, is the fifth most popular cereal crop in the world, largely due to its natural drought tolerance and versatility as food for both humans and animals and fuel. Until recently it was largely used to feed cows and livestock, but it's now turning culinary heads thanks to its health credentials. Like quinoa and brown rice, it's gluten-free and easier on the digestive system, and is also rich in antioxidants, vitamins and protein. Plus, it's eco-friendly – an acre of sorghum uses a third less water than an acre of corn and fewer expensive fertilisers too. To get your fix, try Nutri-brex, a tasty breakfast cereal made with the grain (nutribrex.co.uk).



Multivitamins

A recent study has found that taking multivitamins during pregnancy could help to advance a child's development by up to a whole school year by the time they are nine years old.

Healthy habits

The latest Family Spending Survey from the Office of National Statistics has shown that households in the UK are adopting healthier lifestyles and spending less on alcohol and tobacco.

Oily fish

New research has revealed that eating two portions of oily fish a week can reverse the damage caused to the immune system by obesity.



The BAROMETER

Diabetes

Scientists have discovered that people with apple-shaped bodies – those that are larger around the middle – are more at risk of suffering from type 2 diabetes as well as high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Working from home

According to a report from the UN's International Labour Organization, people who work from home are more likely to suffer from insomnia, stress and depression.

Sweet tooth

Fructose, commonly used in the food industry, is the most harmful sweetener and can increase the likelihood of obesity, heart disease and stroke, experts have claimed.

'Granola with no dairy?' I said.

'What's that like?'

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THERAPY OF THE MONTH

Music therapy

There's a wonderful world of alternative therapies out there just waiting to be discovered. This month, we shine a light on music therapy

For many of us, music is a big part of our lives, whether we play an instrument, are in a band or choir, or simply enjoy listening to it. And, thanks to the wide variety of genres that exist, there's something to suit every taste, need and mood. Music offers us joy, comfort, peace and inspiration, evoking strong emotional responses, and is often linked to key personal memories.

In light of the powerful effect it can have on us, it's no surprise that it's used as a therapy. Music therapists draw upon the qualities of sound and melody to support people of all ages and at all stages of life, from helping newborn babies to bond with their parents to offering compassionate and soothing palliative care during someone's last days.

What makes music so special is the fact that everybody has the ability to respond to it, and the therapy uses this connection to encourage positive

changes in emotional wellbeing through engagement in live interaction between the therapist and patient. It enables people to create their own musical language with which they can explore and connect with the world and express themselves, and can also help to develop communication skills, boost confidence, increase self-awareness and improve concentration.

Due to the fact that participation and response don't depend on the ability to speak, music therapy is particularly effective for those who have difficulty communicating verbally, such as children with autism, brain injury victims and dementia sufferers. It is frequently used to help people whose lives have been affected by injury, illness or disability by supporting their psychological, emotional, cognitive, physical, communicative and social needs, and the results can be pretty life-changing. To learn more and find a therapist visit bamt.org

ON TRIAL

Everything you need to know about your first session

As music therapy is used to treat a wide range of people and problems, the nature of the session depends on the patient's needs, and usually takes one of two forms – active or receptive. In the former, the therapist and patient actively participate in creating music using a variety of styles and instruments, such as the voice, and it is often improvised. Receptive therapy, on the other hand, takes place in a more relaxed setting in which the therapist makes or plays music to the patient, who is free to draw, meditate or simply listen.

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*Silence can
replenish
our mental
resources,
relieve
stress and
tension and
regenerate
brain cells*

NH's talking about: SILENCE

“Silence?” we hear you ask. “That would be nice!” With our lives running at an ever faster pace in an increasingly manic world, moments to ourselves are few and far between. But it’s not just physical silence that we seek today – mental and digital silence are now of equal importance. Our smartphones, tablets and laptops are often no more than an arm’s length away, and thanks to the presence of the internet and social media, we are rarely truly alone. Even when we turn off all technology and are laying in bed trying to sleep, our minds can still be whirring away and keeping us alert.

While we frequently joke about peace and quiet being an unattainable ideal, it turns out that a lack of silence is actually quite bad for us. In 2011, a World Health Organisation (WHO) report branded noise pollution a ‘modern plague’ and concluded that there is overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental noise (that caused by transport and industrial and recreational activities) harms our health. Recent studies have confirmed that physical and digital noise negatively affects our focus and sleep, as well as

**Silence is golden – and
key to our wellbeing**

increasing stress hormones and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Thankfully, the health and wellness industry has caught on to the need to switch off, and there are now various ways in which you can

do just that. Silent retreats, which usually involve several days of solitude, meditation and mindfulness and zero use of technology, are on the rise, with celebrities such as Emma Watson and Gisele Bündchen giving it a go. You could even take a trip to the Silent Spa at Therme Laa Hotel & Spa in Vienna, the first comprehensively silent bathing and spa experience complete with mute staff.

A ‘digital detox’ is another a great way to disconnect from your devices and reconnect with yourself, your loved ones and nature. You can embark on one with the help of Time To Log Off which also offers retreats in the UK and abroad, including one designed for teenagers (itstimetologoff.com). Simply meditating for a few minutes a day can go a long way in bringing a bit of silence back into your life, and there are some great apps available to help you get started – try Headspace, Buddhify or Calm.



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2



3



4



1

SHOP YOURSELF HEALTHY

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5

6



7



8

1 SURF'S UP Activewear brand O'Neill has announced the launch of its first eco-friendly women's range and we are head over heels! The multifunctional collection is bright, fashionable and completely affordable. O'Neill Active Print Surf Legging £45.99 and Active Mesh Insert Sport Bra, £34.99, oneill.com

2 HEAVEN SCENT Light up a Nula Soy candle and your room will soon be enveloped in the most blissful scent. We adore this floral fragrance complete with cerise crystal glassware. Expect notes of lavender, rose geranium and chamomile. Nula Soy Aromatherapy Candle in Elizabethan Garden, £24, lovelula.com

3 ARM CANDY Matt & Nat is tugging at our heart and purse strings with its new line of Opia bags. Made from 100 percent recycled materials with a chic saddle bag silhouette, they can be worn cross body or carried as a clutch. Matt & Nat Opia Saddle Bag, £65, mattandnat.com

4 WATER WORKS Having trouble hitting your two litre target? Invest in a pretty S'well bottle to keep yourself excited about H2O throughout the day. There's a multitude of colourways, so no excuse not to get those eight glasses. S'well Destination Bottle in Sundance, £35, amara.com

5 SLEEPING BEAUTY This Holistic Silk eye mask will ensure a blissful night of uninterrupted beauty sleep. Crafted from the highest-grade silk, its lightly-cushioned design sits softly against your face to block out light and prevent damage to the hair and skin. Holistic Silk Eye Mask in Candy Stripe, £52, holisticsilk.com

6 TEA OFF Herbal tea bags were so last season. This spring, it's all about loose-leaf, so get on board with the trend with this delightful tea egg from Danish brand Normann. Just place your favourite botanicals in the base of the egg and steep in hot water for the perfect cuppa. Normann Copenhagen Tea Egg, £12, amara.com

7 ON THE FLOOR Who says you have to change time zone in order to get that tropical tree-pose insta? Take your practice to the beach with this scenic yoga mat made from all-natural ingredients. Yoga Everywhere Gili T Beach Mat, £80, yogaeverywhere.com.au

8 GOOD VIBRATIONS The Issa Hybrid has been hailed as the best dental invention since the electric toothbrush, and rightly so! The cutting-edge device delivers a dentist clean feeling, removing plaque and germs while preserving enamel and gums. Foreo ISSA Hybrid, £149, foreo.co.uk

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HEALTHY READS

We cherry-pick four books worth buying this month...



HYGGE

Marie Tourell Soderberg, £12.99, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Of all the books published about hygge over the last few months, Danish actress Marie Tourell Soderberg's is one of the prettiest and most informative. Having travelled up and down her country to create the ultimate guide to cooking, decoration and entertainment inspired by the trend, Marie not only tells us how to embrace hygge, but also shows us through beautiful photography.

CLEANSE, NURTURE, RESTORE WITH HERBAL TEA

Sebastian Pole, £20, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Sebastian Pole, co-founder of Pukka Herbs, has compiled 70 recipes using botanicals, herbs and fresh ingredients so you can make your own revitalising brews at home. The recipes are handily grouped by their health benefits and the 'Pukkapedias' will help you to make teas to suit your own needs and tastes. Time to pop the kettle on!

SUPERFOOD SOUPS

Julie Morris, £14.99, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Much to our delight, queen of superfoods Julie Morris has added a collection of soup recipes to her growing repertoire of healthy cookbooks. The chef has selected 100 favourites packed with nutrient-dense, plant-based foods and powerful ingredients such as medicinal mushrooms, turmeric and kale. Julie's tasty concoctions make the perfect lunch or light dinner – we can't wait to try the cacao black bean soup!

THE NATURE OF BEAUTY

Imelda Burke, £20, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

The definitive guide to a new generation of natural skincare and make-up courtesy of Imelda Burke, founder of Content Beauty and Wellbeing. Offering both time-honoured and modern techniques, tips and guidance, Imelda showcases the ingredients and brands that should be on all of our radars. If you want to learn how to recognise what your skin needs, then this is a must-have.

“At 52, I am HEALTHIER & HAPPIER than I’ve ever been”

She may have retired from the runway, but, Australian supermodel *Elle Macpherson* is still a force to be reckoned with

When you’ve been colloquially termed ‘The Body’ since the 1980s and decades later it still holds true, chances are you’re doing something right. But while Elle Macpherson’s iconic frame and permanent youth seems to defy all logic, the catwalk veteran insists that it’s all down to an easy-to-follow lifestyle based on balance, wellness and laughter. From alkalising her body with her own brand of super greens to finding 30 minutes of solace each day, everything on Elle’s agenda drives her happiness and exuberance. This month, we chatted to the blonde beauty to uncover her most valuable pearls of wisdom. Read it, breathe it and take serious note, because these lifestyle tips are a total game-changer...

I’m so thankful that I’ve had (and still have) such a full and diverse career. All of the people that I’ve met and collaborated with have been extraordinarily talented in their fields, and working with them has helped to shape me into the woman I am today. I began modelling when I was just 17 years old. It was such a different world then and I was such a different girl. I’m now less concerned about the number on the scales or what dress size I wear because I know that I’m not defined by a number. Today I focus on how I feel because true beauty comes from the inside and radiates out.

I’m in love with ageing! The alternative (death) doesn’t bear thinking about. Time passing is so interesting to observe, especially when you have children. When I became a mother, I knew I wanted to help guide my children on all levels, so I am more observant and conscious about the decisions I make and how I choose to live my life. I want to be a positive example.

At 52, I am healthier and happier than I’ve ever been and I have a sense of fulfilment. Maturing has taught me a lot like not to sweat the small stuff. I’m looking forward to what the future holds for me.

Wellness is important to me and I choose to make it a priority in my life every single day. I believe that a healthy body and mind comes from an abundance of love, laughter, water and good nutrition. It’s all about that balance, no extremes.

I try to find 30 minutes every day to do some solo yoga or meditation, usually first thing in the morning as this helps to clear my head. Depending on where I am in the world, I also make an effort to explore my

surroundings with a walk, hike or bike ride. I enjoy variety in my day to keep me motivated and inspired, so when I’m in Miami, for example, I’ll mix things up by going water-skiing or wake-surfing with my boys. Family time is so important!

Nutrition-wise I always start my mornings with two teaspoons of The Super Elixir Alkalising Greens (£36, welleco.co.uk) in cold spring water or coconut water for extra hydration. I eat regularly, about three times a day, and I’ll often have The Super Elixir Nourishing Protein shake (£39, welleco.co.uk) as a snack or meal if I’m on the go. I do eat chicken and fish, but recently I’ve discovered that my body responds really well to a plant-based diet. So my new thing is to do a plant-based week at the change of every season, or before a shoot as a way of cleansing my body.

I launched WelleCo because a few years ago I started feeling really run-down. I tried an array of supplements, but nothing seemed to work. That’s when I met Dr Simone Laubscher, a specialist in the science of nutrition, who explained that there was one factor in my life that wasn’t balanced: my body’s alkalinity. My pH levels were off-kilter, causing my body to try to compensate. As she put it, my body was “working overtime, all the time”. She told me to get rid of my synthetic supplements and replaced them with whole food alternatives. I didn’t expect it to have such a big impact, but I was able to completely transform the way I felt. I had loads more energy and I was healthier than I’d been in years! It made me realise what a profound impact food can have.

I have also noticed a significant difference in my outer appearance. Skin is a great barometer of how you are feeling on the inside. My skin isn’t dry anymore, it looks plumper and I have what nutritionists call ‘the alkaline glow’. My sugar cravings subsided, too, as my blood sugar levels steadied and digestion improved. I lost weight. I felt more upbeat and I found myself choosing healthier habits, all round, as my body became more balanced and I was able to ‘listen’ to what it really needed.



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JANEY LEE GRACE

These things I know...

You should try a tonic

I love this time of year, but it often brings with it allergic reactions, and hayfever et al. Hayfever is caused by the immune system believing pollen is a pathogen, but if we boost our immunity it can help to restore balance. It's important to do it naturally and with an awareness of the seasons. I definitely feel an increased energy in springtime, but sometimes that means I overdo it too (you've been there I'm sure) and rather than taking time out to actually smell the daffodils and tulips I often find I'm taking on way too many projects and getting into overwhelm mode.

Recently I've learnt to recognise the importance of balance and harness the power of traditional herbal remedies and plants. I remember my dad always used to say if you're feeling a little out of sorts, have a 'tonic' (his version included alcohol and raw eggs). I hadn't heard that expression for years but in searching for a natural plant-based solution, I came across a fascinating woman called Vanessa Jacoby who does believe in this way of thinking. Vanessa is a shamanic herbalist who cured her own coughs and colds by making a 'fire' tonic, which meant she didn't need antibiotics. After her own spiritual awakening

“ I'm sipping at the moment an authenticity chakra tea ”



Janey is the author of *Look Great Naturally* and runs the website imperfectlynatural.com



she decided to create a range of tinctures and herbal infusions. Vanessa is a yogi and masseur too so she really gets in touch with how the unique herbs and spices affect us. She combines the tastes and sensations to work with the chakras. So I'm sipping at the moment the authenticity chakra tea – it's for the throat chakra, the centre of our expression, which is perfect for me as a presenter, and it contains blueberries and cornflower so you can only imagine the lovely blue colour. I'm also – to make my late dad proud, trying the body boost tonic. It's a fiery blend which contains apple cider vinegar, honey, red chilli, turmeric and more... I'm hoping to ward off everything, and it certainly beats slurping brandy and raw eggs!

Check out realremedies.co.uk

STEM CELLS: *the future of medicine*

What if one day we could grow new organs as and when we needed them? It might sound futuristic, but in reality it's not that far off, says Jayney Goddard



The reason that I wanted to cover this topic in my column this month is because it ties in very closely to what I (and other researchers) believe is the 'holy grail' of medicine – fully customised 'designer' medical treatments that are tailored to you – as an individual. This new

approach to medicine and wellbeing will ensure that there is less chance of patients suffering side effects of drugs – and should organ transplants ultimately be required, these will be grown from the patient's own stem cells – so that there won't be a need for incredibly toxic anti-rejection drugs. Interestingly, the fully personalised approach to medicine that we will see in the future closely matches the ideals of complementary medicine – which has been used for hundreds and even thousands of years; we practitioners strive to treat our patients as individuals. In complementary medicine, we prescribe only those medicines and therapeutic interventions which match the patient's symptom picture perfectly – this is particularly relevant in disciplines such as homeopathy, herbal medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda – to mention just a few approaches.

First of all, here's an explanation of what stem cells are – and why they are so exciting: We have stem cells in our bodies in many locations – and scientists believed, until very recently, that the types of stem cell that could be medically useful were only available in embryos – but research has moved forward dramatically in recent years. Stem cells have the potential to become any cell in the human body and can thus give rise to any tissue found in the body, which ultimately means that there is nearly limitless potential for medical applications (this will inevitably lead to fully 'regenerative' medicine).

The uses for stem cells are potentially endless. Currently, researchers are investigating how stem cells might be used to prevent or cure diseases and injuries such as type 1 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, heart disease, Alzheimer's, strokes, muscular dystrophy, osteoarthritis, burns, vision and hearing loss. Many fully functioning organs have already been grown and the field of skin-grafting has already been revolutionised. In the very near future, it is

highly likely that stem cells will be regularly used to replace or repair tissue damaged by disease or injury – and futurologists optimistically predict that stem cell treatments might herald a 'cure for ageing'. Of course, that is a hugely controversial topic and not one that we should get into in this article – simply for

space reasons. However, another great controversy centres around the ethics of stem cell use and I want to cover this here as it is easily dealt with. Many people objected to stem cell research because originally scientists used embryonic stem cells which had been harvested from aborted foetuses, and this was held to be highly unethical. However, science has moved on and it is possible to harvest our own stem cells from many sites in our bodies and render them 'pluripotent', meaning that they are essentially 'blank' cells – which truly have the potential to become any other type of cell that we might require.

The potential use of our own stem cells is really exciting to say the least, and much has been done recently to find out how pluripotent cells can be transformed into the many different types of cells that we can use to treat and heal illness and injury.

Researchers initially struggled to get stem cells to produce certain tissues, including muscle. It was only recently discovered that stem cells arise from small clusters of cells called somites and these form muscle

cells – as well as the bone and cartilage of vertebrae and ribs, among other cell types. The breakthrough came when scientists discovered that by adding just the right mixture of signalling molecules (proteins which are involved in development) to human stem cells they could be coaxed into resembling somites. These 'somites-in-a-dish' then have the potential to develop into muscle, bone, and cartilage, and these can be guided to form entire organs, whole bones, muscles and more.

So, just how close are we to achieving the 'holy grail' of fully individualised medicine? Well, very close indeed as it happens: following years of painstaking research and experimentation, scientists have now found that they can turn 90 percent of human stem cells into somite cells in just four days. Growing organs from these cells is fast too: 3D printers can be used to manufacture 3D heart segments using biological material. Although these

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or *repair* tissue
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disease or
injury
”



don't include any actual heart cells, these structures provide the 'scaffold' on which heart tissue can be grown. A team from both Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School has taken this scaffolding concept and combined it with stem cells for some truly spectacular results – and fully functioning hearts have been grown in about two weeks.

GROW YOUR OWN

We can all take advantage of just how malleable stem cells actually are right now as there is an incredibly simple way to re-set your immune system, which has huge benefits for overall health – and provides innumerable anti-ageing benefits. In the respected science journal *Cell Stem Cell* a published paper showed that cycles of prolonged fasting not only protect us against immune system damage, they also induce immune system regeneration. Water-only fasting flips a regenerative switch which shifts our stem cells from being in a dormant state to a state of self-renewal. It has long been understood by practitioners of the complementary medical

approach to wellbeing called natural hygiene that water-only fasting produces spectacular results for people suffering from a variety of conditions – it also has the effect of biological age reversal – including re-setting the immune system. Conventional medicine has finally cottoned on to this and is using fasting prior to chemotherapy treatment to improve the immune response of recipients and, interestingly, it was noted that they required fewer chemotherapeutic drugs overall. Water-only fasting produces results in as few as three days – but complete bed rest is required and it is wise, for people who have not fasted previously, to be fully supervised by an experienced practitioner who has been trained in this discipline. Furthermore, water-only fasting is contraindicated for some people. A full discussion of this radical but hugely effective approach to wellbeing is on The Complementary Medical Association site: the-cma.org.uk.

Jayne is one of the leading experts in complementary medicine, helping clients worldwide achieve vibrant good health and abundant energy. Visit jayneygoddard.org

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FOR THE OATS

2tsp agave or maple syrup
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½ vanilla pod, scraped
1 tbsp almond butter
a small handful of raspberries plus extra

TO SERVE

6 tbsp rolled oats

1 To make Chia jam, combine the fruit with maple syrup, to taste, and gently simmer for 10 minutes. Add a pinch of salt and the chia seeds and lemon juice, stir well and continue to cook for 10 minutes until thickened. Chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours.

2 To make the overnight oats, mix together the syrup and almond milk then combine the vanilla seeds and almond butter. Roughly mash in the raspberries and tip over the oats, stir well, cover and leave to soak overnight (or at least for 2 hrs).

3 In the morning, layer the oats and some of the jam into a jar or swirl in a bowl and top with extra raspberries.

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Patsy's beauty range, *Preciously Perfect*, is available from Ideal World (idealworld.tv/search/Preciously-perfect-by-patsy-kensit) or on Sky 654, Freeview 22, Virgin 747 or Freesat 812.

Until I was in my twenties, I never had a problem with my back at all. I went to ballet classes when I was younger and rode horses and donkeys as a kid and although my body was certainly put through the wringer, my back had always been ok.

That was until I was pregnant with my first son 25 years ago. The plan was to have a natural birth but in the end – after being down on my hands and knees wailing in pain for hours – I had to have an epidural. Nowadays it's completely different but back then you were paralysed from your nose down. It was awful.

I had a very long labour – nearly 19 hours – and they had to use forceps and all sorts to get my baby boy out. I have really strong memories of my obstetrician turning up – he looked a bit like Warren Beatty and had just come from the opera so was wearing black tie with silver boots. He examined me and I remember thinking my body would never be the same again after all the poking and prodding.

From that day on I had neck and lower back problems like you'd never know. I'm not complaining because I got my beautiful son from it, but it has had an impact on my life ever since. It's also gotten worse as the years have gone by and it's well known that back problems can be exacerbated when you're menopausal.

I have tried everything to help with the pain – I've found that both acupuncture and cupping do work, but you have to attend sessions religiously, and other options just haven't been effective for me. Earlier this year, though, I discovered a new solution while

PATSY KENSIT *What I've Learned:* BACK PAIN

Patsy Kensit tries a new treatment
to help her posture

I was at a health resort in Thailand. The experts there suggested that I try a holistic treatment called rolfing and I can honestly say it has changed my life. My back is now 75 percent back to what it was – it's incredible.

Essentially, it's a special therapy which uses soft tissue massage and different body movements to try to help restore our natural alignments and ease stresses and strains. I found the massage itself quite painful and I could physically feel the knots being broken down by my therapist, but although it sounds tortuous it was amazing.

Interestingly, he measured my height before and after the treatment and the latter measurement was half an inch more! It helped reduce all the tension that can cause you to hunch over and I felt that I could carry myself properly for the first time in ages.

My sessions lasted an hour and I went every other day while I was over in Thailand. After the first one I felt better already! Cynically, I did think that after two weeks or so the pain would be back to normal, but so far I'm still feeling great.

As well as the massage, my therapist also gave me some exercises for my posture that I can do at home. One of them involves putting a reading book on the floor and then lying down and resting my head (not neck) on it at the base of my skull. He told me that if I pushed down on the book with my head, this could help correct the hump that often appears on our necks.

For people with back problems rolfing is amazing and something I'd really recommend. I loved it and am already looking for places that offer it nearby.



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ASK THE EXPERTS

Don't suffer in silence – our wellbeing wonder-team of experts is on hand to answer your health questions

Can acupuncture reduce PMS, and if so, what would it involve?

Amanda Hair, acupuncturist and lecturer at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (naturopathy-uk.com), says:

Having an acupuncture treatment just before the menstrual cycle starts can significantly reduce the severity of PMS symptoms. In the ancient practice of Chinese medicine, different symptoms are thought to indicate that certain organs and bodily functions are out of balance. Based on this theory, you will receive a comprehensive and individual assessment to identify the most relevant acupuncture points on the body. Sterile needles as thin as human hair will then be (painlessly) inserted into these areas, and left there for up to 30 minutes while you lay still and relax.

A holistic approach to PMS tends to produce the best results. Naturopathic acupuncturists use herbal medicine and homeopathic and nutritional diagnoses, as well as traditional Chinese medicine, to help rebalance the hormonal system. As food is part of the healing tool kit, they also offer dietary advice to reduce inflammation and boost nutrient intake.

I'm prone to bad headaches. How can aromatherapy help?

Joannah Metcalfe, a consultant aromatherapist for Base Formula (baseformula.com), says:

Most headaches are caused by other health problems such as tiredness, muscular tension or stress, and there are a variety of essential oils that can help depending on the root cause. In general, neroli, peppermint and lavender are three of the best oils for relieving headaches, especially if they are related to fatigue or anxiety. The second two are both analgesic, which means they have pain-relieving properties, and work particularly well together as the stimulating peppermint helps to counter the sedative effects of lavender.

Try mixing 50ml of aloe vera gel with 10 drops of lavender oil, two of peppermint and one of neroli and massage into the temples, forehead and back of the neck. Alternatively you can rub in a few drops of undiluted lavender oil and sniff the peppermint directly from the bottle, or use it in an aromatherapy diffuser.

If you suffer from muscular tightness in the upper back, neck and shoulder area, try a tension-relieving massage with 30ml of base oil, five drops of lavender, four of marjoram, three of clary sage and one of peppermint. Or, if your stress levels are high, indulge in a relaxing bath with six drops of lavender oil, two of neroli and two of roman chamomile. If you are experiencing persistent headaches you should always make an appointment to see your GP.

I'm coming to the end of the menopause and have been finding sex painful. What could be the cause and how can I stop it from happening?

David Mantle, medical advisor to nutritional supplement company Pharma Nord (pharmanord.co.uk), says:

Women can suffer from dyspareunia (the medical term for painful intercourse) for both medical and psychological reasons and it is one of the most common problems experienced before and after the menopause. For the most part, it is attributed to declining oestrogen levels which can lead to vaginal atrophy, the symptoms of which include the thinning and shrinking of tissues in and around the vagina and decreased lubrication. Women who have undergone an induced menopause or treatment for breast cancer often suffer from this too. You can try using a natural lubricant or vaginal moisturiser, or opt for an omega 7 supplement which can help to restore the original lubrication of mucous membranes. It's always worth seeking advice from your GP too.

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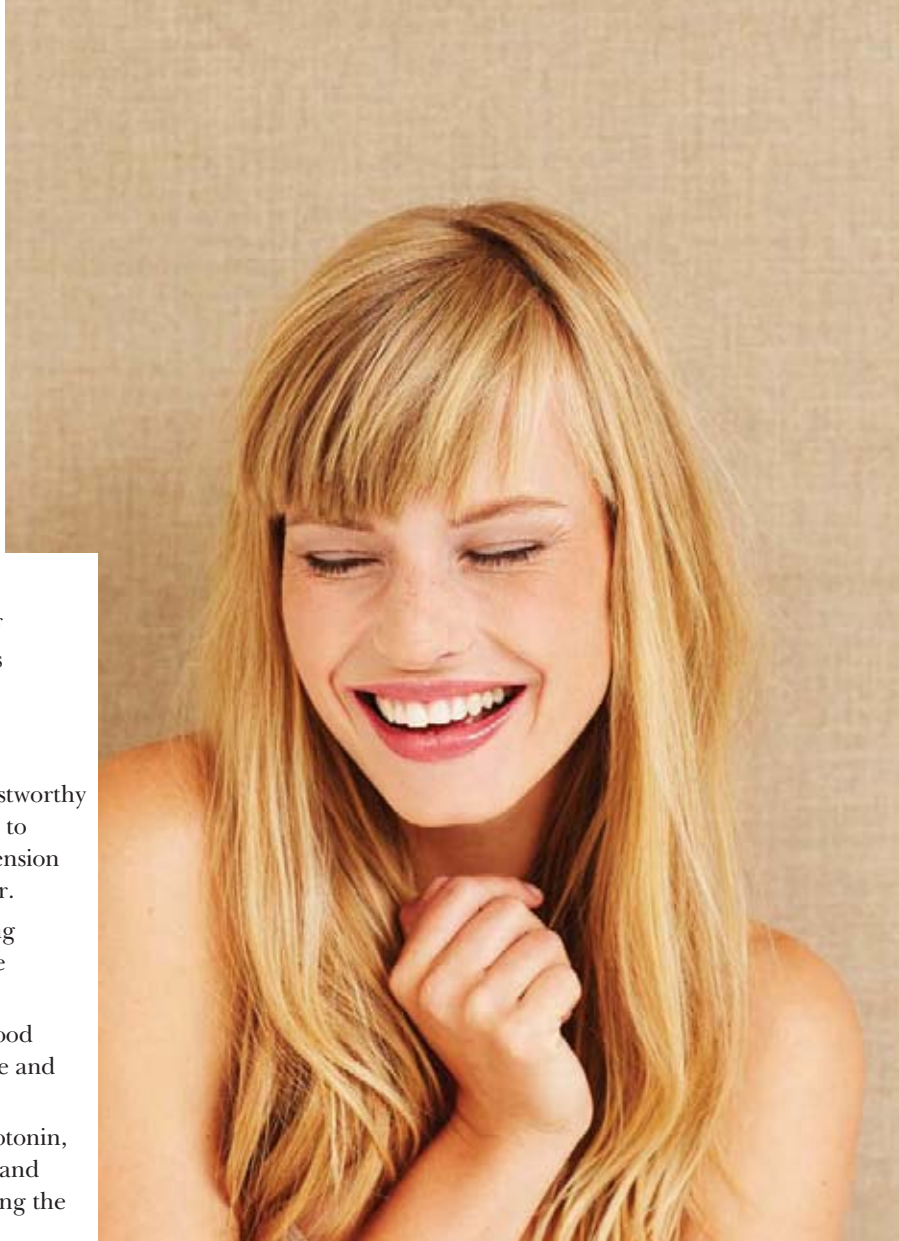


The latest in **PHYSICAL HEALTH**

REASONS TO SMILE

Say *cheese!* While smiling is a well-known indicator of positivity and happiness, it turns out that it also offers a number of health benefits. Here are four of its credentials courtesy of children's charity Smile Train (smiletrain.org.uk).

- A smile suggests that you are approachable and trustworthy and has been shown to make us seem more attractive to others. It's an inviting facial expression which eases tension and makes people feel comfortable around each other.
- The movement of muscles in your face when smiling releases endorphins – chemicals that trigger a positive feeling, lower stress levels and improve mood.
- Endorphins also increase circulation and reduce blood pressure which can decrease your risk of heart disease and other cardiovascular problems.
- Laughing and smiling encourage the release of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that contributes to our happiness and wellbeing and has many beneficial properties, including the ability to boost our immune system.



WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE? *SCARRING*

Scars are pretty unavoidable – it would be a challenge to find someone who doesn't bear an unwanted mark of some sort, whether it be as a result of an injury, a skin condition or physical changes, such as growing or pregnancy. Whatever the cause, most of us would rather be without them, so we've come up with some natural ways to reduce their appearance.

1 Aloe vera works wonders on damaged skin thanks to its anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. You can either purchase a pure aloe vera gel or remove the substance from a leaf yourself. Apply to scars two or three times a day.

2 Vitamin E is one of the best-known and most effective remedies for scarring, as it is an antioxidant that helps to repair damaged tissue and stimulates the production of collagen, which improves skin texture and strength. Vitamin E oil, lotions or the contents of capsules can be used directly on the skin. Massage onto the affected area, leave for around 15 minutes and then wash off with warm water, twice daily.

3 Teatree oil has long been used to treat scarring, particularly that caused by acne, due to its antiseptic, antiviral and antifungal qualities. For the best results, add a few drops of it to a good oil base, such as coconut or olive oil, and rub on several times a day.

FAIR PHARMING

The National Health Federation (NHF) has launched a campaign to make the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency, which the NHF argues is currently controlled by the pharmaceutical industry, independent. The NHF wants to end the industry's influence over the MHRA, which has pharma directors on its board, and give all patients freedom of choice regarding the medical treatments available to them. A petition asking the Minister of Health, Jeremy Hunt, to give the British public an impartial regulatory body has been set up by the campaign group to trigger a parliamentary debate on the matter. Model and singer Leah Wood, whose whole family are advocates of healthy and holistic living, is supporting the NHF's campaign. "Many cheap but effective treatments, such as homeopathy and complementary medicines, are overlooked or banned in favour of expensive, often ineffective drugs with dangerous side effects that are highly profitable for big corporations," she says. To find out more visit mhramend.uk



"Slathering yourself in moisturisers without consuming a nutrient-rich diet is like doing exercise without the right training gear" - p86

(NOT) FOREVER YOUNG

New research from Bupa has found that an increasing number of young people are suffering from health problems usually associated with the elderly. According to the private healthcare provider's analysis, sedentary lifestyles have led to an increase in adults in their 20s and 30s experiencing ailments such as haemorrhoids and varicose veins. Arthroscopic knee operations and epidural injections at the base of the spine, used to treat back pain, were among the five most common procedures for 36 to 45-year-olds in 2015. Bupa believes that the rise in these conditions and treatments in younger generations has been caused by time spent sitting at desks, watching box sets and using smartphones and tablets, leading to bad posture, inactivity and back ache, amongst other things. The saying 'get up and go' has never been more apt!



Vitamin D

Recent analysis shows that vitamin D supplements could spare more than three million people from colds or flu in the UK.

Anti-ageing

Eating less and restricting calories can combat the effects of ageing and protect against grey hair and stiff bones, new research has suggested.

Just keep moving

Scientists have discovered that fidgeting may help to prevent blood clots, as constant motion significantly increases circulation.

The BAROMETER



Fatty foods

A recent study has found that eating processed foods high in fat has a more detrimental effect on men's blood sugar levels than women's.

Painful sex

It has been revealed that one in 10 women in Britain suffer from dyspareunia, the medical term for sexual intercourse that causes pain and discomfort.

Plastic surgery

According to a new report, selfies are now the biggest incentive for plastic surgery. Around half of the patients that clinics see today are reportedly seeking a 'natural filter' to make themselves look better on social media.

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Yoga

FOR

POSITIVITY

These poses will clear your mind and
open your heart, says expert teacher
Elena Benedi



ONE LEG KING PIGEON II

Eka pada raja kapotasana II

This pose is a deep heart and hip opener. It is a yang active pose, which you must practice with ahimsa (meaning no self harm). Hip and heart openers can liberate not only physical sensations but strong emotions, so allow for fluidity of sensations and emotions in the pose. Use the breath to move you into it.

Getting into the pose: from a downward dog, swing your left leg forward and land the foot between your palms into a low lunge. Check that the knee stacks directly above the ankle. Bring each palm on top of each hip and square the hips, move the left one back and right one forward. Begin to bend the right knee, moving your right heel towards your glute. Roll your shoulders back and bring shoulder blades together, lift the heart and lower your tailbone towards the earth. Use your right hand to grab the right foot, point your right elbow towards the sky as the heart lifts, and rest your left arm on the earth behind you.



DOWNWARD DOG

Adho mukha svanasana

This is an asana with forward fold and inversion qualities to energise the body and calm the mind. Holding the pose builds strength in the spine, hips, legs, arms and shoulders.

To get into the pose, come to hands and knees, with hands directly under the shoulders and knees under the hips. Move your hands slightly forward, press the palms into the earth and spread the fingers wide. As you exhale, move the sit bones up towards the sky, keep the back of the neck long and the crown of the head pointing towards the earth. If your hamstrings are tight, keep the knees bent. As you get more length into the back of the legs you can straighten them. Have the shoulder blades support the back of the heart, and press the index and thumb fingers into the earth.

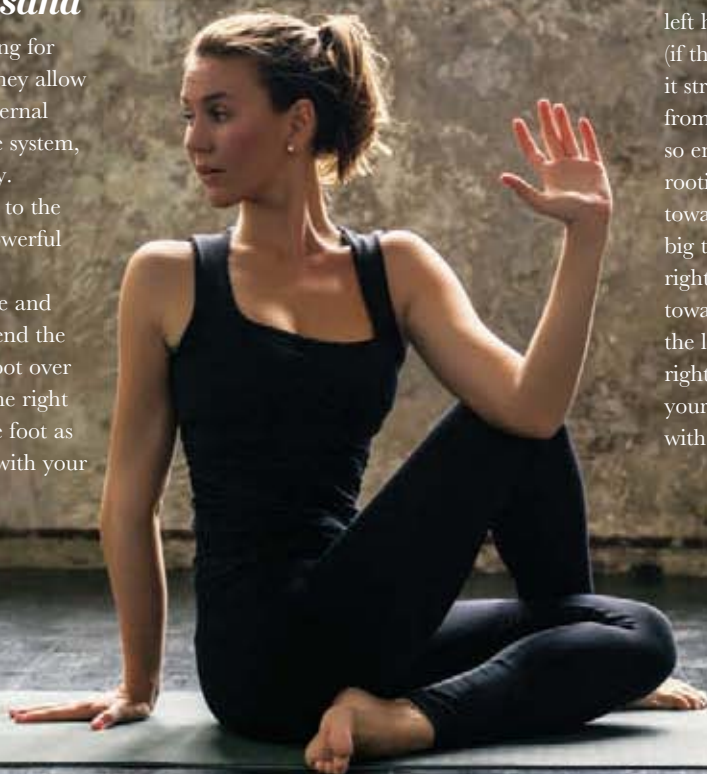
HALF LORD OF THE FISHES POSES

Ardha matsyendrasana

Twists are cleansing and purifying for the body as well as the mind. They allow for a physical massage of the internal organs, particularly the digestive system, eliminating toxins from the body. This allows for a sense of clarity to the mind and the body due to its powerful detoxification quality.

Begin seated with a tall spine and legs extended in front of you. Bend the right knee and move the right foot over the left thigh. Press the sole of the right foot into the earth and bring the foot as close to the left hip as you can, with your

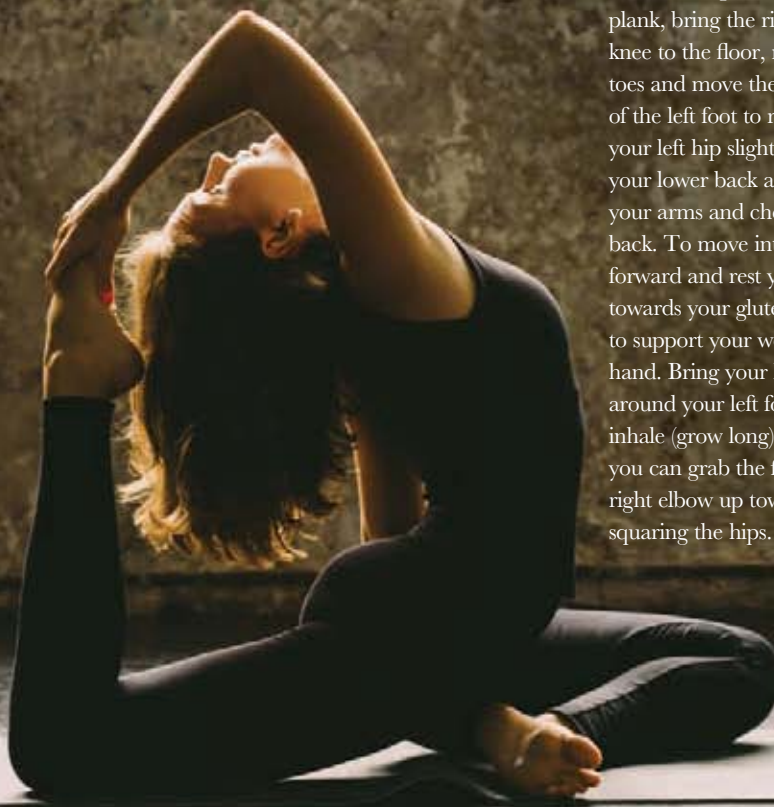
right knee still pointing towards the sky. Now bend the bottom knee and bring the left heel towards your right sitting bone (if the left/bottom knee bothers you keep it straight). This is a twist originating from the belly button towards the heart so ensure your hips remain square by rooting your right hip/sitting bone towards the earth and pressing your right big toe towards the earth. Bring your right palm behind by your right hip, look towards your right shoulder. Either hook the left elbow towards the outside of your right thigh or wrap your left arm around your right leg. Keep twisting in alignment with your breath.





ONE LEG KING PIGEON *Eka pada raja kapotasana*

From downward dog, inhale and lift the right leg up. As you exhale, bring the knee to the chest and shift forward into a plank, bring the right knee behind the right wrist, and lower the knee to the floor, right foot behind the left wrist. Curl the back toes and move the left leg back into pigeon pose. Bring the top of the left foot to rest on the earth. Square your hips by bringing your left hip slightly forward and down. Bring awareness to your lower back and make sure there is space, otherwise move your arms and chest forward to allow more space in the lower back. To move into the full expression, move your torso slightly forward and rest your palms on the earth. Bend the left heel towards your glute, keep the right palm pressed into the earth to support your weight and grab your left foot with your left hand. Bring your left arm behind, bend the elbow and wrap it around your left foot, bring the right arm towards the sky as you inhale (grow long), as you exhale bend the right arm and see if you can grab the fingertips from each palm. Keep pointing the right elbow up towards the sky opening the heart, and keep squaring the hips.





Elena Benedi is one of Azulfit's yoga teachers, with experience teaching and studying across the globe. Azulfit run retreats all over the world. Visit azulfit.com

SPHINX *Salamba bhujangasana*

This is a mild back bend and heart opener. The pose strengthens the back muscles and tones abdominal organs. It can bring a positive outlook and a sense of connection through the heart center.

Lie on your belly, with your palms underneath the shoulders. Press the pubic bone into the earth, with the tops of your feet resting on the earth, and roll your shoulders back and down. As you inhale, lengthen the crown of the head forward and move the heart up and forward. Bring your forearms flat to the earth, elbows directly underneath the shoulders, palms resting flat on the earth. Keep pressing the forearms into the earth as you feel the heart shoot forward, and your shoulder blades come together to support the back of the heart. Your head remains an extension of the spine, and the back of your neck is long.

MY FERTILITY RULES

Our women's health expert **Emma Cannon** explains why she takes the relaxed approach

I wrote my new book *Fertile* to support the heart (emotions) as much as the body.

It is a book about passion; passion for life and passion for food. My aim is to show the reader how to live a more fertile and abundant life and increase their body/mind awareness. If you want to nourish another, first you must learn to nourish yourself.

My approach is to make delicious food and still leave time for baby making. After all you can have the best diet in the world but if you don't make time for making love, babies tend to take a lot longer to come alone.

My aim in everything I do is to help people understand their body, what to eat to make the body function better, how to improve digestion and microbes, how to use food to manage minor (and not so minor) period problems, how to live to be more fertile, have balanced hormones, manage mood swings or improve libido.

I believe in cultivating health and fertility, without becoming rigid or controlling. In many ways baby making is a lot like cooking; first we must have all the right ingredients and a vision of what we are trying to create. Once we have put the ingredients together we need good timing and then we wait for the transformation to occur. When we bake a cake, at some point we must leave it alone and not keep looking and poking and prodding. So we can prepare and do our very best, and then at some point we must have faith in the process, sit back and let the magic happen.

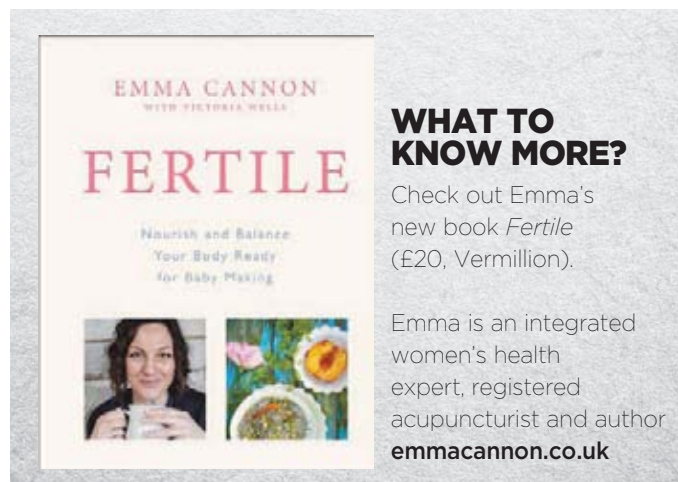


A FERTILE LIFE

Throughout our day, however busy we are, there are tiny adjustments that can be made to live a more fertile life. Like getting up 20 minutes earlier to stretch or meditate or spend the time on a heartfelt project that always gets put to the bottom of the 'to do' list. Feeling grounded and strong. Deciding to engage fully in making a delicious breakfast to start the day, instead of reaching for empty calories. Walking to work and taking in our surroundings.

The human body is challenged like never before, yet we are living longer and have higher expectations of our bodies. I have discovered over 21 years plus in practice that it doesn't matter what reason a new patient or couple comes to see me, my role is to help them be more balanced, whether it is in the body, the mind or in their lives (usually a little of all three). It is encouraging to see so many people now actively involved in their own health and fertility. The conversation is really beginning to grow around this topic. People appear to be more able to talk openly about fertility, concerns about not leaving it too late and also how their diet or lifestyle might have an impact on things are all current topics of discussion. There is a real sea change in people's awareness and an acceptance that how we live our lives does impact on our health and fertility.

When you are trying for a baby it is important to take the correct advice and not be tempted to cut too many things out of your diet. And always try to keep a calm attitude towards food. After all a controlling and rigid relationship with the very thing that nourishes us is more damaging than occasionally just eating what your heart desires and feeling good about it.





EMMA'S FEEL-GOOD FERTILITY RECIPES

THREE-BEAN TAGINE WITH ALMOND & LEMON COUSCOUS

SERVES 2

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely sliced
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 x 400g can mixed beans, drained
- 400ml passata

For the almond & lemon couscous

- 150g couscous
- ½ tbsp olive oil
- 30g flaked almonds, lightly toasted
- ½ preserved lemon, flesh removed and rind finely diced
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

To garnish

- 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
- 2 tbsp natural yoghurt

This is also really tasty with a fried egg on top.

1 Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based pan. Add the onion and celery and cook over low heat for 15 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the spices and garlic and cook for 2 minutes, then stir in the beans and passata. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and cook over low heat for 45 minutes to an hour until the sauce has thickened.

2 Meanwhile, make the couscous about 15 minutes before the tagine is ready to serve. Put the couscous into a pan with 150ml (¼ pint) boiling water and the oil and stir well. Cover with a lid and let stand for 10 minutes. Stir the couscous with a fork to fluff up the grains, then stir in the almonds and preserved lemon. Season with salt and pepper.

3 Divide the tagine between serving plates, garnish with the coriander and a dollop of yoghurt and serve with the couscous.



DAHL WITH ROASTED TOMATOES

SERVES 4-6

- 375g red lentils
- 1½ tbsp olive oil or ghee, plus extra for oiling the tomatoes
- 300g cherry tomatoes
- 2 brown onions, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 2cm piece fresh ginger root, peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- ½ tsp chopped dried chilli (optional)
- 1 litres homemade chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 200ml passata
- 1 sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

To garnish

- Natural yoghurt
- 1 handful fresh coriander leaves, chopped
- 6 mint leaves, shredded

1 Rinse the lentils under cold running water, then put them

into a bowl, cover with cold water and let soak overnight. The next day, preheat the oven to 150°C.

2 Rinse the lentils under cold running water and drain well. Rub a little oil over the cherry tomatoes, then place them a roasting tin and season with salt and pepper. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, cover with foil and set them aside.

3 Meanwhile, heat the olive oil or ghee in a large, heavy-based pan. Add the onion and garlic and cook over low heat for 15 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the ginger and spices and cook for a couple of minutes, stirring continuously.

4 Add the lentils and stir well to coat in the spiced oil and onions. Add the broth and passata and bring to the boil, then cover with a lid and cook over low heat for 1 hour, checking from time to time to make sure the dahl isn't drying out and adding a little more stock or water if necessary.

5 Ladle the dahl into bowls, place some roasted tomatoes on top, then add a dollop of yoghurt or kefir and sprinkle with the coriander and mint.

Beat the bloat

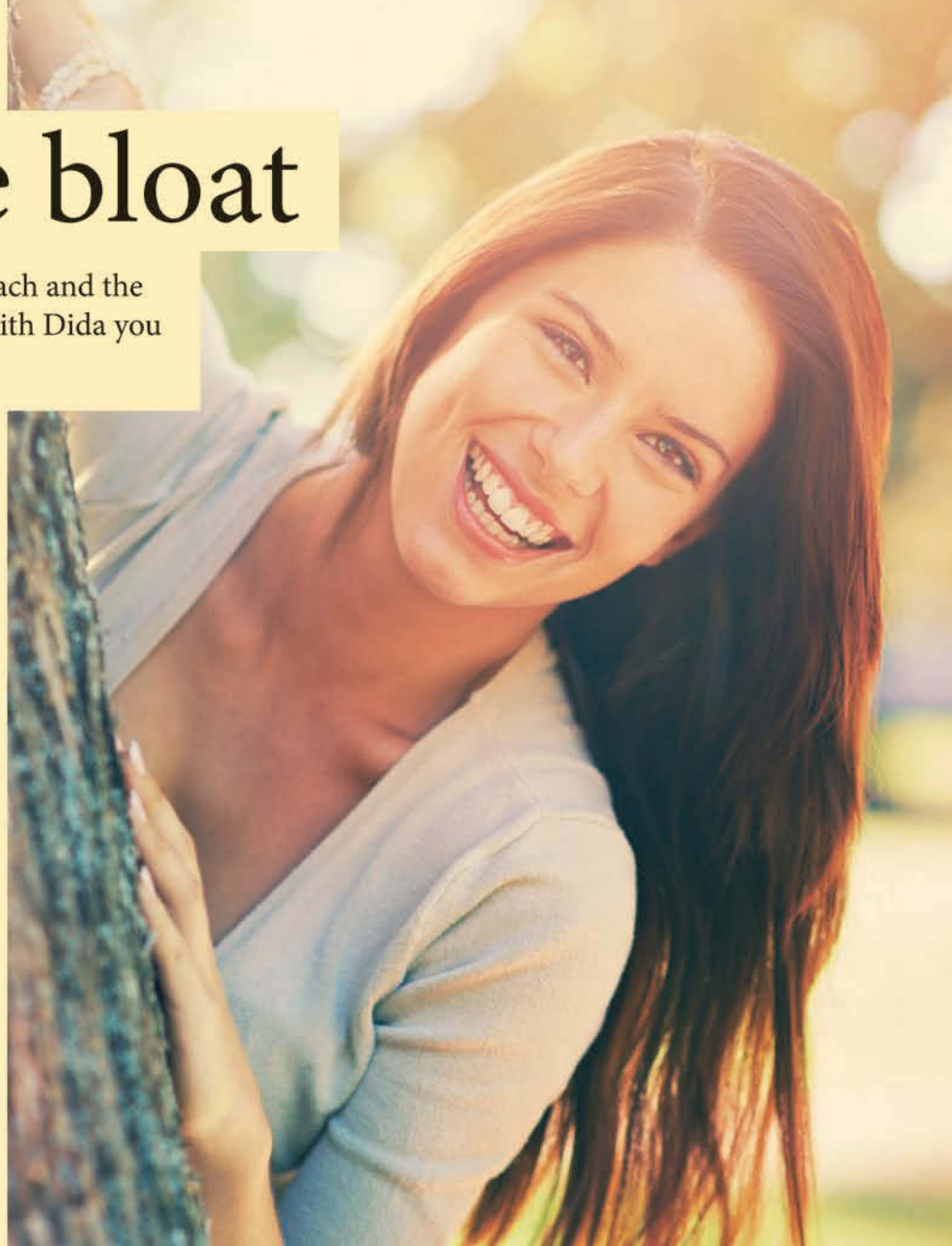
Fed up of having an upset stomach and the symptoms that come with it? With Dida you can start feeling better, today.

Did you know that bloating, digestive pains, irritability and flatulence can be caused by an overgrowth of yeast in your digestive system? All of us have yeast in our bodies, but too much can lead to unwanted symptoms and yeast infections – more than 90 per cent of which are caused by a type of fungus called candida. However, research has shown that high concentrations of certain plant extracts can have a positive effect on lowering levels of candida in the body.

Natural warriors

Now you can say goodbye to these unwelcome symptoms with Dida. A supplement from New Nordic, it contains a unique range of natural extracts to create an environment in the intestines where candida fungus cannot thrive. Ingredients including anti-microbial cinnamon, thyme and garlic, plus extracts from fennel, mint and cardamom, contribute to the maintenance of healthy, balanced bacteria and candida levels. In each tablet there's also the B-vitamin niacin, which helps maintain healthy mucous membranes. Add it into your healthy diet and lifestyle, and Dida could be the solution you're looking for to feel great, for good!

You can find Dida in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call **0800 389 1255** or Purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk



KEEPING YOUR TUMMY HAPPY

Dida works hard to reduce yeast levels, but there's a lot you can do to give it a helping hand and restore balance in your gut.

REDUCE: your intake of alcohol, sugar and refined carbohydrates (such as white bread).

INCREASE: start eating more proteins such as chicken, fish, eggs, beans, along with lots of fresh vegetables.

OIL UP: having more essential fatty acids, including olive oil and linseed oil, can help fight candida fungus.



HOLLAND & BARRETT
the good life

~ INDEPENDENT ~
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www.newnordic.co.uk

Look for New Nordic's "Silvertree" mark, It's your guarantee for a high quality health supplement you can trust.

Jo Wood

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Our green goddess reveals her top tips for tackling hay fever



For many of us the advent of spring is coupled with pesky allergies – wheezing, sniffing runny noses and itching are just a few of the symptoms that can be triggered by high pollen counts, new plant growth and many other seasonal factors. Such allergies are caused when the immune system over-reacts to these typically harmless triggers.

As an organic lifestyle advocate, I always favour using natural remedies to treat hay fever. One should be mindful, however, that serious allergic reactions, like asthma, may require medical intervention.

That being said, I have used the following natural remedies with great success, for many years...

FEED YOUR BODY WITH LOVELY ORGANIC FOOD

Although there is growing evidence that an organic, balanced diet can cure maladies, the primary benefit of this way of eating is that it helps to keep the immune system in top shape. And the stronger your immune system, the less likely you are to be affected by seasonal allergic reactions. If you're expecting the sniffles to start in April and May when the first spring blossoms appear, start eating wisely and organically right now so that your immunity is gradually boosted in time for the pollen onslaught!

The term 'organic food' is now widely used, however, so it is good to remember what you're actually looking for. Make sure everything you buy is free from antibiotics, artificial growth hormones and bio-engineered ingredients, and cultivated without pesticides and synthetic fertilisers. You also want to avoid products that have been irradiated.

MAKE QUERCETIN YOUR FRIEND

This natural bioflavonoid and potent antioxidant acts almost like an antihistamine, so you'll want to stock up! You should start increasing

quercetin in your diet around four to six weeks before allergy season. Do this by amping up your intake of organically-grown onions, garlic, apples, red grapes and tomatoes. For maximum results, you can also add berries, which like the skin of red grapes, contain resveratrol which will offer an additional immune boost. If you would prefer to take a supplement, check with your health practitioner first, as you should with all herbal and natural supplements.



STEAM WITH EUCALYPTUS

I remember my father using steam to ease his hay fever. The pine-like aroma of eucalyptus oil can enhance a steam inhalation session by some measure. The rising eucalyptus vapour provides a soothing, menthol-like sensation that makes breathing feel a little easier for wheezing allergy sufferers. I like to put a few drops in a bowl of hot water and drape a towel over my head while inhaling deeply for five to eight minutes. Alternatively, I'll put a few drops of eucalyptus oil on the shower floor and enjoy breathing in the warm, steamy vapours. Just remember this oil should never be taken orally and that pregnant women should always check with a doctor before using oils and herbs.

THE NETI POT IS BACK

This is an age-old way of flushing a saline solution through the nasal cavity to rinse away allergens and clear sinuses, giving sufferers great symptomatic relief. It may not be very elegant, but it really works! Fill your neti pot with a sterile saline solution by dissolving one teaspoon of Himalayan or sea salt in a quart of warm water that has been previously boiled or is distilled. Tilt your head so that you can pour the mixture through one nostril and let it drain out of the other. Easy and inexpensive!

Above all, remember to eat well, manage your stress levels, exercise and live positively!

10 ways to LOVE YOUR LIVER

Increase your energy, vitality and longevity
with these simple rules says Kristin Kirkpatrick

1 *Eliminate most white foods.* Tofu, cauliflower, onions, white beans, and hearts of palm can stay. But white bread, pasta, rice and crackers, as well as white potatoes and other starchy or sugary foods, need to go because they cause your insulin and blood sugar to embark on a major roller-coaster ride, which over time increases your chances of developing insulin resistance and suffering liver damage. Note: Bean-based pastas, such as those made from black beans, red lentils and edamame are trendy because they're loaded with protein and fibre and have less carbs than traditional pasta, so they won't take your insulin or blood sugar levels on a wild ride.

2 *Get breakfast right.* I recommend starting the day with a protein source, such as eggs, and a vegetable several days a week, because the protein helps prevent cravings later and having a veggie helps set the tone of healthy eating for the day (plus, it gives you a leg up on your daily produce intake). On other days, start with a healthy source of whole grains or probiotics to fuel your body. Add coffee or green tea, and you've got an energising morning meal!

3 *View trans fats as poisons.* Found in many packaged baked foods and fried foods, they are essentially toxins because they're harmful to your blood vessels and damaging to your liver. Get in the habit of reading labels on packaged foods and avoid anything that has the words 'partially hydrogenated oils' on it. Also, steer clear of fried foods, which often rely on hydrogenated oils to make French fries, onion rings, mozzarella sticks, and other fried fare.

4 *Upgrade your macronutrients.* Any grain that has had its fibre removed is essentially devoid of nutrients and will elicit dramatic spikes in blood sugar. Trade in simple carbs for complex ones (such as whole grains and veggies), high-fat sources of protein for lean ones (fish, tofu, eggs, legumes and skinless poultry), and unhealthy fats for healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated ones (such as organic, cold-pressed olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds). While healthy carbs, protein and fats will make your liver happy, starchy carbs, fat-filled protein, trans fats and saturated fats will make it downright angry (and perhaps inflamed too!).

5 *Include five different coloured foods in your daily diet.* Brightly coloured fruits and vegetables are loaded with antioxidants and health-promoting plant compounds called phytochemicals. Foods with different hues (blueberries, oranges, red tomatoes, yellow bell peppers, spinach, aubergines and so on) typically contain different types of phytochemicals. The more colours of produce there are in your diet, the merrier your health will be. So, choose a sweet potato instead of a white potato, and kale or even Romaine over iceberg lettuce.

6 *Eat till you're no longer hungry.* Contrary to what many people believe, the goal really isn't to become full (that's a sign that you've eaten too much). The goal is to be satisfied, as in pleasantly sated. A concept in the Okinawan culture, where people often live to be one hundred, is known as *hara hachi* but it instructs people to eat until they're 80 percent full. If you haven't done so already, I suggest you try this approach by eating slowly and mindfully, chewing your food well, and paying attention to your body's signals.

7 *Choose foods with fewer than six ingredients.* This strategy will help you curb your intake of highly processed foods that have additives, preservatives, fillers and other artificial ingredients. If an ingredients list contains items you can't pronounce or can't identify, think twice about putting it in your body. As a general rule, foods that have relatively short ingredients lists tend to be more wholesome and nutritious.

8 *Opt for organic foods whenever possible.* Yes, they're often more expensive but not always by much, and often they're worth the added cost. After all, you'll be doing your body, especially your liver, a favour if you minimise your intake of pesticides. One of the best ways to do this is to rely on the

“
The more *colours*
of produce there
are in your *diet*,
the merrier your
health will be
”



Environmental Working Group's testing data for pesticide residue. The 10 worst offenders are: apples, peaches, nectarines, strawberries, grapes, celery, spinach, sweet bell peppers, cucumbers and cherry tomatoes; these items are worth splurging on with the organic variety. The cleanest forms of produce are: avocados, sweetcorn, pineapple, cabbage, frozen sweet peas, onions, asparagus, mangoes, papayas and kiwis – so, if you're looking to save a bit, these conventionally grown items are okay to buy. (Check out ewg.org for more information.)

9 *Get busy in the kitchen.* When you eat out, it's easy to consume massive amounts of calories, carbs and fats – an overload that's hard on your liver, your weight, and the rest of your body. Plan to eat at home at least six nights a week. Besides allowing you to prepare healthy meals, cooking allows you to add liver-friendly herbs and spices, such as turmeric (found in curry powder), cinnamon and ginger, ingredients often included in the recipes that follow. In working with patients and clients, I have found that people are more likely to stick to a healthy eating regimen if they use herbs, spices, and roots that they love.

10 *Embrace water as your new best friend.* Consuming more water means you'll consume less soda, juice or specialty drinks – a welcome improvement for your wallet and your calorie budget. My personal policy is to avoid drinking calories as much as possible because your body won't compensate for liquid calories by consuming fewer calories from food. Fluid calories can quickly add up to excess amounts, contributing to weight gain. Plus, water helps keep the entire body functioning optimally, helping to regulate fluid and electrolyte balances, promoting good digestion, and more.

Extracted from *Skinny Liver* by Kristin Kirkpatrick and Dr Ibrahim Hanounah (£14.99, Vermilion).

Be your own NATUROPATH

Heal your mind, body and soul with these simple holistic techniques to try at home!

Wouldn't it be great if you could step into Gwyneth Paltrow's shoes and have a VIP hotline to your own personal healer? If you could try loads of fabulous complementary therapies, healthy treatments and uplifting remedies on a daily basis? Well with a little bit of insider know-how, you can do exactly that. Incorporate some of our simple therapy-based techniques into your daily routine and check yourself in for a complete body and soul makeover every day!

WHEN YOU WAKE UP

Yoga and stretching

First thing in the morning, channel your inner yoga guru with a rejuvenating pose to get you firing on all cylinders. The mountain pose or *tadasana* is a brilliant energising technique and, what's more, you don't need to be a snake-hipped yogi to do it: Stand tall with your feet together, shoulders relaxed, weight evenly distributed through your soles and your arms at your sides. Take a deep breath and raise your hands overhead, palms facing each other with arms straight. Reach up toward the sky with your fingertips. Remember to focus on your breathing at all times. When you're done, give yourself a pat on the back for your excellent yogic skills! If you've got a bit more time on your hands, try the yoga sequence in the panel far right.

IN THE SHOWER

Hydrotherapy and aromatherapy

Next, book yourself in for some invigorating hydrotherapy. It's incredibly simple and super effective. Start with your usual hot shower then (brace yourself!) turn the tap to icy cold for a couple of minutes before going back to hot then back to cold again. You

can't beat this short, sharp shock therapy to boost circulation and stimulate lymphatic drainage, helping your body to rid itself of toxins. To turbo charge your DIY therapy, scatter a few drops of peppermint essential oil into the shower then follow up with an aromatherapy massage by rubbing your body all over with an organic carrier oil such as sweet almond or grapeseed oil laced with essential oils of grapefruit, lemon, neroli and bergamot. Aromatherapy oils trigger certain neural pathways in the brain, which can, in turn, have an effect on your hormone levels, boosting energy levels for the rest of the day.

AT BREAKFAST TIME

Nutritional therapy

For breakfast, don your nutritionist hat and whizz up a delicious superfood smoothie to fuel your body with high-grade nutrients. The following ingredients are loaded with powerful plant medicines, vitality-boosting greens and healthy natural fats and make a delicious morning treat. Simply combine in a blender and enjoy!

- Half pint of coconut water
- Two handfuls of spinach
- One handful of kale
- One pitted avocado
- Two frozen bananas
- 1 tsp of chlorella
- 1 tsp of spirulina
- ½ tsp of maca
- ½ tsp of cinnamon
- ½ tsp of turmeric

IN THE MORNING

Ayurveda and breathwork

This is a great time to soak up some of nature's healing vibes so instead of taking the bus, grab your trainers and walk to work





STRIKE A POSE

Channel your inner yoga guru with this energising warrior sequence

● Start with your feet together and sit back into the awkward chair pose, as if you're lowering yourself into a chair. Lift your arms alongside your ears and hold for the post for five deep breaths. Keep your core stomach muscles engaged and legs working hard to hold your squat.

● On an exhalation, step your left foot back into a long lunge and press your heel down for warrior 1 pose. Remember to keep your hips facing forward and angle your back foot 75 degrees forward. Press your palms together firmly above your head and look up toward your thumbs.

● Again as you exhale, stretch your arms out to warrior 2 pose. Your right knee should roll open toward the outer side right foot. Anchor your outer left foot and let it turn out a bit more toward 45 degrees.

● On an inhalation, lift onto the ball of your left foot coming into a high lunge. Make sure your legs are far enough apart that your knee stays directly above your front ankle (not moving forward past it) and press firmly through your back heel.

● On an exhalation, step back into the awkward chair pose, staying low in your squat. Repeat the entire sequence on your left side. Do this three times.

instead. Not only is it much cheaper but it's instant fresh air therapy too! Ayurveda considers walking a tridoshic exercise as it balances all three doshas without putting excessive strain on your body. It calms your mind, nourishes your soul and has heaps of physical benefits too such as boosting circulation, strengthening muscles and improving lung health.

If you're working in an office make sure you take a quick 60-second break every hour. Stand up, stretch and breathe deeply. Diaphragmatic breathing, where you inhale deep into your belly, has loads of health benefits including lowering stress and improving cognitive function. Try breathing in deeply for four seconds (or as long as you can) then breathe out the same amount of time. Make sure you breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, in order to maximise your oxygen intake.

AT LUNCHTIME

Raw food therapy

Salads are a brilliant healthy lunch option and by choosing raw foods you are turbo-charging your body with living plant nutrients and natural enzymes. Tune into your inner dietician and create a nutritious mix of green leaves such as spinach, kale or rocket, then throw in a colourful array of antioxidant-rich veggies such as bell peppers, radishes, carrots, peas, broccoli, tomatoes and cucumber. Add some healthy fats from avocados, nuts and seeds and you're well on your way to being a real raw food guru!

IN THE AFTERNOON

Reflexology and colour therapy

Beat that boring afternoon slump by taking a tip from colour therapists and surrounding yourself with uplifting hues. The colour red carries the energy of fire element in feng



shui and is a great way to restore flagging spirits, so try wearing a fire engine red scarf or decorating your desk with a vase of crimson-hued roses.

If you're feeling stressed at work, treat yourself to some soothing acupressure by pressing the middle of the palm of your hand. This point is located on one of the most important meridians (or energy channels), which affects the heart, liver, and pancreas, where stress is often stored.

Throughout the day harness your herbalist skills by sipping on a revitalising herbal infusion of cinnamon and ginger to boost your energy levels.

“If you're working in an office make sure you take a quick 60-second break every hour”

AT DINNERTIME

Traditional Chinese medicine

For your evening meal, take a tip from Chinese medicine experts who believe you should 'breakfast like a king, lunch like a merchant and supper like a pauper', as your digestive system works more efficiently morning. Research backs this up and many studies have shown it is better to opt for foods that are rich in 'qi' energy such as raw fruits, vegetables and whole grains during the day and choose warming and more easily digestible 'wei' foods such as a vegetable soup or rice dishes in the evening.

IN THE EVENING

Massage and visualisation

When it comes to winding down, nothing beats hands-on healing, so tap into your inner masseuse and treat your feet to some TLC. A gentle foot rub triggers reflexology points that are connected energetically to other parts of your body. By massaging these points, you encourage the energy to flow more smoothly and boost your wellbeing. While you're doing this, practise a calming visualisation technique by imagining yourself as a rag doll and feeling all the tension melt away from your limbs, leaving your body supremely relaxed.

AT BEDTIME

Flower remedies and crystal healing

Both crystals and flower remedies work on an energetic level to bring about healing deep within our cells. Be your own crystal healer by placing calming crystals around your bedroom. Try amethyst to help you relax, lapis lazuli for peaceful thoughts and hematite, moonstone or celestite for a deep and restful sleep.

Finally, before you go to bed, add flower therapist to your list of many talents by taking a few sleep-enhancing Bach remedies such as white chestnut, vervain and mimulus. With all these amazing therapies you've treated yourself to, you'll be floating on air and asleep in no time. Sweet dreams!



Glynis Barber *Eating* **ORGANIC**

Our columnist on why we should go green

Once upon a time, circa 1985, there was a furtive group of people who had a common purpose. Their numbers were small, they didn't know each other for the most part, and people scratched their heads when they heard about their 'peculiarity'. This group consisted of me, some leftover hippie types and Prince Charles. Our 'peculiarity' was that we wanted to eat organic food. And let me tell you, other than growing it yourself, it wasn't easy. There was only the odd health food store with a few carrots, a limp lettuce or two and, if you were really lucky, an apple.

Oh how things have changed. To this day I eat as organically as possible. So, has it been worth it? Well, I like to think so. I enjoy good health and was inspired to start a website on how to become ageless as opposed to old.

The naysayers in the 1980s sounded very much like the naysayers today – the main argument being that organic food has the same nutritional content as conventionally-grown food. In fact, research at Stanford University in 2012 famously showed this to be true. However, I've

always been taken aback by this argument. I don't eat organic food because of what it *does* contain, but rather because of what it *doesn't* contain. It seems blindingly obvious to me that consuming chemicals on a daily basis is going to have an impact on your health. And if by any chance organic foods do contain more nutrients, that's a bonus. And low and behold, the newest research is showing that this is indeed the case.

According to Michael Greger, it's now been found that organic fruit and veg contain higher levels of beneficial phenolic phytonutrients. They also contain more antioxidants which play a critical role in the prevention of diseases. Organic berries, for example, appear to suppress the growth of cancer. Organic foods also have much lower levels of cadmium, a known carcinogen that has a number of negative effects on human health. Eating organically-raised meat also reduce your exposure to antibiotic resistant bacteria which in turn may minimise your risk of illness.

Pesticides, on the other hand, are associated with a whole host of medical problems. Research has shown an increase in allergic reactions and high sensitivity to foods and the carcinogenicity of pesticide-covered foods has led to concern and debate for many years.

There's also another big benefit to organic farming – it improves soil diversity and the communities of life that exist within the soil. These are vital to our health and to the nutritional value of the food grown in the soil. It seems like a no-brainer to me.

GLYNIS' TOP TIPS

1. Buy organic versions of the 'dirty dozen':

Apples, celery, bell peppers, peaches, strawberries, nectarines, grapes, spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, blueberries, and potatoes.

2. Eat organic eggs.

These have been found to be more nutritious than non-organic eggs which are also far more likely to be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria like salmonella.

3. Stick to organic meat and dairy.

It's been found that these contain markedly higher levels of omega 3 fatty acids. According to Professor Chris Seal from Newcastle University, diets high in this are linked to reductions in cardiovascular disease and improved neurological and immune function.

Glynis Barber is an actress, co-author of *The In-Sync Diet* and founder of agelessbyglynisbarber.com



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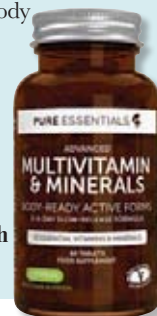
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The anti-ageing success secrets

Lengthening your telomeres is the key for youth-boosting your body. Sound too sciency? It's easy, say Elizabeth Blackburn and Elissa Epel

One current, predominant, scientific view of human ageing is that the DNA of our cells becomes progressively damaged, causing cells to become irreversibly aged and dysfunctional. But which DNA is damaged? Why did it become damaged? The full answers aren't known yet, but the clues are now pointing strongly toward telomeres as a major culprit.

Think of your shoelaces. Shoelace tips are a metaphor for telomeres. The longer the protective aglets at the ends of the laces, the less likely the shoelace will fray. In terms of chromosomes, the longer the telomeres, the less likely there will be any alarms going off in cells or fusions of chromosomes. Fusions trigger chromosome instability and DNA breakage, which are catastrophic events for the cell.

Telomeres throughout the body shorten as we age, and this underlying mechanism contributes to most diseases of ageing. Telomeres explain how we run out of the ability to replenish tissue.

We are interconnected in ways we cannot see, and telomeres reveal these relationships – by how we feel in our neighbourhood, by the abundance of green plants and trees nearby, and by the emotional and physiological states of those around us. When we know how we are affected by our surroundings, we can begin to create healthful, supportive environments in our homes and our neighbourhoods.

SMILES MATTER

Acknowledge people you pass on the street. As social animals, we are exquisitely sensitive to social cues, noticing signs of acceptance and especially rejection. Each day, we interact with strangers or acquaintances, and we can either feel separate from them – or we can connect with them in a small way that has a positive effect. Give people an air gaze (looking past the face, with no eye contact) and they will tend to feel more disconnected from others. Give them a smile and eye

contact, and they feel more connected. Plus, when people are given a smile, they are more likely to help someone else in their next moments.

STRENGTHEN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

There are the people we wake up to almost every day – our family, and the colleagues we work with. The quality of these relationships is important to our health. It is easy to be neutral, to take those we see all the time for granted. Investigate what it is like to really acknowledge your close ones in a significant way; show gratitude and appreciation. Do you have someone in your life who is close to you but also causes unease? About half of all relationships have positive qualities with less helpful interactions, what researcher Bert Uchino calls 'mixed relationships'. Unfortunately, having more of these mixed-quality relationships is related to shorter telomeres. Women with mixed friendships have telomeres that are shorter; both women and men have shorter telomeres when the mixed relationship is with a parent.

Marriages come in all flavours, and the better the quality of the marriage the better the health benefits. Put someone from a satisfying marriage into a difficult situation, and they'll likely have more resilient patterns of stress reactivity. Happily married people also have a lower risk of early mortality. Marriage quality has not been examined with telomere length yet, but we

“
The
lifetime
of an
emotion,
even a very
unpleasant
one, is *no
longer
than 90
seconds*
”

Extracted from *The Telomere Effect* by Elizabeth Blackburn and Elissa Epel (£14.99, Orion Books).

do know that married people, or people living with a partner, have longer telomeres. (This was a surprise finding from a genetic study of 20,000 people, and the relationship was stronger in the older couples.)

Couples in unhappy relationships, on the other hand, suffer from a high level of ‘permeability’ – they pick up on each other’s stress and negative moods. If one spouse’s cortisol rises during a fight, so does the cortisol of the other spouse. Both are operating at a high level of distress, leaving no one in the relationship who can put the brakes on the tension, no one who can say: “Whoa, wait. I see you’re upset. Let’s take a breath here and talk about it, before things get out of control.” It’s easy to imagine that these relationships are wearying and depleting. Our physiological responses moment to moment are more synced with our partner’s than we may realise.

TAKE A THREE-MINUTE BREATHING BREAK

The lifetime of an emotion, even a very unpleasant one, is no longer than 90 seconds, unless you try to chase it away or engage with it. Then it lasts longer. A breathing break is a way to keep negative emotions from living past their natural life spans. You can make it a habit, so it helps anchor you at any time, not just during hard moments. You can picture this exercise like an hourglass – invite whatever is present in your mind broadly, then focus narrowly on the breath, and then expand awareness out to your full surroundings. Here’s our modified version:

1. Becoming aware: Sit upright and close your eyes. Connect with your breathing for a long inhalation and exhalation. With this awareness, ask yourself, ‘What is my experience right now? What are my thoughts? Feelings? Bodily sensations?’ Wait for the responses. Acknowledge your experience and label your feelings, even if they are unwanted. Notice any pushing away of your experience, and soften around it, allowing space for all that comes up in your awareness.

2. Gathering your attention: Gently direct your full attention to your breathing. Notice each inhalation and each long exhalation. Follow each breath, one after another. Use your breathing as an anchor into this present moment. Tune in to a state of stillness that is always there right below the surface of your thoughts. This stillness allows you to come from a place of being (versus doing).

3. Expanding your awareness: Sense your field of awareness expanding around you, around your breathing, around your whole body. Notice your posture, your hands, your toes, your facial muscles. Soften any tension. Befriend all of your sensations, greet them with kindness. With this expanded awareness connect with your whole being, encompassing all that is you in the present moment.

This breathing break calms your body and offers you more control over your stress reactions. It shifts your thinking away from self-focus and the doing mode and moves it toward the peaceful being mode.

EXERCISE


Let’s pretend you’re at a drugstore of the future. You consult with the pharmacist, who gives you a choice between two pills. You point to the first one and ask what it does. The pharmacist ticks the benefits off on her fingers. “Lowers your blood pressure, stabilises your insulin levels, improves your mood, increases your calorie burn, fights osteoporosis, and cuts your risk of stroke and heart disease. Unfortunately, its side effects include insomnia, skin rash, heart problems, nausea, gas, diarrhea, weight gain, and lots of others.” “Hmmm,” you say. “How about the second pill? What does it do?” “Oh, it’s got the same benefits,” the pharmacist says brightly. “And the side effects?” you ask. She beams. “There aren’t any.” The first pill is imaginary, a fantasy synthesis of beta-blockers to control high blood pressure, statins to reduce cholesterol, diabetes drugs to regulate insulin, antidepressants, and osteoporosis medications. The second pill is real, sort of. It’s called exercise. People who exercise live longer and have a lowered risk of high blood pressure, stroke, cardiovascular disease, depression, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome. And they avoid dementia for longer.

TRADE PAIN FOR SELF-COMPASSION

Another technique for resilient thinking is self-compassion. This is nothing more than kindness toward yourself, the knowledge that you are not alone in your suffering, and the ability to turn toward and face difficult emotions without getting lost in them. Instead of beating yourself up, you treat yourself with the same warmth you’d extend to a friend.

To gauge your self-compassion, answer these questions, based on Kristin Neff’s self-compassion scale: Do you try to be patient and tolerant toward aspects of your personality you don’t like? When something painful happens, do you try to take a balanced view of the issue? Do you remind yourself that everybody has flaws and that you are not alone? Do you give yourself the care you need? Yes answers indicate that you’re high in self-compassion, and you probably recover quickly from most stresses. Now try these questions: When you fail at something important to you, do you berate yourself? Do you become consumed by feelings of inadequacy? Are you judgemental about your flaws? Do you feel isolated and alone, separate from other people? If you’ve answered yes to these, it’s a sign that you struggle to feel compassionate toward yourself.

Self-compassion is a skill you can develop. And it’s a skill that will help you develop a resilient response to your negative thoughts. When people



“
Self-compassion is self-improving because it cultivates the inner strength to cope with the troubles of life
”



who are high in self-compassion have a flood of negative thoughts and feelings, they do things differently from the rest of us. They don't criticise themselves for having faults. They can observe their negative thoughts without getting swept up in them. This means that they don't have to push away negative feelings; they just let those feelings happen and then fade. People high in self-compassion react to stress with lower levels of stress hormones, and they have less anxiety and depression. But you may be objecting to the idea. Some people think it is more honest and more honourable to be self-critical. But self-compassion is self-improving, because it cultivates the inner strength to cope with the troubles of life. By teaching us to rely on ourselves for encouragement and support, self-compassion makes us more resilient. Depending on other people to make us feel good about ourselves is fraught with peril. When we need other people to think well of us, the thought of their disapproval is so painful that we try to beat them to it – and that's when we jump to criticise ourselves. We cannot over-rely on others for comfort. Developing self-compassion is not weak or wimpy at all. It is self-reliance, and a part of stress resilience.

TAKE A SELF-COMPASSION BREAK

Kristin Neff, a psychologist at the University of Texas at Austin, has conducted extensive research on self-compassion. Her early trials suggest that practising self-compassion can reduce rumination and avoidance, and increase optimism and mindfulness. Here is a modified description of how to do it:

Recall a situation in your life that is bothering you, such as a health issue, a relationship conflict, or perhaps a work problem. 1. Say whatever word or expression that feels true to your situation: "This is painful." "This is stressful." "This is really hard right now." 2. Acknowledge the reality of suffering: "Suffering is a part of life." Say something that reminds you of our common humanity and that this pain is not unique to you: "I'm not alone." "Everyone feels this way sometimes." "We all struggle in our lives." "This is part of being human." 3. Put your hands over your heart, or any other place that feels soothing, perhaps your belly or gently over your eyes. Take a deep breath and say to yourself: "May I be kind to myself." You can use different statements depending on your needs, such as: "I accept myself as I am, a work in progress." "May I forgive myself." "I will be as kind to myself as possible."

TRY THIS!

TIME DISTANCING

Next time you are in the grip of a stressful event, ask yourself: 'In 10 years, will this event still have an impact on me?' Recognising the impermanence of an event helps you get over it faster.

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SUGAR
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Eat natural *Living healthily from the inside out*

*On-trend health foods
top our shopping lists nowadays,
but do they have to be so expensive?*

*Fortunately, we have some tricks to stay healthy
for less. “**Branded coconut oil costs around
£2.40 per 100ml, but in the world food
aisle, you’ll find it for just 45p per 100ml,**”
says expert Ellen Hoggard from Nutritionist Resource
(nutritionist-resource.org.uk). “Swap chia seeds (£3.95
per 150g) for sesame seeds; it’s thought they are
more nutritious and only 85p per 100g. Finally, the
expensive smoothie booster, spirulina (£15.99 per
100g), can be replaced with spinach. Support
local farmers and channel your inner
Popeye for as little as £1
per 200g.”*



The superfood HOTLIST

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Choose from mind, body, skin, hair, cleansing or sleep. Niche Wellness Teas, £10, notonthehighstreet.com



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TOTALLY TOFU

Tofu made with organic soybeans and certified by the Soil Association. The Tofoo Co. Naked Tofoo, £2, Tesco



THIRST QUENCHER

This water contains vital minerals and electrolytes and the can is 100 percent recyclable. CanO Water, 99p, Whole Foods



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This spread tastes just like nutella and is full of goodness! Wyldsson Hazelnut & Cocoa Spread, £5.99, wyldsson.com



BEST OF BRITISH

Quinoa sustainably farmed in Shropshire. Sussex Wholefoods British Organic Quinoa, £6.99, healthysupplies.co.uk



EDITOR'S PICK

Tea with a purpose - choose from energy, recover or sleep. Blendology Functional Teas, £3.99, blendologytea.com



COOKIE CRUMBLE

Gluten-free vegan cookies - go for hazelnut, fruity or cashew & cacao. Lucy Rocks Cookies, £2.49, lucyrocksaleo.com



GO GREEN

Organic, vegan and fairtrade powdered supplements. Organax Green Superfood range, £29.99, organax.co.uk



NICE AND CRISP

Air-dried crisps made from ugly apples and pears. Each bag is 100 percent fruit. Spare Fruit Crisps, £1.25, sparefruit.com



NH LOVES

Botanical soda made with carbonated Welsh spring water. Lurvill's Delight Botanical Blend, £1.79, drinksupermarket.com



IT'S A BUG'S LIFE

Natural energy bars made with protein-packed cricket flour. Give it a go! Yumpa Bars, £19 (box of 9), yumpabar.co.uk



DRINK UP

Breakfast in a bottle! Full of protein, fibre and calcium, these drinks come in three yummy flavours. Up & Go, £1.79, Tesco



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Pure, 100 percent natural oil made from cold-pressed hemp seeds. Great for cooking. Good Hemp Oil, £5.95, Sainsbury's

NUTRITIOUS INSPIRATION & IDEAS



ON TRIAL *Kenwood Persona Glass Toaster*

Editorial Assistant Emily McMullin toasts her bread to non-carcinogenic perfection

I know what you're thinking. A toaster is a toaster, right? They may differ in colour and size, but essentially they're all the same. Until recently I would have agreed, but a recent news story drew me to try out Kenwood's glass version.

Back in January, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) claimed that burnt toast and over-cooked potatoes might cause cancer. The government body issued a public warning over the risks of acrylamide, a chemical compound that forms in some foods when cooked at high temperatures and has been linked to cancer. At the same time, it launched its Go for Gold campaign to encourage people to aim for a golden yellow colour when frying, roasting, baking or toasting starchy foods.

Enter Kenwood's stylish device, which allows you to do just that. Thanks to the toaster's glass front, you can watch your bread browning to perfection, and to make things even easier there are five levels of heat to choose from, as well as bagel, reheat and defrost options. The two slice-long slot is extra wide to accommodate artisan breads and baguettes and there's a handy high lift feature for retrieving smaller items. What sealed the deal for me, however, was the easy-to-empty crumb tray and the fact that the glass panel can be lifted out for cleaning.

While there are cheaper options on the market, Kenwood's toaster really does look and play the part. And let's be honest, we could all do without charred bread and the wail of the fire alarm first thing in the morning.

Kenwood Persona Glass Toaster, £89.99, lakeland.co.uk



SMOOTH CRIMINAL

Protein Blast and Protein Smash have joined Savse's original Protein Punch. Savse Protein Smoothies, £2.99, Waitrose



PROTEIN PUNCH

The ultimate healthy snack! Primal Pantry Paleo Protein Cocoa Brownie Bar, £29.90 (box of 15), primalpantry.com



WAKY WAKY

A coffee alternative infused with coconut water and acai berries. Mahtay Sparkling Yerba Mate Tea, £2.50, mahtay.co.uk



TEA TIME

Peppermint pleasure, camomile calm and fennel fusion. Voya Organic Seaweed Teas, £10, voya.ie



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Ready-to-eat pots of porridge in three yummy flavours. Yorkshire Provender Porridge, £1.79, Ocado



SWEET TOOTH

A raw chocolate egg with no added sugar. The Raw Chocolate Pie Company Classic Easter Egg, £9.95, rawchocpie.co.uk



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Gluten-free soup full of goodness and suitable for vegans and vegetarians. Souper Supergreens Soup, £1.49, Asda



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Vegan and organic raw-pressed protein bars with ethical credentials to boot. BodyMe Protein Bars, £2.50, bodyme.co.uk

IN THE KITCHEN WITH...

*Nicola Graimes, author of *The
Part-Time Vegetarian**





Although I've always enjoyed trying new foods and dishes, my real interest in cooking coincided with me leaving home to study at 18. I also became a vegetarian at this time.

Pretty much my first job after graduating was as an editorial assistant on a catering magazine, followed by a job on a magazine for delicatessens and fine food shops, then I got my dream job as editor of *Vegetarian Living* magazine. I've been so lucky that my career has been in the food world and it has really spurred my interest in cooking and all things foodie.

Over the years, I've definitely become more conscious of eating well and avoiding processed food when I can, and this has definitely been spurred on by having children.

More recently, I love the way many of us have become more interested in what we eat but on the other side of the coin I'm completely anti really restrictive crash diets where entire food groups are left out. I think these 'diets' have encouraged many to have a warped attitude to food. Eating should be enjoyable and guilt-free and eating well should be a way of life not something you just do in January for a month – rant over!

On a personal level, the idea behind my book, *The Part-Time Vegetarian*, fits with the way we eat as a family at home. I was a vegetarian for over 20 years and then started to include some meat and fish in my diet. This change of heart and eating habits came about for various reasons and wasn't taken lightly, but I'm reassured that being a 'part-time vegetarian' is growing exponentially in popularity.

The beauty of a flexitarian diet is its flexibility, which is why I love it. Unlike most diets it's not prescriptive – there are no hard and fast rules, so it can easily and readily be adapted to suit your lifestyle and what's happening on a weekly basis. Whether you opt to go meat-free just one day a week, eat meat on rare occasions or prefer to choose meat- and fish-light meals, it is manageable and free from guilt.

I think it's fantastic that many of us are becoming

more conscious of what we eat and where our food comes from. Until relatively recently, many non-vegetarians would have scoffed at the idea of regularly eating vegetable-based meals, but there has been a significant positive shift in many of our eating habits, including cutting down on meat.

The common link between vegetarians and part-time vegetarians, or flexitarians, is that they like to base their meals on vegetables. To those who want to start cooking healthily, I would keep this in mind – half of the plate should be made up of vegetables with the remaining featuring a carbohydrate (such as grains, potatoes, pasta) and a protein food (nuts, eggs, tofu, meat, seafood).

It may sound a little clichéd but I'm very much about 'everything in moderation'. If you aren't allergic or intolerant to a particular food, there is no reason to cut out a particular food group – it's worth considering that every type of food provides a range of nutrients in varying levels and performs a function in the body. The only exception is sugar!

ABOUT NICOLA

STUDIED:

Journalism at
London College
of Printing

CAREER HIGHLIGHT

Interviewing Linda
McCartney when
I was editor of
Vegetarian Living
magazine. She
was so passionate
and welcoming.

SKILLS / EXPERTISE:

I'm very proud
that I've just
written my 30th
cookbook.

3 foods I'll be eating THIS MONTH

Asparagus

I inherited an asparagus bed at my allotment and there's nothing more exciting when the first spears appear around April.



Chocolate

I never say no to a square or two of good-quality dark chocolate – and it is Easter after all.



Wild garlic

I love foraging and wild garlic grows abundantly in Sussex around this time of year. It can be transformed into a very delicious and easy pesto.





EAT WELL

Nourish your body with these healthy choices

GET PERKY!

PERK!ER's new Peanut Quinoa Bar combines air-roasted peanuts and creamy peanut butter to deliver a delicious taste, crunchy texture and a nutritious energy boost. Packed with superfoods, each bar contains 6g protein, is high in fibre and rich in vitamin E! Gluten, wheat and dairy-free, it's also suitable for vegans. 75p, in the free-from aisles of Asda and Morrisons supermarkets



SOUPE DUPER

Tideford Organics has launched the first organic, vegan soup range in the UK, and we love it. All of its superfoods recipes and miso broths are not to be missed either. These convenient meals are organic, gluten-free, dairy free, and have no added sugar. £2.89 from Waitrose, Tesco, Abel & Cole plus independent shops nationwide.

SUPERFOOD SNACKS

Eat Real's innovation in the healthy snacking sector continues with the launch of Quinoa Puffs, giving a goodness packed twist to standard puffs with the addition of superfoods quinoa and kale. Quinoa Puffs are vegan, gluten-free and free from all allergens, artificial colours, flavours and preservatives. £1.79, Available from all Health Food Wholesalers from January 2017, eatreal.co.uk



GLUTEN-FREE BREAKFASTS

Rise and shine with gluten-free Nutri-Brex - a wholesome heavenly way to start your day. Designed to revolutionise breakfast, every spoonful of this cereal is packed with the tasty ancient grain sorghum and fortified with vitamins. With 96 percent wholegrains, a lighter texture, vegan-friendly formula and reduced sugar, it's a kitchen must-have! RRP £3.79 for 375g, ocado.com



NATURE'S BEST-KEPT SECRET

... has been uncovered. TreeVitalise Organic Birch Water is the bright refreshing taste of a cool spring day. Harvested once a year in the Carpathian Mountains, the organic and unsweetened drink contains nature's own blend of nutrients all freshly brewed inside a tree. Rich in manganese and available in three delicious flavours, it makes for a happier and healthier you. £2.49 available at Holland and Barrett. treevitalise.com



DINNER FOR THE WEEK

Sorted!

Ella Mills, aka Deliciously Ella, shares three simple meat-free suppers perfect for week-night cooking





CHILLI AND GINGER PHO

SERVES 4

- 2 portions of buckwheat noodles
- 25g dried shiitake mushrooms
- 2 tsp toasted sesame oil
- Generous thumb of root ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 red chillies, finely sliced
- 2 spring onions, each chopped into quarters
- 2 tbsp brown miso paste
- 2 tbs tamari
- 100g baby corn
- 250g bok choy, thinly sliced
- 120g beansprouts
- 2 carrots, peeled and julienned
- Handful of fresh coriander, roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 lime, plus lime wedges to serve

1 Prepare the noodles according to the packet instructions, then

place in a sieve and rinse with water. Put the shiitake in a bowl, pour over 500ml of boiling water and set aside for 20 minutes.

2 Heat the sesame oil in a wok, or large sauté pan, then add the ginger, garlic, chillies and spring onions, and cook for a minute or so, stirring to make sure the garlic doesn't burn.

3 Splash in a little water and let it bubble for a couple of minutes, then add the miso and tamari and 500ml more boiling water. Let this broth bubble away until the mushrooms are ready, then add them too, with their soaking water (except the dregs, as they may contain grit). Return to a nice simmer for five minutes.

4 Add the corn and bok choy, and simmer for five minutes. Stir in the beansprouts and carrots. Divide the noodles between four bowls, then spoon the broth on top. Sprinkle with chopped coriander and a squeeze of lime juice, then serve with lime wedges.



CHANA MASALA

SERVES 6

- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 6 curry leaves, or 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 leek, finely chopped
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 2 tbsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp ground coriander
- 2 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2.5cm root ginger, finely grated
- 5 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 green finger chillies, halved lengthways
- Plenty of salt and pepper
- 2 x 400g cans of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 250g baby leaf spinach
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Fresh coriander leaves, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan and throw in the curry leaves, if using. Let them sizzle away and release their flavour for a few minutes, then drop in the leek and stir.

2 Next add the dry spices – including the curry powder if you're not using curry leaves – and stir well. Let this cook for a few minutes before adding the onion, ginger and garlic; at this point you can add a couple of tablespoons of water if things are starting to stick to the pan. Cook for a few minutes before adding the canned tomatoes, tomato purée, green chillies, salt and pepper. When you've poured in the tomatoes from their cans, swish a little water around in each to get the remaining juice, then add this to the saucepan, too. Let everything bubble away for 20 minutes.

3 Add the chickpeas and cook for another 10 minutes.

4 Stir in the spinach, just until it wilts. Let cool slightly, then stir in the lemon juice and serve with coriander leaves over the curry.



SWEET POTATO NOODLES WITH A SATAY SAUCE

MAKES 2

FOR THE NOODLES

- Olive oil
- 1 celery stick, finely chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2.5cm root ginger, finely grated
- Pinch of salt
- 250g mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 small sweet potatoes, about 200g each, peeled and spiralised
- 100g baby spinach

FOR THE SAUCE

- 3 tbsp crunchy peanut butter (or almond butter also works)
- 70ml almond milk, plus more if needed
- 1 tsp tamari
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tsp honey
- A little olive oil, if needed

1 Heat a glug of oil in a large frying pan, then add the celery, garlic, ginger and salt and sauté over a low heat until the celery is softening. Add the mushrooms once the pan has been bubbling for a couple of minutes.

2 After a minute or so more, add the sweet potatoes and cook for about 10 minutes. Next, make the satay sauce. Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, adding oil if needed, then add salt to taste.

3 Once the noodles and mushrooms are tender, add the spinach and the satay sauce. Stir until the spinach has wilted and the sauce is warm. If the sauce feels a little thick, add a splash of water, olive oil or almond milk and stir.



BOOKshelf

Recipes extracted from
Deliciously Ella with Friends
by Ella Mills, Yellow Kite, £25



PROMOTION

EAT WELL

Looking for some help in your quest to eat more healthily? Nutritionist Resource could be the answer, as Ellen Hoggard explains

Diet is the cornerstone of optimal health and wellbeing and we believe everyone deserves health, happiness and access to quality nutritional information and advice from professionals. That's why we set up Nutritionist Resource – a website dedicated to offering a simple way to connect with qualified nutrition professionals across the UK.

EXPERT ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Whatever your reason, the site can help you realise that change is possible, support is available and you are not alone in the journey.

Our website includes everything we wish we'd had access to when starting our journey – a detailed library of fact-sheets featuring useful information about some of the reasons you may want to consult a nutrition professional as well as articles, blogs and recipes to help you keep up-to-date with all things nutrition.

All of our members have a personal profile where they provide plenty of information about how they work and who they are, helping you decide whether they are the right person for you.

For more information visit
nutritionist-resource.org.uk



STEPS TO MANAGE IBS

Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome ruining your life?
We've spoken to the experts to help you take back control

Constantly worrying about leaving the house, especially for social events which involve food, just in case your IBS rears its ugly head? "Irritable Bowel Syndrome is basically an umbrella term for a collection of persistent and recurring gastrointestinal symptoms thought to affect as many as one in five people, and twice as many women as men," says Susie Perry Debye, food scientist and nutritional therapist for Udo's Choice (udoschoice.co.uk). "The symptoms tend to flare-up for anything from a few days to a few months making IBS an unpredictable condition to live with and manage," she adds. Thankfully there are plenty of simple steps you can follow to help you take back the reins and enjoy a healthy relationship with food.

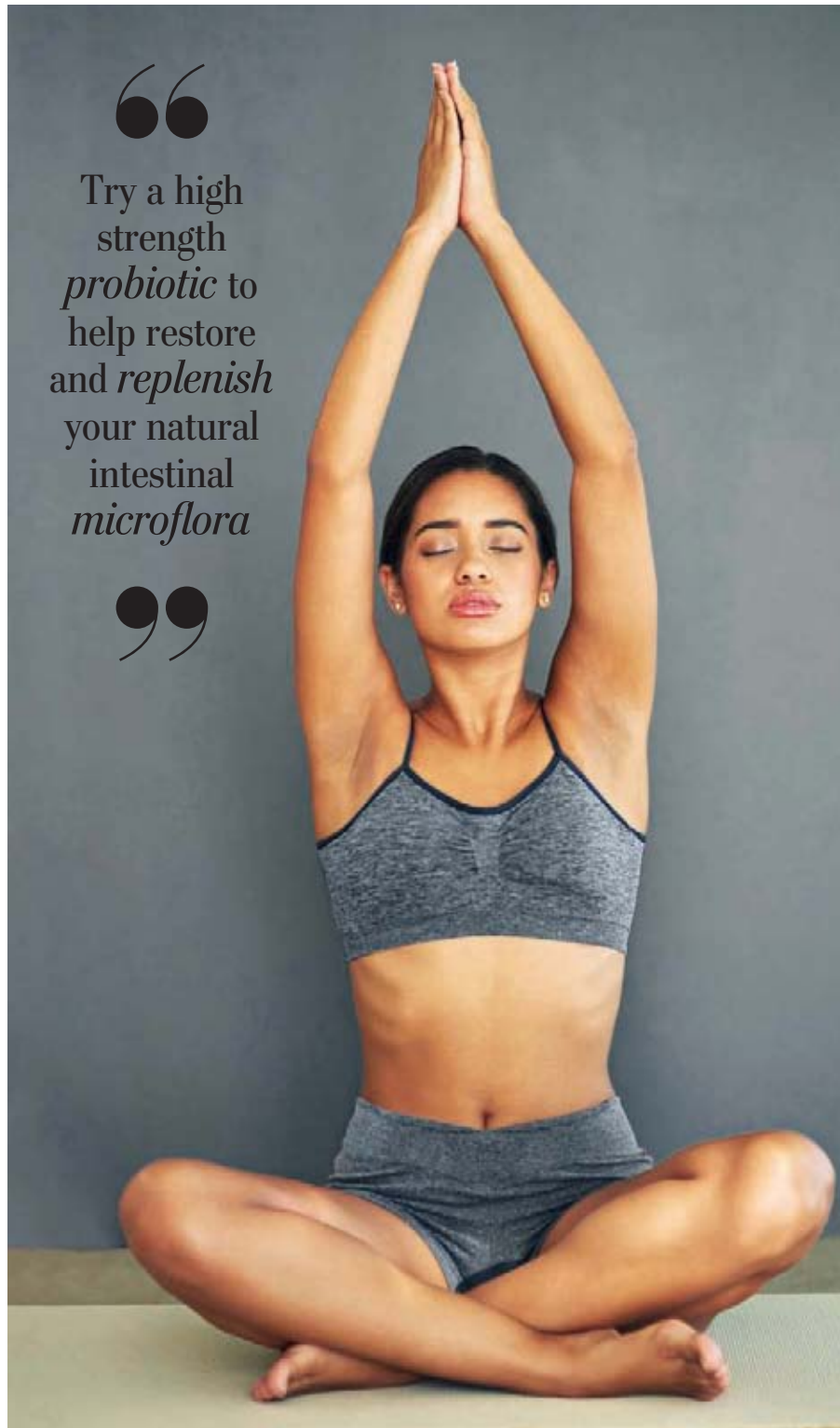
GO LACTO-FREE

"For many IBS sufferers natural foods are often a trigger, and one of the main culprits is lactose," says Susie. "This is especially true for sufferers of Asian decent who tend to not produce the digestive enzyme lactase which is responsible for breaking down this milk sugar." Avoiding dairy foods or opting for lacto-free alternatives is an instant and easy way to avoid a flare up. But if you can't bear to part with your favourite dairy-filled treat, consider taking a lactase enzyme supplement to support your digestive system and help you break down the lactose... without it breaking you.

LOWER YOUR STRESS LEVELS

According to the NHS, stress and anxiety can trigger chemical changes that interfere with the normal workings of the digestive system, and it is also a common trigger for IBS symptoms. "Stress is almost inevitable in the fast-paced world we now live in," says Paul Battersby, president of the FHT (fht.org.uk). "Managing our stress levels is key so that our health (including our digestive health) doesn't become affected. Many complementary therapies can help to reduce stress and anxiety including reflexology, massage, aromatherapy and shiatsu, to name just a few," Paul adds. Want to instantly lower your stress levels? Try meditation. Find a quiet spot, close your eyes, clear the mind and focus on your breathing. Feel the movement each breath has on your body and concentrate on this movement. Aim to meditate daily for at least 10 minutes to help quieten the mind.

“Try a high strength probiotic to help restore and replenish your natural intestinal microflora”



UP YOUR INTAKE OF PROBIOTICS

Studies have shown that consuming more probiotics can boost gut health and improve the symptoms of IBS. "These friendly gut bacteria help to fight off infections, protect cells that line the intestine from damage and inflammation, promote regular bowel movements, stimulate the immune system and help with detoxification," says Susie. Foods high in gut-loving probiotics include sauerkraut, miso soup and some versions of good quality dark chocolate – who knew?

TURMERIC, EVERYTHING!

A key player in Chinese and ayurvedic medicine which has been used to help arthritis, skin complaints and poor digestion, turmeric possesses antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties which can ease irritable bowels. "A recent study found that consuming turmeric reduced IBS symptoms by up to 50 percent after an eight-week trial," says Egzona. The roots of turmeric plants contain curcumin, a miracle chemical for sufferers. "Curcumin compounds help reduce intestinal pain and inflammation, stimulate bile flow and liver function, and even help to reduce the risk of gut fermentation," adds Susie. Want to up your turmeric intake? Add the spice to hot beverages, soups, curries and stews for an instant pick-me-up.

GIVE PEPPERMINT A GO

"Peppermint has been shown to aid digestion and also to help relieve an upset stomach," says Egzona Makolli, nutritionist at Kinetic4Health (kinetic4health.co.uk). "Several studies show that peppermint's main constituent L-menthol has anti-spasmodic, anti-carminative, anti-infective and topical analgesic effects which have shown a reduction in IBS associated symptoms." Australian scientists discovered that peppermint oil can help relieve IBS by activating an anti-pain channel in the colon which soothes inflammatory pain in the GI tract. Try a peppermint oil capsule two to three times a day, or whenever cramping occurs, to soothe the effects.

UNDERSTAND FIBRE

For irritable bowel sufferers, fibre can be a minefield. "Many find that reducing their intake of high-fibre foods improves their symptoms, however this is not always the case," explains Egzona. Fibre intake is very much dependent on the individual and sufferers should adjust their intake based on personal symptoms. "Studies have shown that reducing insoluble fibre (the type that does not dissolve in water and is not readily broken down, think wheat, bran, nuts and whole grains) can improve symptoms of diarrhoea. Increasing your intake of soluble fibre

(the type that dissolves in water and is broken down by the natural bacteria in the bowels) can help improve symptoms of constipation, but it is worth noting that any increase should be gradual to allow the gut to become used to the extra intake," advises Egzona. Are you considering consuming more soluble fibre to help ease your symptoms? Oats, nuts, fruits and vegetables are a good start.

TRY A NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Supplements are some sufferers' knight in shining armour, namely digestive enzymes. "There are so many nutritional supplements available now so it can be difficult to know where to start but I would begin with a good digestive enzyme," Susie says. "Also try a high strength probiotic to help restore and replenish your natural intestinal microflora, plus a soothing or protective factor such as aloe vera. These three supplements will work well in combination to support gut health, digestion and elimination," she concludes.

TAKE THE HOLISTIC APPROACH WITH ACUPUNCTURE

Need a helping hand with the pain caused by IBS? Give acupuncture a try. "Research has shown that acupuncture can be beneficial to sufferers," explains Jonathan Hobbs, vice president of the FHT (fht.org.uk). "Serotonin, the happy hormone, is released into the body during acupuncture treatments, and although this is most commonly associated with the brain and our mood, most of the body's serotonin (around 80 percent) is found in the gut where it plays a key role in regulating digestive function." You could also consider electro-acupuncture, a form of the therapy that sends a small electrical charge down the needles to stimulate targeted points. "One trial found that when applied to specific acupuncture points near the naval and on the lower back the treatment was effective at reducing diarrhoea symptoms associated with IBS," Jonathan adds. To find a qualified therapist visit fht.org.uk/findatherapist

CHANGE HOW OFTEN YOU EAT

Crazy as it may sound, slightly altering your eating habits could have a big impact on IBS symptoms. "Eating big meals can put a real strain on an already sensitive digestive system. Be kind to your tummy and switch to eating little and often," says Susie. Large meals can overload your gut and increase gas, which can result in stomach pain. It's also advisable to thoroughly chew food to aid the digestion process. Avoid 'gulping' food as this can lead to swallowing air which will only add to stomach problems. "Drink plenty of water too as dehydration can cause constipation," Egzona adds.

Give IBS the
heave ho!



Nutribrex, £3.79,
available at all major
supermarkets and
nutribrex.co.uk



**Koko Original
Milk, £1.50,**
available at
all major
supermarkets
and [kokodairy
free.com](http://kokodairyfree.com)



**Adult Acidophilus &
Bifidus – 25 Billion
(capsules), £13.95,**
provenprobiotics.
co.uk



**Extra Strength Oil
Of Peppermint
Capsules, £11.79,**
hollandandbarrett.com



**Bart Ground
Turmeric, £2.09,**
waitrose.com

THE BEST FOODS FOR JOINT HEALTH

Look after your joints with help from nutritional therapist
Henrietta Norton

With around 10 million people experiencing the symptoms of arthritis in the UK alone, joint health problems are a common complaint in GP surgeries. However, this is not just the preserve of the elderly as is often thought. In fact, joint degeneration and auto-immune related joint concerns such as rheumatoid arthritis can begin at any age. Therefore looking after our joints through diet and lifestyle at a young age is both a very powerful preventative measure as well as effective support for existing conditions

WHICH FOODS COULD HELP?

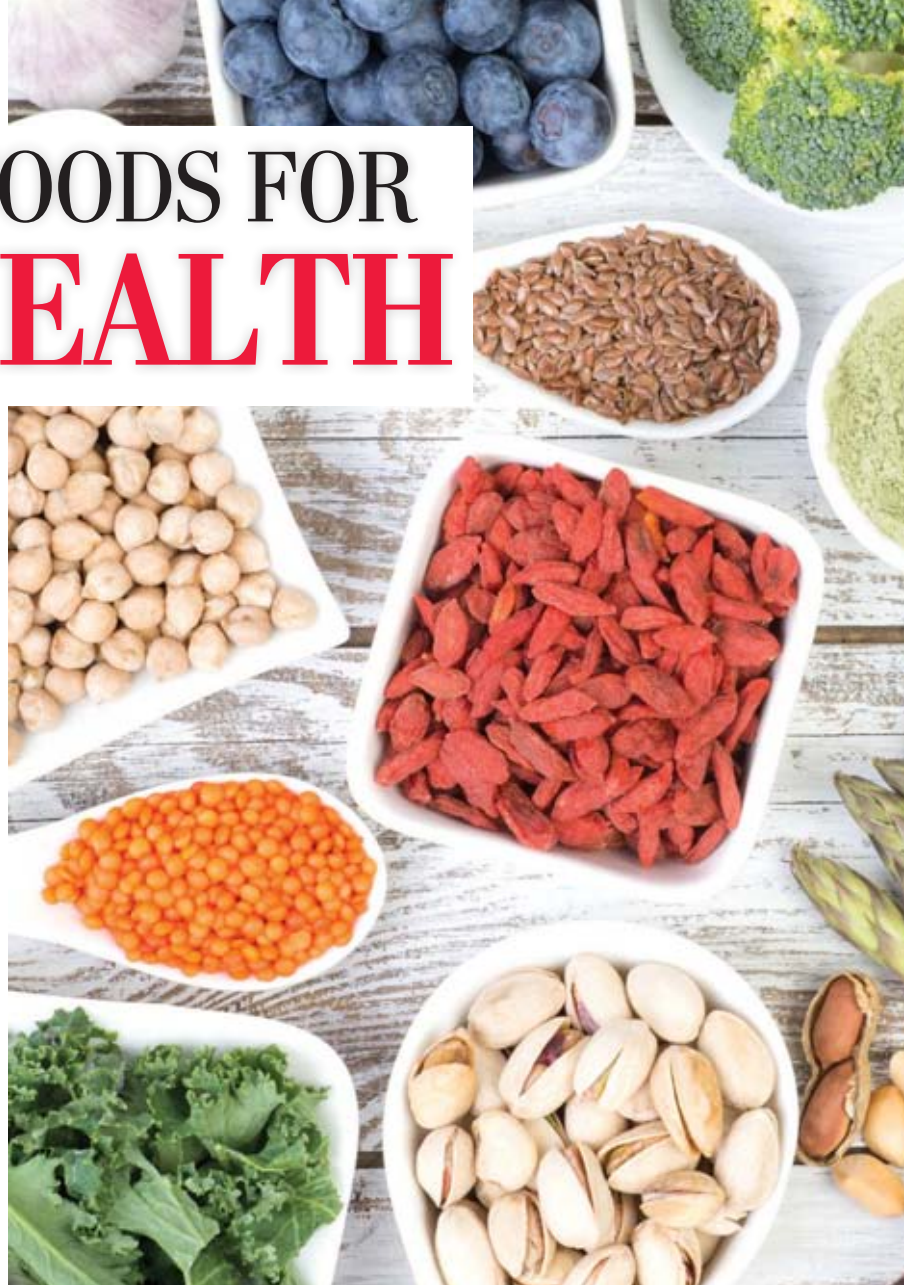
Rainbow coloured vegetables

Vegetables and fruits are high in vitamin C, which is essential for collagen production and the health of the cartilage. Each different colour within a vegetable provides an array of natural anti-inflammatory chemicals called phytochemicals such as flavonoids. They are also rich in a variety of antioxidants to quench free radicals that can exacerbate inflammation and damage to the joints. The deeper root vegetables are also an excellent source of trace minerals needed to support the immune system and bone density (which is particularly important in cases of osteoarthritis or osteopenia). I recommend aiming for five to seven servings of mixed coloured vegetables per day – think of a rainbow of colour on your plate!

Colour can be achieved through fruit too. The best fruits to include are usually dark-coloured berries, which are high in antioxidants and low in sugar. Other fruits can be highly nutritious but also contain significant amounts of natural sugar, so it may be best to stick to a maximum of two to three portions a day and avoid those highest in sugar such as bananas, grapes and especially dried fruit.

Fats

Another important nutrient is omega 3 fatty acids. This type of fatty acid – especially EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) found in oily fish – can be converted into substances in the body that help to control inflammation. To get more omega 3, eat oily fish such as sardines, mackerel, trout and salmon two or three times a week, and include omega 3-rich seeds, such as flaxseeds and chia seeds, in your diet. Raw nuts and other seeds are rich in omega 6 essential fatty acids and also contain some omega 3, and can be excellent sources of nutrients such as magnesium, zinc and calcium that are important for bone health.



Spices

Spices such as turmeric, ginger and cayenne can be brilliant additions to foods as they can have gentle anti-inflammatory properties. Studies have shown that the anti-inflammatory benefits of regular turmeric consumption in food to be comparable to over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatories.

Water

Keep hydrated. Drinking enough water is vital for joint health, as it is for all areas of health. Water helps to remove toxic metabolic waste and dead cells that are produced in higher quantities where there is inflammation, as well as delivering nutrients to the tissues. Try herbal teas too: nettle tea is high in minerals to support the bones, green tea may be a good source of antioxidants to combat free radicals, and rosehip tea may have good anti-inflammatory properties. Ginger tea can also be a good option, especially if made using fresh ginger.

WHAT FOODS SHOULD WE AVOID?

The following groups of foods may be best avoided or kept to a minimum when looking after your joints:



Sugary foods and refined carbohydrates

Sugar can have a detrimental effect on our health in many ways, including by exacerbating inflammation. Refined carbohydrates break down quickly into sugars when digested so are just as problematic. Aim to replace these with whole grain carbohydrates such as brown rice, oats, quinoa and good quality wholemeal breads. (Some people may do better avoiding wheat at all and trying rye breads or other alternative wheat-free options.) Alcohol is also included in this group.

Coffee

Tea is a better option, but stick to one to two cups a day to limit caffeine intake. Try to replace tea and coffee with alternatives such as grain 'coffees' based on barley, rye or chicory, or rooibos tea which tastes similar to normal tea but is naturally free of caffeine and other stimulating substances.

Red meat and organ meats (e.g. liver, kidney)

These are best limited to one or two servings a week, as they can be acid-forming and high in a pro-inflammatory omega 6 fat called arachidonic acid. They can also be rich in nutrients, however, so for most people they do not need to be excluded entirely.

Fried foods

Avoid any fried foods, particularly those fried in vegetable oils. Vegetable oils are high in omega 6 fatty acids, which in high levels can convert to pro-inflammatory substances in the body, and also become rancid when heated to high temperatures. Fry or roast food in oil only occasionally. Olive oil is a slightly better alternative to normal vegetable oils but its fatty acids can still spoil at high temperatures, so avoid heating it to smoking point. Coconut oil can be a much better option: as it is mainly composed of saturated fats, it does not spoil at high temperatures, and still provides a healthier alternative to butter and other animal fats. De-odorised coconut oils are also available for cooking if you want to avoid the coconut flavour/smell.

Vegetables from the nightshade family

These may cause a problem for those with arthritis as they seem to trigger inflammation in the joints. The nightshade family includes tomatoes, white potatoes, aubergine and peppers. (Note: black pepper as a spice is not included in this group and is fine to use.)

HOW CAN YOUR LIFESTYLE HELP?

If you are overweight and suffering from osteoarthritis in particular, weight loss will help to reduce the strain on your joints.

You should also try to reduce stress. Stress causes increases the rate of oxidative damage and preliminary research has shown a connection with stress and auto-immune inflammatory conditions such as psoriatic and rheumatoid arthritis.

Taking supplements

Many supplements may be helpful for joint health and the below may be worth trying...

- A fish oil supplement. Look out for one with a good level of the omega 3 fatty acid EPA in particular, as this omega 3 is thought to be the most helpful for reducing inflammation.
- Glucosamine and/or chondroitin, which provide the building blocks for cartilage production and repair.
- Rosehip extracts, which can have anti-inflammatory benefits and have had better results than glucosamine in some studies on osteoarthritis.
- Collagen has shown benefits for joint pain, including for both rheumatoid and osteoarthritis.
- Green-lipped mussel extract has been reported to have similar benefits to fish oil as a natural anti-inflammatory.
- Magnesium oil topical spray. Magnesium absorbed through the skin may help with pain in the local area.
- Devil's Claw may be a good option for any type of joint pain, working as a natural anti-inflammatory.
- Turmeric is also a good natural anti-inflammatory: when choosing a turmeric supplement, choose one with a high quantity of curcumin, which is thought to be the most active constituent.

It's so fraiche!

Seriously. A crème fraiche without the crème, which means that for the first time ever, everyone can enjoy it.

You might be thinking: "No crème? How can it be a crème fraiche?" Which is exactly why you should consider putting this ad down and picking up a carton to try yourself. In Sweden, where we make this amazing



product, it has done nothing less than revolutionise the lives of our veggie, vegan and lactose-

averse friends

because not only is it completely dairy-free, it performs just like fraiche, which is pretty fraiche if you think about it. Oh, one more thing. You'll find it in the chilled section at Tesco. Enjoy.

IAN MARBER

“Here’s why you should up your turmeric intake”



Turmeric is certainly the ingredient of the moment, but what makes it so special? Nutritional therapist Ian Marber examines the research



Ian is one of the UK's top nutritional therapists ianmarber.com

Everyone seems to be talking about turmeric these days and while it was once somewhat of a niche plant, today it has become so mainstream that you'll probably be able to buy a turmeric latte at your local health food store. But what is it and why should you be including it in your diet?

FULL OF GOODNESS

Turmeric is a first cousin of ginger, similarly shaped and, with the peel on, looks almost identical. However, inside the flesh is bright orange in colour (because of its curcumin content) and it is both pungent and bitter to the taste. Turmeric is commonly found in powdered form, although the fresh root is available in most supermarkets too. There are many plant compounds in turmeric including turmerin, turmerone, elemene, furanodiene, curdione, bisacurone and germacrone but it is curcumin that may be the most potent.

EVIDENCE-BACKED

Turmeric has been widely studied and research suggests that curcumin offers

a myriad of health benefits – with it protecting the liver, reducing the growth of cancerous cells and addressing inflammation linked to type 2 diabetes as well as impacting on cardiovascular disease and vascular dementia.

Curcumin appears to block the activity of a molecule that switches on the inflammatory process and, by doing so, curtails the creation of the various substances that cause inflammation, including histamine, nitric oxide and leukotrienes. It also has built in antioxidant properties, so including it in the diet on a regular basis can offer a degree of protection against common disease. Furthermore, curcumin also supports the ability of the human body to make its own antioxidants and whilst it is certainly not the only plant chemical to do so, it is especially effective.

Most of the research involves an extract of turmeric rather than the fresh root, which reflects the importance of a high concentration of curcumin.

Curcumin accounts for under four percent of turmeric and so to benefit from the active compound one would have

to eat several grams of the root daily. However, it's worth knowing the activity of the substance is greatly enhanced by piperine, a plant chemical found in black pepper. Curcumin is a fat-soluble compound and also requires some dietary fat for absorption by the digestive system.

INCREASE YOUR INTAKE

Turmeric root can be peeled and grated over many familiar dishes, or mixed with a drop of extra virgin olive oil to make a paste. Dried turmeric powder can be added to soups or sprinkled on vegetables. You may choose to take a supplement of at least 500mg curcumin a day, to be taken with food for extra absorption (in terms of ingesting the powder with food you'd need over a teaspoon of turmeric a day to get the same amount of curcumin). Look for brands that include piperine in the formula as this can greatly increase absorption in the gut.

“Curcumin supports the ability of the human body to make its own *antioxidants* and is especially *effective* at this”

THANKS FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

We've been trying to bring this amazing product to you since we introduced it in Sweden and saw how it changed people's lives. What's so amazing about it? It's a single cream that performs exactly like regular cream but is completely free from dairy making it perfect for our veggie, vegan and lactose-averse friends. What about the taste? Perhaps you should answer that yourself by picking up a carton and trying it out rather than relying on the writer of this ad. You know writers of ads, they always try to make things so positive. Oh yeah, for your convenience, you will find it in the chilled section at your favourite Tesco from now on.



Beauty

Better skin, hair, make-up naturally – here's how

*News just in: This spring, Dr Hauschka is celebrating its 50th anniversary with the launch of a **brand new collection** of natural and organic make-up products. The range, which has been four years in the making, features more than 80 products for face, eyes and lips as well as a stellar range of industry-standard make-up brushes and application tools. Based around the premise that colour should be without compromise, each item features newly-developed mineral pigments and targeted botanical extracts to ensure that every hue pops brightly against the skin. Race you to the checkout!*

10 WAYS TO VOLUMISE LACKLUSTRE HAIR

Our panel of haircare experts reveal their top tips for a full-bodied mane



1

TAKE A BREAK

Damage is your biggest nemesis in the fight against thinning. "Repetitively colouring, hot ironing or perming your hair will eventually break down the fibres that allow it to retain its shape when styled," says Ian Sallis, consultant trichologist at the Farjo Hair Institute. "The more you damage the hair, the less it will respond, which usually results in you using even more heat and chemical processes to get the desired effect. Try taking a break from regular styling treatments. Your locks will thank you!"

2

FOAM IT UP

Mousse is making a serious comeback, but you can forget the crunchy wet-look curls of the 90s. No, the new-generation of foaming formulas offer optimum flexibility and movement whilst encouraging natural texture. "Just be sure to look for a protein formula that expands the hair cuticle," says Lloyd Court, senior consultant at Seanhanna Salons.

Aveda Phomollient Styling Foam, £16, aveda.co.uk

3

BLOW IT OUT

It doesn't matter how long you spend styling your hair before

you leave the house – gravity will always win. As you go about your day, your locks will become increasingly weighed down, leaving your mane void of life by sunset. "The best way to counteract this is to blow dry your hair upwards. "You can do this by either tipping your head upside down or using your fingers to pull the strands up," explains London stylist Jo Hansford.

4

CHANGE YOUR PARTING

If you wear your hair parted on the left, consider shifting it to the right or centre (or vice versa) to create instant height. "The switch helps to lift the hair away from your scalp, making your crown appear like it has more body and volume," says Anushka Lakhani, founder of aer Blowdry Bar

5

WAKE UP TO WAVES

When we think of volume, cascading waves a la Cindy

Crawford instantly spring to mind. Anushka suggests prepping this look in your sleep for beautiful bounce come morning: "Twist damp hair into small buns before bed and fasten using bobby pins or use a 90s-style velvet scrunchie and put it into a topknot. Unwrap your strands in the morning, tousle them about and use a light hairspray to set."

Rahua Defining Hair Spray, £34, rahua.com



6

BRUSH IT UP

Thought your Tangle Teezer was only good for detangling? Prepare to have your mind blown! Stylist to the stars Shuan Pulfrey says back-brushing the roots of your hair with one is a great way to create volume for loose styles, elegant up-dos and everyday ponytails alike: "The Tangle Teezer hair brush is much kinder on the hair than using a traditional comb. It doesn't break or stretch the hair and can be easily combed out. Simply use the tip of the brush to gently back-brush the hair at the roots to create volume, and then smooth the ends using the same brush to eliminate frizz."

Tangle Teezer, £10, boots.com

7

DON'T OVER-WASH

Washing your hair daily strips it of the oils needed to keep your mane healthy and lifted. "Instead, spritz the roots with dry shampoo which not only refreshes but can add some much needed volume," says Neil Moodie, session stylist and ambassador for Viviscal hair supplements. If you have really fine hair, avoid placing conditioner at the roots after washing. Alternatively, condition first and wash after for an extra boost!

Tabitha James Kraan
Dry Shampoo, £29,
tabithajameskraan.com



GIVE IT A SPRITZ

For an instant lift, you'll want to look out for products that can penetrate the hair shaft and expand each strand from the inside out, says Anabel Kingsley, trichologist at Philip Kingsley. "Lightweight protein sprays are great for this and can actually improve hair volume over time when used frequently."

Ogario London Styling
Mist, £16,
ogariolondon.com



GO OLD SCHOOL

"Instead of always opting for heated appliances, give sleep-in rollers a go," says celebrity stylist Matthew Curtis. "They're great for adding volume without putting too much pressure on the hair or causing breakage." Want something more instantaneous? Rotating blow-dry brushes are brilliant for adding volume, too, and can even be mastered by blow-dry beginners!

Drybar High Tops Self-Grip Rollers,
£8, sephora.com

10

START FROM WITHIN

Healthy hair will always boast natural bounce and shine, so be sure to nourish your strands by taking a specially-formulated supplement. "A good quality hair tablet will give you all the essential vitamins and minerals needed to promote optimum hair growth and thickness," says Lloyd.

Wild Nutrition Food Grown
Skin, Hair and Nails, £30,
wildnutrition.com



Sweet dreams for living life to the full

When Wendy Steele discovered New Nordic Melissa Dream™, she finally found her perfect revitalisation recipe.

WHY I KNEW THAT I DESPERATELY NEEDED A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

Problems had been accumulating over time. Our son was due to leave for university, but before he was able to do that, he had to undergo a difficult and traumatic operation which required intensive home care by specialist nurses as well as regular travel to hospitals abroad as part of the treatment process. As if all that wasn't enough, I was trying to complete a PhD while doing a physically demanding shift-based job, plus our house had been up for sale for months. Burn out was looming.

Life for me had turned into a state of near-permanent panic as I obsessed about all the problems facing me. I couldn't sleep, I lost my appetite and I often suffered from migraines, brought on by stress, poor eating and the lack of proper sleep.

After reading about Melissa Dream™ supplements in a magazine, I decided to give them a try and ordered a supply online. After only two days of taking the tablets, I noticed that I felt calmer and more positive because I was sleeping properly. I was relaxed in a way that was totally different to how I had been for ages.

I've been taking Melissa Dream™ for a month now and because I'm getting a good night's sleep, I'm so revitalised and full of energy that I know I can deal with anything life may throw at me.

My husband, family and friends have all noticed the difference – I'm back to

my normal self and it feels great! I used to be a member of the GB athletics team and have rediscovered my love of running, cross country skiing and regular gym sessions.



You can find Melissa Dream™ in Holland & Barrett and leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call 0800 389 1255 or purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk

New Nordic Melissa Dream™ - not your run of the mill sleep solution.

Melissa Dream™ supplements contain a unique combination of natural bioactive micronutrients and herbal extracts which can help nourish and regulate your nervous system. They include lemon balm extract, L-theanine amino acid, chamomile extract, vitamin B complex and magnesium. They are available in packs of 20, 40 and 100 tablets – simply take two tablets 1 hour before bedtime.

BEAUTY ED'S PICKS



Trilogy Exfoliating
Body Balm,
£24.50, **trilogy
products.co.uk**



Deborah Lippmann
Marshmallow
Whipped Hand and
Cuticle Scrub, £25,
**deborahlipp
mann.com**



bareMinerals Invisible
Glow Powder
Highlighter, £25,
bareminerals.co.uk

Aurelia Brightening
Botanical Essence,
£42, **aureliaskin
care.com**



Primavera
Harmonising Rose
and Osmanthus
Bath Oil, £22.50,
primaverallife.co.uk



Ethereal by Josh
Rosebrook (eau
de parfum), £149,
abeautifulworld.co.uk



Vita Liberata
Body Blur,
£29.95,
**vitaliberata.
com**

NEW MUST-HAVES

These gorgeous spring must-
buys are hot off the press



L'Occitane Terre de Lumière
(eau de parfum), £58,
loccitane.co.uk



Elemis Five-Piece
Pro-Definition
Super System,
£115, **elemis.com**

BareFace Minerals Kabuki
Make up Brush, £15.49,
barefaceminerals.co.uk



Jane Iredale
Mystikol
Powdered
Eyeliner, £22,
janeiredale.co.uk



THE BEAUTY *detective*

Now is the time to start cellulite busting, says our beauty editor at large
Emma Van Hinsbergh

It might only be April but, ladies I've got to tell you, I am seriously on it – my beach body blitz has been fully actioned. You can't mess about when it comes to cellulite, and after a winter of mainlining buttered crumpets, I've had a lot of work to do. Luckily with a bit of serious graft, it is possible to shift stubborn fat in a few weeks (much to the dismay of my lazy self, there's no overnight fix for cellulite). Nope, the only thing that will give you noticeably firmer thighs when you shimmy down the beach this summer is a slow, sustained war of attrition.

HEALTH KICK

So caffeine, sugar and alcohol are currently out, as are processed foods and loafing around on the sofa hoovering up chocolate-coated rice cakes (they're organic, right?). Instead I'm fasting on apples for one day a week, I've signed up for body pump classes, am body-brushing like an over-zealous stable hand and turning my hair green ploughing up and down my local pool. To paraphrase the actress Debbie Allen in *Fame*, firm bottoms cost and, jeez, am I paying for it. But you know what? My hard work is beginning to reap results and so, buoyed up with renewed enthusiasm, I've added a few more cellulite-busting tricks into the mix.

WORK IT!

For a peachy bottom, you can't beat a decent lunge, according to celebrity online trainer Scott Laidler (scottlaidler.com), and he's worked with the ridiculously fit Kate Hudson and Natalie Imbruglia so he should know. "Cellulite often accumulates on the buttocks,

so the reverse lunge is one of the best exercises to tone and lift your bottom and add all over shape to your lower body," he says. To do it, stand with your feet hip-width apart, with arms at your sides, holding a medium-weight dumbbell in each hand. Lunge behind you with right foot, bending both knees 90 degrees. Hold for a second. Return to the starting position and repeat. Religiously. Every day. However much it hurts.

TREAT YOURSELF

There are some amazing new fat-melting therapies out there if you've got a bit of cash to splash. For a holistic treat, ESPA has a Stimulating Hip & Thigh Treatment (from £55, espa.com) which includes a seaweed, salt and oil exfoliation followed by a deep, detoxifying massage and lymphatic drainage techniques with stimulating essential oils. For a more hi-tech (and expensive) option, you can't beat EF Medispa's Cellufix treatment. Using the much-vaunted 'fire and ice' combo it combats cellulite with a multi-targeted approach. First your temperature is raised with radiofrequency which helps to generate collagen production, tightening and firming your skin and smoothing out the dimpled texture. Next cold laser therapy targets stubborn fat. This is teamed with 'vacuum aspiration' to improve blood circulation and encourage lymphatic drainage. It's not the cheapest of treatments (from £450, efmedispa.com) but it delivers seriously impressive results. Bottoms up!



SECRET WEAPONS

Firm up with these cellulite-busting treats



ODYLIQUE TONING FRUIT BUTTER

This all-natural balm is packed full of sea buckthorn and essential oils of ylang ylang, bergamot and lemon to tone and firm. £20, odylique.co.uk



CAUDALIE CONTOURING CONCENTRATE

100 percent plant-based, this luxurious elixir features invigorating essential oils for smoother, firmer skin. £24, caudalie.com



KNEIPP GRAPESEED OIL BODY SCRUB

Enriched with sandalwood fruit and jojoba wax grains, this gentle scrub boosts circulation and regenerates skin cells. £7.95, graftonsbeauty.co.uk

Beautiful skin from the inside

We all know the importance of looking after our skin on the outside. To achieve your perfect complexion, you must also support your skin from within.

Discover skinade – the skincare drink that nourishes the skin from the inside for beautiful skin on the outside.



FEED *your* FACE

Alice Whitehead explores six new foods and drinks that could give you a facelift from the inside out...



Beauty isn't skin deep – it goes much deeper. Slathering yourself in moisturisers without consuming a nutrient-rich diet is like starting an exercise class without the right training gear. Just as lycra leggings and a good pair of trainers provide the best foundations for getting fit, food and drinks high in omega 3 fatty acids and collagen-boosting vitamin C and A are the bedrock of a flawless, firm epidermis. And, now eating and drinking your way to luminous skin has been made a whole lot easier with a new range of 'nutri-cosmetic'-style foods that boost beauty from within. Try our top picks...

1 TREE WATER

What? Drinks made from the sap of trees such as silver birch and maple.

Try: Sibberi (sibberi.com) or TreeVitalise (treevitalise.com).

Beauty boost? Thought to help flush out toxins, especially those associated with cellulite, it's claimed the waters also contain high levels of phytonutrients and amino acids, great for plump and dewy complexions.

The expert view? "Tree waters are an easy replacement for water or coconut water and have extra benefits such as fast hydration compared to standard water, plus beneficial nutrients like manganese and silica, which are well known all-rounders for skin," says top facialist Sarah Chapman. "However, they can be slow to take effect with any benefits having a cumulative impact over a long period of time. You also need to watch the sugar content."

DIY? If you have a birch tree in your back garden, you can tap for the sap in spring. Drill a hole into the trunk and siphon into a container using plastic piping. Always ensure you seal the tree wound by knocking a suitable sized twig into the hole and sawing off the end. The tree will heal over the scar.

2 LIQUID CHLOROPHYLL

What? The green pigment found in plants that helps transfer light into energy (remember those school science lessons?). It can be bought as a tincture that can be added to water (at around 5ml per 300ml), and also appears in a more diluted form in matcha green teas.

Try: A spearmint-flavoured multipack from organichealthshop.co.uk

Beauty boost? Beloved by Hollywood beauties such as Jennifer Lawrence and Nicole Richie, this 'plant blood' is packed with vitamins and skin-protecting antioxidants. Several studies have shown it could also help reduce inflammation and break outs by creating a more alkaline environment in the body.

BEAUTY BOOSTS

Be kind to your skin with these other complexion-friendly ingredients



MATCHA TEA

Packed with antioxidants which can help reduce tissue damage by UV radiation and pollution, matcha tea can help promote younger looking skin. Try Bloom's Matcha Tea, £16.99, Holland & Barrett and Ocado



BEETROOT

Rich in skin-enhancing nutrients and full of anti-inflammatory properties, beetroot can help reduce acne and brighten your complexion. Try Roots Collective's Sweet Beets Juice, £2.95, rootscollective.co.uk



COCONUT WATER

Keep your skin soft and supple and your body hydrated by drinking plenty of coconut water. Try Coco Community's Organic Coconut Water, £2.29, Ocado

The expert view? "Chlorophyll has great benefits and is found in everyday greens such as kale, cucumber, spinach and broccoli – but in liquid form it can be more easily digested," says Sarah Chapman. "Always ensure the packaging is air tight as this can effect the potency."

DIY? Simply stuff your plate with more greens!

3 PROBIOTIC WATER

What? Water with added probiotic cultures.

Try: Plenish (plenishcleanse.com), which uses vegan cultures, or fermented drinks such as kombucha tea or kefir milk.

Beauty boost? With 80 percent of your immune system located in your digestive system, getting the right gut nutrients will boost the microbes that support skin, hair and nail health. Probiotics help 'overpower' those pesky bad bacteria that stop nutrient absorption, and support the good stuff.

The expert view? "If you're looking to update your anti-ageing regime then I would recommend probiotic water," says registered nutritional therapist Emma Olliff. "The state of your skin is a direct reflection of what is happening internally, and I always start with the gut. It may not be glamorous or sexy, but a good supply of nutrients is key to keeping collagen levels high. If your gut isn't functioning optimally then your skin will suffer."

DIY? "Dissolve a sachet of probiotic power such as Digestion Plus in iced, filtered water and add slices of lemon and cucumber. Mix well and drink!" says Emma. "I also love filling up my water bottle with herbs such as rosemary or mint, and orange and parsley work well together too."

4 ALGAE CHOCOLATE

What? The idea of adding marine organisms to your treats is not a chocolate box image but recently everything from chocolate bars to ice cream has begun to be infused with micro-algae such as chlorella and spirulina.

Try: Conscious Chocolate's Wild at Heart (consciouschocolate.com).

Beauty boost? A chocolate that nurtures your skin rather than bolstering acne is a chocoholic's dream! As well as mimicking the sweet taste of sugar, without the calories, algae are detoxifiers and are high in chlorophyll and amino acids.

The expert view? "Some algae has been shown to be a powerful antioxidant and the overall health benefits of reducing inflammation in the body are well known," says leading skincare expert Debbie Thomas.

DIY? Growing algae for human consumption is probably best left to the experts but you can add algae and spirulina powders to smoothies.

5 TURMERIC LATTE

What? Golden nut milks spiced up with cold-pressed turmeric, the bright yellow member of the ginger family.

Try: Find turmeric lattes at Nama, London (namafoods.com) or in cakes and bakes at the Modern Baker, Oxford (modernbaker.com).

Beauty boost? Entrenched in ayurvedic medicine, turmeric has been used as a restorative in curries, rice dishes and in milk drink 'haldi doodh' for centuries in Southern Asia – but its antiseptic and anti bacterial properties means it's also great for a youthful glow, lightens pigmentation and is packed with antioxidants.

The expert view? "Turmeric is believed to reduce inflammation within the body and help balance insulin levels," says Debbie. "Not only can this be an issue for acne sufferers but it can affect general skin health as well, and is associated with premature ageing."

DIY? Combine one teaspoon each of chopped, fresh turmeric, peeled chopped ginger and sugar to a cup of almond milk. Simmer in a pan, blitz until frothy and serve. If you can't tolerate the yellow stains or savoury flavour of turmeric, try sweeter spices. "Sprinkle fragrant nutmeg, which contains vitamins A through to E on your morning porridge, add cardamom to curries to detox the liver (great for keeping the skin clear and fresh) or try polyphenol-rich star anise, which can help increase blood flow and oxygen to the skin," says nutritionist Angelique Panagos.

6 ARONIA BERRIES

What? Dark purple berries akin to blueberries but much too tart to eat raw.

Try: Cold-pressed TickleBerry Juice (aroniaberrysuk.co.uk), made from aronia berries grown in Kent, or sun-dried aronia berries from Holland & Barrett (hollandandbarrett.com).

Beauty boost? Containing three times more antioxidants than blueberries, aronia berries are also high in vitamin C, which support the production of collagen.

The expert view? "The berry has a powerful natural blend of polyphenolic antioxidants, flavonoids and anthocyanin, which helps to reduce inflammation, minimize acne and wrinkles, and increase circulation," says nutritionist Emma Olliff.

DIY? Try Emma's 'Super Berry Smoothie' by blitzing together one glass each of coconut milk and coconut water, one tablespoon each of aronia berry powder, goji berries, Greens Balance, raw cacao powder, maca powder and chia seeds, and one and a half tablespoons of vegan protein powder.



5 ingredients for GLOWING SKIN

Avalon Organics reveals the best ingredients to help you achieve a radiant complexion for spring

Avalon Organics was founded on the deep-rooted belief that ‘all beauty comes from the earth’. Certified organic, vegan and cruelty-free, its products are packed full of skin-nourishing nutrients and vitamins that will help you achieve a glowing, radiant complexion. And the best thing? The specially-designed formulas make the most of nature’s pure resources and all the ingredients are organic and plant-based. To support you in your quest for younger-looking skin this spring, the team at Avalon Organics have picked out five of their favourite ingredients that you should look out for when buying skincare...

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C plays a major role in the synthesis of collagen and connective tissues between cells. It is essential to keep the skin looking

young and delaying the appearance of wrinkles while also contributing to a glowing visage. Known to enhance your complexion and refresh skin, it has scientifically been proven to neutralise the damaging free radicals caused by sun damage or environmental factors. Avalon’s Intense Defense range features vitamin C as well as other key ingredients such as white tea and lemon bioflavonoids to defend skin and support its natural renewal cycle.

COQ10

CoQ10 is a powerful antioxidant that is found throughout the body and is believed to help fight the effects of free radicals. It is a natural fuel for cellular energy and has the ability to protect and repair the skin resulting in glowing skin. Try Avalon Organics’ Wrinkle Therapy range of products which

contains CoQ10 and skin-replenishing lipids, vitamins and antioxidants to energise skin and counteract visible ageing.

HYALURONIC ACID

Hyaluronic acid naturally occurs in our body and enables skin to be hydrated – which relates to a smoother and more radiant visage. It will instantly plump your complexion and promote moisture retention for improved elasticity and firmness. Look out for this ingredient in moisturisers and serums for a hit of youth-boosting goodness – you can find it in a number of Avalon Organics’ products, including its Wrinkle Therapy Cleansing Oil.

LICORICE ROOT

Licorice root is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory and studies have shown that it has mild smoothing and brightening properties which can help you achieve radiant skin. Avalon Organics’ Brilliant Balance range of products connects the energising power of licorice root to help tone and draw out radiance, while incorporating a gentle blend of prebiotics, lavender and cucumber to optimal skin health. Cucumber-enriched (with a 95 percent water content), these items are packed with nutrients such as beta-carotene, vitamin K, vitamin C and manganese essential for beautiful and radiant skin.

LAVENDER

Lavender oil can act as a stimulant for the circulatory system which increases the flow of blood and speed up the delivery of nutrients to the skin. Derived from the flower, it is known for its antiseptic and healing properties and helps cleanse, balance and soothe. It’s a key ingredient in Avalon Organics’ Brilliant Balance range and is good for all skin types, helping with a wide range of issues.

For more information visit avalonorganics.com or find the products at Ocado, Waitrose, Holland and Barrett, Whole Foods, Planet Organic and other health food stores.

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JO FAIRLEY'S

SPRINGTIME SAVIOURS

The *Beauty Bible* guru on the best sun-protectors for everyday use

Why carry around two separate sunscreens for face and body when this does double-duty? From this much-loved New Zealand beauty name comes a product packed with plant-based hyaluronic acid (one of the greatest moisturising ingredients ever harnessed), alongside antioxidant kiwi and grape extracts. Reishi mushroom – the mushroom of immortality – has also been included to help power up healthy cell growth.

● **Yes to Carrots Daily Facial Moisturiser SPF15, £9.99, feelunique.com**

This wackily-named range is one of the most affordable natural options out there, and its pump-action daily moisturiser shields against UVA and UVB damage with a blend of zinc and titanium dioxide. Beautifully skin-softening, thanks to sweet almond, sunflower, pumpkin seed oils and aloe vera, it also showcases age-defying carrot oil (hence the name).

● **Trilogy Vital Moisturising Cream SPF15, £21.65, victoriahealth.com**

Fellow beauty editors have described this as 'the Rolls Royce of natural moisturisers' – a homage to its luxurious feel. Skin-nourishing ingredients include jojoba, rosehip and evening primrose oils, while the sun-screening ingredient is zinc oxide. A couple of pumps will plump skin beautifully and you can apply make-up straight on top thanks to its quick-absorbing properties.

● **Origins VitaZing SPF15 Energy-Boosting Moisturiser, £29, origins.co.uk**

Anyone who loves Origins (as I do) will recognise the brand's fresh, fruity signature in VitaZing's subtle fragrance. Suitable for all skin types, it features antioxidant-rich mangosteen. Shielding effectively against both UVA and UVB, it's also lightly tinted, so skin appears instantly vibrant.

Why not tweet me your top picks? I'm @jojosams and always keen to hear other people's favourites!



I'm often asked what's the best anti-ageing product for maturing skin.

And my answer, especially from April to late October (and even on sunny days through the winter), is always SPF15 – at a minimum! Now, I'm not actually one of those advocates of

year-round, day-in-day-out sunscreen. Personally, I think a little common sense is required: if it's really cloudy and the window of sun exposure is nipping from your car to the office or the front door of your home, an SPF is simply superfluous.

But as the days – blissfully – lengthen, the sun gets higher in the sky and you start to feel its warmth, I absolutely recommend the switch to an SPF daily moisturiser. I'm not talking about beach sunscreen here, but an everyday cream or lotion which can also be worn under make-up if you choose. If you've embarked on a serious anti-ageing regime and don't want to interrupt it, you can layer one of these on last, after your serum and/or age-defying moisturiser.

Trust me, it really is the most important step in any skincare ritual, especially from now until autumn – because with wrinkles, prevention is way easier than cure...

● **Green People Day Solution Cream SPF15, £18, greenpeople.co.uk**

A brilliant day cream which really babies the skin and is even suitable for sensitive and eczema-prone complexions. Aloe vera is the calming botanical here and I just love the rose geranium smell. It's also certified by the Organic Food Federation.

● **Antipodes Immortal Face & Body Moisturiser SPF15, £28.99, lovelula.com**



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& Shower Oil, £45, aromatherapyassociates.com.
TROPIC POLISHING FOOT PEBBLE, £8, tropicskincare.com
ELEMIS REVITALISE ME, £21, elemis.com
TEMPLE SPA LA LA LAGOON SHOWER GEL, £12, templespa.com
TISSERAND SWEET DREAMS BODY OIL, £9.95, tisserand.com
INLIGHT BODY OIL WITH ARNICA, £34, inlight-online.co.uk
SHEY BY MENAGE BLACK ORCHID BODY SCRUB, £75, she-y.com



PAMPER PARTY

If you could wrap a bundle of radiance and use it day in and day out, you would, right? Thankfully the team at Nourish have made that possible. The beauty brand's gift set features three travel-sized award-winning products: Radiance Firming Facial Oil, Radiance Rejuvenating Peptide Serum and Argan Skin Renew Moisturiser. All for just £25.

nourishskinrange.com



Skin saviours

Spring clean your beauty regime with our top picks

SPRING FLING

Refresh your skincare regime the natural way this spring with Rio Rosa Mosqueta. Discover three of its best-selling skincare products in cute miniature sizes with the Discovery Set (£12.95) which includes a plant-based cleanser, rosehip seed oil and an anti-ageing day and night cream in one handy little box. Chemical-free, fragrance-free, cruelty-free and vegan friendly, what's not to love? £12.95, riorosa.co.uk



MAGIC CREAMS

Packed with skin loving minerals, vitamin C to help produce collagen and vitamin E to repair and protect, Dead Sea Spa Magik's BB Cream (£13.50) deeply moisturises skin. Complete with a light coverage, it evens skin tone and covers imperfections. Then, as the weather gets even warmer, switch to the CC Cream's tan shades (£14.50) to suit your new healthy glow. shopforspa.com

BEAUTY SHOT

Want to give your skin a real treat?

Then look no further than Skinade, a skincare drink designed to support your body's natural production of collagen, elastin and hyaluronic acid. Containing active ingredients that work together to nourish skin from the inside for beautiful skin on the outside, it provides the ideal start to your day. Take one with breakfast every morning. £105 for one-month's supply, skinade.com



GOING NUTS

Coconut oil is one of the most versatile beauty products around. A superb natural skin food, it's a great way to moisturise and remove dead cells and also doubles up as a nourishing hair conditioner. We love Akamuti's Organic Coconut Oil (£6.95). It solves all our hair and beauty dilemmas, akamuti.co.uk



SPRING IT ON

Now is the time to start getting your body ready for the warmer months by banishing those unsightly dry patches. Need a helping hand in creating silky soft skin? Hope's Relief Moisturising Lotion gives intense all-over-moisturising and is even suitable for those with eczema, psoriasis and dermatitis thanks to its soothing and non-irritating properties. £15.50, hopes-relief.com



WASH AWAY WINTER

Step into spring with the WhiteWater Deep Cleansing Exfoliator for face and body which promises to leave skin feeling radiant, rejuvenated and revitalised after just one use. A natural form of microdermabrasion, this ancient Persian gem can truly nourish your skin from head to toe. £14.99, whitewaterskincare.com



Psst...

Don't forget to spring clean your make-up bag too. Check the dates on your summer-ready products, especially mascara, and load up on liquid bronzer to cheat a healthy glow.

GOLDEN GLOW

You've heard of BB and CC creams but have you tried a DD cream? Green People's Age Defy + Tinted DD Moisturiser comes complete with a SPF15 protection and will become your new go-to for a daily glow. Rich in vitamins and boasting a youth-boosting skin solution leaves a beautiful sheer coverage that reduces redness and balances out sallow complexions. £36, greenpeople.co.uk





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Self

Simple steps to balance your mind, body and soul



*“Learning to **challenge an automatic negative thought pattern** can go a long way towards helping you feel much happier,” says Harriet Griffey, author of *I want to be happy* (£7.99, Hardie Grant Books). “When you catch yourself thinking negatively, stop and consider whether what you think is really just an imagined, worst case scenario. Where’s the actual evidence for it? The aim is to use your brain, rather than your feelings, to assess and manage those negative thoughts that are affecting how you feel.”*

HOMEOPATHY FOR ANXIETY

Use this ancient medical approach to ease your tension, says Mani Norland, principal at the School of Homeopathy

A thumping heart, a sudden dizzy spell, or simply lying awake all night fretting – anxiety is an unwelcome visitor faced by twice as many women as men. And while there are lots of ways to approach the problem, if you're looking for a completely natural, holistic approach, homeopathy could be the answer.

It is wise to seek professional advice as you are likely to need a few consultations to find the right remedy. The homeopath will want to know about your anxiety, how you experience it, what your symptoms are, when and how it starts, what helps to alleviate symptoms, and when it all first started.

I think it is safe to say that just about every homeopath will have dealt with cases of anxiety

in their practice and seen positive results, but in today's world where people prefer more evidence, it is also good to know that the professor of psychiatry at Duke University, Jonathan Davidson MD, found that 60 percent of patients responded favourably to homeopathic treatment when he conducted a small study of adults with major depression, social phobia, or panic disorder.

One of the main advantages of treating anxiety with homeopathy rather than drugs is that it does not have addictive or harmful side effects. With the right homeopathic treatment, those living with debilitating anxiety can once again look forward to enjoying happy, worry-free lives.

6 REMEDIES FOR A CALM MIND

1 ACONITE

The number one remedy for a sudden and overwhelming fear of dying for whatever reason. This could be fear of war, flying, an earthquake, claustrophobic fears; anything where they are sure that death is imminent. The person will appear restless.

2 ARGENT NIT

Good for anticipation-related worry with claustrophobia, fear of tests, or fear of appearing in public (yet these people love to appear in public). This contradiction creates tension (expansion of imagination and claustrophobia), diarrhoea and wind. They want to run away, but if they feel cornered, then they may be paralysed by anxiety and have digestive upsets. These tend to be hot blooded people, better out of doors.

3 ARSEN ALB

Perfect for those who are deeply insecure, restless and fidgety, highly self-conscious – often obsessed with tidiness to overcome anxiety. They are very negative, and feel very chilly and tired. These people are sensitive to disorder, and like things tidy.

4 LYCOPODIUM

Can treat those who have an extreme lack of self-confidence, yet when in their place of power they are pompous, pretentious, and their ego is inflated. Might be described as being nice with superiors, but a tyrant at home. They have feelings of helplessness. They may shun responsibilities because of fear of not being up to the challenge. They have little confidence, and fear of failure in new situations (e.g. performing), but usually

still do quite well. They avoid crowds, yet dislike solitude, crave sweets and are worse in hot, stuffy rooms.

5 PHOSPHORUS

If there's anxiety before an operation, phosphorus can help. If people have bad reactions after anaesthetics, lack self-confidence, are intelligent and caring, they fit the right description for this remedy. They may be physically and emotionally exhausted.

6 GELSEMIUM

Good for fear of up-coming events, such as tests, which feel like impossible ordeals. The person often trembles, cannot speak (their mouth feels as if full of tongue), has chills running up and down the spine, feels overwhelming fatigue, and buckles at the knees.

“With the right
homeopathic
treatment, those
living with
debilitating anxiety
can once again
look forward to
enjoying *happy,*
worry-free lives”

OTHER HELPERS

There are a number of holistic techniques that can be used to help alleviate anxiety. As a first strategy, consider simple meditation, mindfulness or relaxation practices. These will help you to calm the mind, reflect on the issues, become aware of what the triggers are, and help with breathing and control. Do not fight anxiety, accept it, watch it, learn from it and learn to cope with it, breathing into it and reducing the level. Flower essences are made from flowers and are very gentle in relieving negative states of mind – like homeopathy they are not addictive and do not interfere with prescribed medication. Look at your diet and nutrition – what you eat is unlikely to be the cause of your anxiety, but how healthy you are will affect your ability to cope with stress, and what you eat does affect how you feel and your mood, so it can be a contributing factor. Ensure you are eating anxiety-reducing and calm-boosting foods and drinks, for example you could try drinking chamomile tea when you're feeling anxious.

**Mani is principal
at the School of
Homeopathy.
Visit [homeopathy
school.com](http://homeopathy
school.com)**

Say goodbye to PMS

Beat the bloat and cramping once and for all with Cleanmarine For Women

Auntie Flo, that time of the month, shark week... Whatever you refer to it as, it doesn't change the fact that many of us dread our periods and the lead up to them. Fortunately, you can put all of the pesky symptoms behind you thanks to Cleanmarine!

WHAT IS PMS?

According to the National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome (pms.org.uk), women can experience PMS during the seven days before their period and at ovulation for three to four days and it has over 150 symptoms. These include mood swings, depression, tiredness, fatigue, anxiety, aggression, poor sleep, food cravings, bloating, clumsiness, breast tenderness and weight gain. It's estimated that women affected by PMS will suffer symptoms for 3,000 days, which is over eight years of a woman's life!

IS THERE ANYTHING TO HELP ALLEVIATE MY SYMPTOMS?

Sadly, there is no cure, but a new study by Cleanmarine has found that Krill Oil can improve symptoms by an average of 69 percent over a period of three months. The participants, who took two capsules of Cleanmarine For Women a day, saw a significant reduction in breast tenderness (81 percent), while anxiety, headaches and bloating were also drastically lowered!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The human body needs essential fats such as omega 3 and 6 to stay healthy, but we aren't able to produce them naturally. This means that it's vital that we make sure our diets contain foods rich in these good fats, or that we take supplements. In the UK, our meals are plentiful in omega 6, but getting sufficient omega 3 from food sources alone can be very difficult. This is where krill oil comes in, as it enables you to top up your levels hassle-free, as well as providing overall benefits, such as controlling cravings and improving anxiety and joint pain. Cleanmarine For Women contains krill oil and other key ingredients, including rosemary oil (which is used for its mood enhancing effects), soy isoflavones (to ease headaches, cramps and back pain) and vitamin D3 (to help alleviate mood disorders associated with PMS). It also uses B vitamins, which aid your body in converting food into fuel to produce energy, as well as vitamin B1 (thiamine), which contributes to a healthy heart and vitamins B2 and B6, which maintains healthy skin, energy levels and normal vision.

Cleanmarine for Women, £23.99, available at cleanmarinekrill.co.uk





LYNNE FRANKS

"My idea of leadership is to encourage others to be in their power and to speak up"

Our empowerment guru meets the youngest high priestess



The beautiful Indonesian island of Bali, with its

unique Hindu-based culture and traditions devoted to God and the environment, has attracted visitors from around the world since being discovered by Dutch explorers in the 16th century.

On my recent visit I had the pleasure of meeting a young woman in a very unique position of power. Ida Resi Alit is still only 30 and has been a high priestess in the Balinese Hindu Dharma religion now for almost 10 years. Although not the only woman high priestess in Bali, she is unique in her youth in a country where the tradition is for any high priest or priestess to reach at least 45 years old before being appointed.

Ida's story is of a young girl from a fairly poor background who received visions and information while meditating. She had started suffering deep depression in her teens when she couldn't get a job and was feeling her life wasn't taking off. Her priest uncle encouraged her to meditate and she started to channel words in a strange language. Finally, after going into a deep coma, she came back with knowledge of all the ancient prayers, chants and rituals and became accepted by the heads of her religion as a high priestess.

I was lucky enough to meet Ida Resi through mutual friends and after my own powerful cleansing, which consisted of cold buckets of water poured constantly over me as she chanted ancient prayers above my head, I spent some time with her in conversation on her ideas of the importance of her ancient rituals and how they work with the modern world. She herself is thoroughly a modern young woman, communicating on WhatsApp and with her own Facebook page, while at the same time chanting prayers and conducting ceremonies hundreds of years old in delicate temple outfits.

I first asked her if she had found it difficult being accepted as a young woman and a spiritual leader in her country. "Some might hesitate from taking on this role and it has to be in their hearts to

understand how to behave and to understand," she told me. "I hope that I would encourage other young people to be inspired to be leaders," she said.

"My idea of leadership is to encourage others to be in their power and to speak up. Being a leader means a perspective, to be open minded, to take care of true relationships. It's also

understanding that freedom is not about being free to do whatever you want. Freedom is to expand our awareness, our consciousness, to see wisely and deeply what we experience. Courage inside is part of being a leader for ourselves and for others. I would like to encourage others, whatever their position."

"I feel in my heart that I am still learning and going deep inside. I learn from experience, from people I meet.

"Tradition and modern life is like a partnership, like the masculine and feminine; compassion and wisdom. Tradition comes from our ancestors and the information they guarded, based on messages they received from God on how people should live."

She explained these beliefs are firstly morally, secondly ethically and third devotionally, all in one place to build understanding, perspective and ability. "We need all three: devotion, wisdom and building inner wisdom to create a belief. With belief comes trust. The tradition comes from devotion from the heart; old tradition is to respect where we are born."

She offered some final wisdom which relates to all of us, regardless of where we live. "The important thing in life is acceptance, both of self and the world around you."

We have again just celebrated International Women's Day. We need our young women leaders to understand their role in inspiring and supporting others. Ida Resi is certainly an inspiration for all.

Watch Lynne Franks TEDx Talk on The Return of the Wise Woman on You Tube and find out about her Women's Creative Leadership Retreats for 2017 in the beautiful Somerset countryside at lynnefranks.com

The 5 Keys to CONNECTION

True happiness and fulfilment comes from paying attention to these five areas of your life, says holistic expert and author Patrick Holford

There are five keys to the fullest expression of who we are.

The first three keys relate to our physical, emotional and mental aspects, or our body, heart and mind. *The Wizard of Oz* is a great example.


As Dorothy walks her path, the yellow brick road, the fact that she is out of balance is represented by the lion who has no courage, the tin man who has no heart, representing his ability to relate being shut down, while the scarecrow who has no brain represents an inability to function. As Dorothy faces up to her demons, the witches, she becomes more balanced – more connected.

FIVE CAVITIES

It is an anatomical fact that the human body is divided into five main cavities – the pelvic cavity containing our sexual and reproductive organs; the abdominal cavity containing our digestive organs where we process food to give us vitality; the thoracic cavity with our heart and lungs; the cranial cavity of the brain and the vertebral cavity of the spine which connects everything. While the first pelvic cavity eludes to our sexuality, the last, the vertebral cavity, relates to our desire for unity, that is the spiritual aspect of who are we, looking for meaning and purpose. These are the five keys to connection – sex, body, heart, mind and spirit.

1 BALANCING BODY, HEART AND MIND

An easy starting point is to recognise that we have a body, which is our physical zone, a heart and feelings, our emotional and social zone, and a mind, our intellectual zone that enables us to make sense and order out of our perceptions, thoughts and feelings. In just about every philosophical, religious or mystical tradition this triad is represented by points of attention or energy, called chakras in the Indian traditions. In taoism there is the lower t'antien, in the belly, the middle t'antien in the heart and the upper t'antien in the head, or third eye.



“Opening the third eye and developing intuition is a key to connection”

2 BE IN YOUR HARA

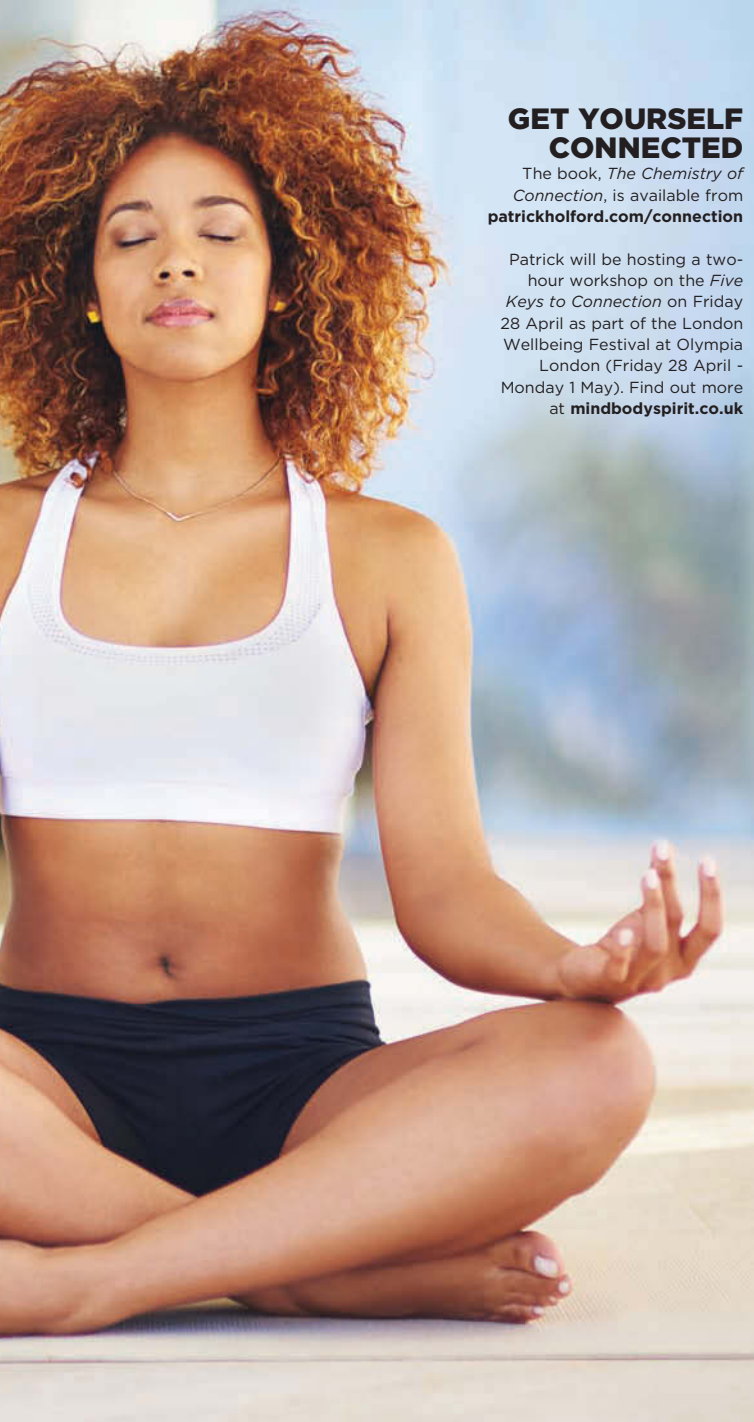
The belly centre, in zen traditions, is called the hara. It is a grounding, centering point of awareness and all true martial arts are performed with awareness in this centre. It is your centre of balance, or core.

Body awareness also means being aware of the earth, and the food that grows in the earth to nourish us and become our body. Yet we have become so germ phobic to the point where the average city dweller's microbiome is so sterilised that allergic conditions like asthma are becoming endemic in urban children. In my book and workshops I explore how to connect to the earth, and how to connect to your body, and nourish and heal yourself with real food and the right attitude.

GET YOURSELF CONNECTED

The book, *The Chemistry of Connection*, is available from patrickholford.com/connection

Patrick will be hosting a two-hour workshop on the *Five Keys to Connection* on Friday 28 April as part of the London Wellbeing Festival at Olympia London (Friday 28 April - Monday 1 May). Find out more at mindbodyspirit.co.uk



4

OPENING THE THIRD EYE

The third intelligence center is the ajna, or third eye. It correlates with the pineal gland, which is light-sensitive in many animals and is necessary for them to be connected to the environment and the ebb and flow of day and night, as well as seasonal changes. We produce melatonin, the neurotransmitter that keeps us in sync with the earth's cycles, and di-methyl-tryptamine (DMT), a powerful entheogen that is thought to be primarily produced or stored in the pineal gland, along with serotonin, the brain's feel-good chemical. They are central to dreaming and imagination. Indian mystics consider the pineal to be an antenna for 'inner' light. Philosopher René Descartes considered it to be the seat of the soul. Opening the third eye and developing intuition is another key to connection.

5

THE ALCHEMY OF SEX AND SPIRIT

A recurring theme in any true exploration of connection is the two principles: the material and the spiritual; the relative and the absolute; earth and heaven; physicality and transcendence. We experience these two principles every day as subject (I) and object (world). The merging, the meeting point, the co-existence, the alchemy of these two principles provides the greatest opportunity for a fully connected existence.

Energy itself can be seen as a dual force. The earth force, or life force, or desire for life, is the fuel of our sex drive. Sex makes life. That eros energy is what makes life exciting. The heaven force is the desire and drive for transcendence. They are the same energy, albeit with a different direction. Freedom and love. Enlightenment is having a foot in both camps, so to speak.

3

THE HEART IS THE HUB

One of my first meditation influences was from guru Nityananda of the Siddha tradition. "The heart is the hub of all sacred places. Go there and roam." That was his teaching. We have so much to learn about the metaphysical heart and the ocean of love that exists in us all. Modern science is only just starting to wake up to the fact that the heart is more like a brain than a pump, and that there are more connections from the heart to the brain than the other way around. The Heartmath Institute has pioneered ways of measuring our heart coherence, with simple ways to encourage heartfelt living. Opening the heart, and letting go of all the negative patterns and unexpressed pain that stop us being able to connect with each other, is the next key to connection.

CONNECTION TIPS

EARTH

Earth yourself by putting on some thick socks and standing on the ground, or on concrete on the earth, but not wood – it doesn't conduct. Hence, hugging a tree might not do it! Say thank you to the rising and setting sun.

BODY

Give your body a break from sugar, fried food, alcohol and caffeine. Have a detox once a week free from junk food, eating only what you can pick from a tree, or out of the ground – organic if possible. Try a hot vegetable and bean soup and a root vegetable salad, with grated carrots and beetroot, or a ginger, carrot and apple juice.

HEART

Breathe into the heart space. Bring to mind a regenerative feeling. Send that to someone in need. Commit a random act of kindness. Say hi to a stranger.

MIND

Transcend a prejudice. Turn off your smartphone and emails for two hours in the evening.

SENSUAL & SEXUAL

Treat yourself to something sumptuous and naughty. It could be a divine massage, setting up the most romantic evening for your partner, especially if you don't normally do this kind of thing, a truly decadent meal in or out, an outrageous cocktail, or a gig, concert or art show.

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5 WAYS TO Banish your inner critic *Once and for all*

Life coach Emma Tynan (emmatynan.com) shows us how:

Are you scared to create a radical change in your life? Maybe you know it's time to quit that job you've outgrown, or take the trip of a lifetime, but you get scared. Stuck. And you start to doubt yourself.

That instant feeling of elation and excitement when you think about going after something you really want will often be followed by fear. This is a natural animal instinct response that's trying to keep you safe from the unknown.

This fear becomes really problematic, however, when it takes over and then starts taunting you. This is your inner critic. The negative judgemental chatterbox that utters phrases such as: "Who do I actually think I am to do this?!", "What if it doesn't work?" and "What if I don't make any money?" And before you know it, elation has turned into a downward spiral of self doubt and self loathing.

Here are five steps to banish your inner critic for good...

LEARN TO RECOGNISE THE VOICE OF YOUR INNER CRITIC

You can do this instantly, just by scanning how you feel when you think about making a bold leap in the direction of something you desire to do or achieve. Listen to what the voice is saying, then write it down. Just observe them and know that these are self-limiting beliefs.

BANISH F.E.A.R.:

Otherwise known as False. Evidence. Appearing. Real. Just because you've written down your fear-based thoughts, it doesn't make them real. Your inner critic is just trying to keep you safe and in your comfort zone. It will throw anything and everything at you and try to keep you there, especially when it comes to over estimating what could go wrong!

GO DEEP

Our fears can be our greatest teachers, so it pays to get behind them. Ask yourself some deeper questions, either in your journal or while meditating. Start with: "What am I really scared of? Why? What else?" and just keep digging. You will be amazed at what you will uncover.

GATHER EVIDENCE TO PROVE YOURSELF WRONG

Maybe you want to start your own business but you have thoughts like: "I can't possibly do that – I wouldn't know where to begin". Overcome this by writing out all of the skills and qualifications that make you capable of starting your business. You should also research people who are doing what you want to do successfully and try to emulate their approach. You might want to get in touch with some mentors or invest in a business coach to help you do this.

DO IT ANYWAY

If you let it, your inner critic will keep you in your comfort zone your whole life. It's cosy and safe, but the truth is nothing ever happens there. There's no growth, no new experiences, no life lessons. Everything you desire is on the other side of your fears and that's why you must just do it anyway. Start with baby steps and work your way up to a massive leap of faith.



BREATHE *easy*

Confidence is just a breath away, says Fay Pottinger, co-founder of Scentered Aromatherapy Balms and Candles (scentered.me)

Everyone recognises that faltering feeling, a niggles of self-doubt which grows and grows until it starts to feel really uncomfortable. It happens to the best of us, but lack or loss of confidence can be overcome through building self-belief and becoming more comfortable with yourself. At times this might seem really elusive but it's easier than you think, and, with a little aromatherapy wisdom, you can be the calmest, most confident person in the room.

Aromatherapy is the art and science of utilising naturally-extracted aromatic essences from plants to balance, harmonise and promote the health of body, mind and spirit. Sometimes it is called essential oil therapy because, over the centuries, it has been found that particular aromas can have a deeply beneficial effect on our health and wellbeing.

Have you ever noticed how the scent of a flower which grew in the garden of your childhood home can have you go back 30 years? Or the waft of sweet pastry could see you travel the distance to Paris? Of all of the senses, smell can be the most powerful at evoking feelings, emotions and memories.

Oils that are grounding help us to feel stronger and more comfortable in our own skin, promoting feelings of self-confidence and self esteem. Think warm, woody tones such as sandalwood and cedarwood.

Citrus oils such as grapefruit and orange are naturally uplifting, boosting our general mood and positivity, which leaves us feeling happier about ourselves. Clary sage and rosemary promote mental clarity, which reduces negative mental chatter, leading to a stronger sense of purpose, focus and action – great for helping with confident decision making.

YOUR ESSENTIAL (OIL) HOW TO...

- 1 Sit down in a comfortable position on a chair, bench or on the floor, whichever suits you best.
- 2 Dab your chosen aromatherapy balm on your pulse points and inhale.
- 3 Take long deep breaths right into your belly and exhale slowly, notice the belly rising and falling with every breath.
- 4 A slow exhale is important. Common in mindful and yogic breathing techniques, the taking of a short inhale and longer exhale stimulates the vagus nerve to calm the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight response) and activates the parasympathetic nervous system to make us feel relaxed.
- 5 As you start to focus and observe your breath, you will feel more relaxed as your nervous system and your mind starts to calm. Take a couple of minutes just repeat this until you feel completely de-stressed and you will be able to focus with confidence on the tasks in hand.

THE CONFIDENCE TOOLKIT

Escape Therapy Balm with Sandalwood and Cedarwood, £14.50, scentered.me



Focus Therapy Balm with Clary Sage and Rosemary, £14.50, scentered.me

De-Stress Therapy Balm with Orange, £14.50, scentered.me



Be Happy Therapy Balm with Grapefruit, £14.50, scentered.me



Just SAYING

Improve your confidence with just a few simple words

Mantras

With the rising popularity of spiritual practices such as yoga and meditation, it seems like everyone is talking about mantras. But what exactly is a mantra and how are you supposed to use it?

“In our westernised, modern-day spiritual practices the word mantra has become as mainstream as ‘intention’, but the two are actually quite different,” says Tris Thorp, lead educator at the Chopra Centre (chopra.com). The word mantra can be broken down into two parts: “man,” which means mind, and ‘tra,’ which means transport or vehicle. In other words, a mantra is an instrument of the mind – a powerful device that you can help you achieve your goals.

Like a seed planted with the intention of blossoming into a beautiful perennial, a mantra can be thought of as a seed for energising an intention. Much in the same way that you plant a flower seed, you plant mantras in the fertile soil of practice. You nurture them and over time they bear the fruit of your intention.”

Essentially they are a phrase, word or sometimes even a sound that manifests a desired outcome. You can say them aloud to yourself every morning in the mirror, or silently repeat them during times when you need an extra boost. Here are a few to get you started...

The most destructive thing you could ever do, is to believe someone else's opinion of yourself.

Saying no is one of the most powerful things that I can do for myself.

It isn't who you are that holds you back; it's who you think you aren't.

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

The only approval you need is your own



Affirmations

Now you might be mistaken for thinking that affirmations are just mantras by another name, but there is actually a big difference. While mantras act as a means to a goal, affirmations help to purify our inner thoughts, in particular the way we think of ourselves. By repeating them daily, you can rewire your brain so that self-love and belief become the norm, as opposed to doubt and fear of failure. It's similar to that old saying 'fake it until you make it' – if you tell yourself that you are confident and amazing, even if you don't feel like it at first, eventually you will be.

Try the following on for size or come up with own. They can be as personal or general as you like. For best results say them out loud – you can do it the bathroom in the morning to on your way to work in car. Just make sure that you do it regularly. Studies show that when performed often, affirmations can raise the level of feel-good hormones, much like exercise, and they play an integral role in breaking patterns of negative thoughts, negative speech, and, in turn, negative actions.

I am the architect of my life; I build its foundation and choose its contents.

Today, I am brimming with energy and overflowing with joy.

I am superior to negative thoughts and low actions.

I have been given endless talents which I begin to utilise today.

I possess the qualities needed to be extremely successful.

I am courageous and I stand up for myself.

My thoughts are filled with positivity and my life is plentiful with prosperity.

I acknowledge my own self-worth; my confidence is soaring.

I am a powerhouse; I am indestructible.

I radiate beauty, charm, and grace

My ability to conquer my challenges is limitless; my potential to succeed is infinite



GETTING WHAT YOU WANT AT WORK

(including a pay rise)

When your worth is monetised and you're constantly competing against colleagues, it can be hard to hold on to your confidence, but career coach Ebonie Allard (ebonieallard.com) says it's important to know your value

Despite the push for equal pay in recent years, self-employed women still earn 40 percent less than self-employed men. A study at Harvard in 2015 also found that women are four times less likely to ask for a pay raise and will typically ask for 30 percent less than men when they do. So, is it that women don't want more money, that they lack the confidence to ask or something else altogether?

I suspect it's actually a mixture of all three. A study at Boston University revealed that women were far more likely to seek accommodations or ask for greater flexibility in order to help them achieve a work-life balance. Of course, there's nothing wrong with this, but it does speak volumes to what women value most.

That being said, getting what you want, whether it's more money, more time, more responsibility or some different entirely begins with these three things...

1 Know your worth

I mean this as more than just a spiritual sound-bite. While I want you to know that you are inherently worthy, I actually mean in cold hard cash. Do your research, know how much value the work you do provides for the client or the company as a figure. This information in itself may help you work out whether you are being recompensed appropriately.

2 Learn to take 'no' less personally

Most women don't like to be told no. They take it personally and when faced with possible rejection, and unlike their male counterparts, tend only to ask for something when they expect the answer to be yes. Women often take rejection of their requests as a personal rebuttal. But it's important to remember that while it is nice to be liked, being respected, being recognised or rewarded at work shouldn't be personal,

and it's far less likely to happen if you are not asking.

Practise asking more often. Start with requests for little things where you are expecting a no response and notice the fear and anxiety start to disappear as your expectations shift and your asking muscle becomes stronger.

3 Develop your BATNA

BATNA stands for Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. Having a BATNA is critical because you cannot make a wise decision about whether to accept an agreement unless you know what your alternatives are.

Your BATNA is not your bottom line, but an alternative to the negotiation, the point at which you will walk away and try something else. Having a good BATNA increases your negotiating power. If you know you have a good alternative, you do not need to concede as much, because you don't care as much if you get the deal. You don't NEED it.

If your options are slim or feel non-existent, the other person can make increasing demands, and you'll likely decide to accept whatever is offered – because you don't have a better option, no matter how unattractive the one on the table is becoming. You don't get what you want in a negotiation, you get what you believe. For example, if you go into a salary negotiation believing you are worth £20k, you will likely get to three percent above or below that figure.



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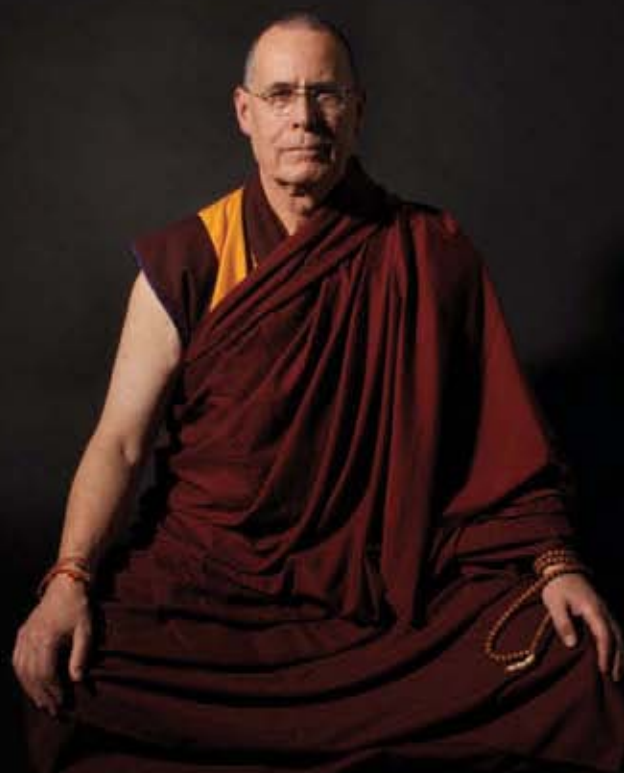
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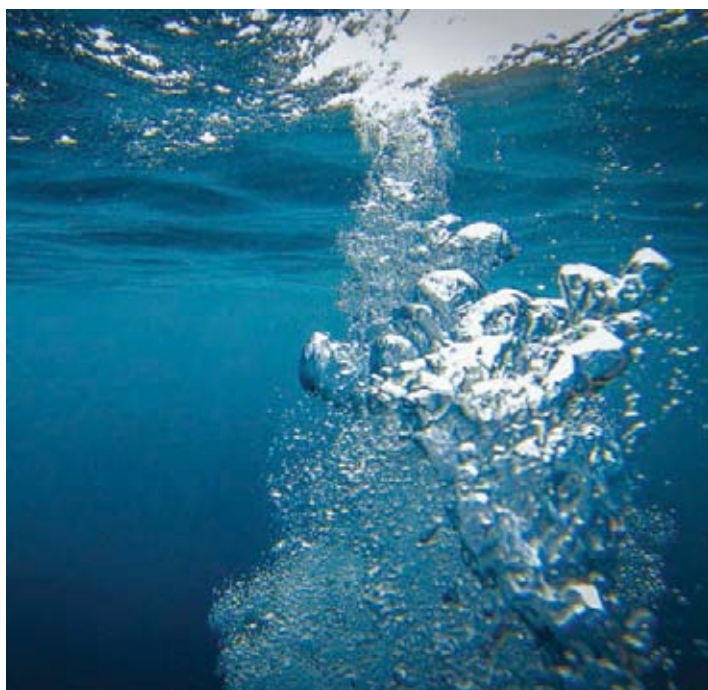
*A new app has been designed to show how much **information** fashion brands share about the **working conditions of their employees.***

The creators of Not My Style have rated more than 80 UK high street stores using 22 key indicators that reflect how open they are about the way they treat their workers. Each brand will receive one of three ratings – shop, think or stop – and ethical companies will be highlighted as ‘star’ stores. The aims are to push brands to be more transparent and help people to shop more ethically. To find out more visit notmystyle.org

The latest in **NATURAL LIVING**

THE TIDY TRUTH

Do you feel like your house is always messy, no matter how hard you try to keep things in order? Bestselling author and serial tidier Marie Kondo sheds some light on this problem in her book *Spark Joy* (£10.99, Vermilion). “The words tidying and cleaning are often used synonymously, but they are two completely different things. If you don’t recognise this important truth, then your home will never be truly clean,” says Marie. “First, the focus is different. Tidying deals with objects; cleaning deals with dirt. The responsibility for mess and clutter lies 100 percent with the individual. It accumulates when you fail to return objects to their designated place. In other words, tidying means confronting yourself. In contrast, dirt does accumulate of its own accord. It is a law of nature that dust and dirt pile up. Therefore, cleaning means confronting nature, and must be done regularly.”



MAKING WAVES

Sky has launched a new environmental campaign to educate people about marine conservation and the increasing levels of plastic littering our seas. Plastic makes up 95 percent of the rubbish found in the world’s oceans, mainly in the form of food and drink containers, bags and fishing equipment. The broadcaster, which also ran a Rainforest Rescue campaign in 2009, has set up Ocean Rescue to encourage the public to make lifestyle changes to reduce the amount of waste polluting the sea. These include using reusable bags and choosing biodegradable and recyclable products made from cardboard instead of plastic. Cleaner oceans are also important in terms of seafood, as plastic residue in fish can be absorbed into the bloodstream once eaten. To find out more visit skyoceanrescue.com

3 of the best... VASES

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1 Wave Vase, £11.95, allthingsbrightonbeautiful.co.uk



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2 Jarapa Tube Vase, £27.99, wayfair.co.uk



2

3 Grey and White Dipped Vase, £21, notonthehighstreet.com

Pollution in South Asia has caused up to 1.6 million premature births since 2010 due to tiny pollutants that get lodged in mothers' lungs

GET IN THE GARDEN

With the arrival of April we can now put the winter behind us, embrace the outdoors and enjoy more daylight and (hopefully) warmer temperatures. "Spring is finally in evidence as daffodils and flowering trees start to bloom," says the Royal Horticultural Society (rhs.org.uk). "Expect the inevitable April showers this month, although there should be sunny days too when you can turn your attention to the lawn." Despite the change in weather, it's important to protect fruit blossom from potential late frosts. It's also a good time to feed shrubs and roses and start sowing hardy annuals, herbs and wild flower seeds outdoors.



DON'T LET THE BED BUGS BITE

The average person spends around 25 years of their life in bed, and that's just sleeping. A quarter of us eat at least one meal a week from the comfort of our mattress, as well as do work, use the Internet and social media, read and watch TV. The result is a significant build-up of sweat, food, skin and dust, which can attract mites. To avoid this, try these top tips for keeping your bedroom nice and clean.

1 BEDDING

If left unwashed for several months, up to a third of your pillow will be made up of dead skin, bugs, mites and their droppings. Gross! On top of that, an adult can lose up to a litre of sweat in just one night. So, no matter how hygienic you think you are, make sure you wash your bedding (duvet and pillows) every eight to 12 weeks, and air your bed in the morning by pulling the duvet back and opening the window for a bit.

2 CARPET

Fluffy floors are a breeding ground for dirt and mites, so it's important to vacuum and dust your bedroom at least once a week, but ideally twice. This applies to the bed and curtains as well!

3 PILLOWS

Experts recommend replacing pillows every two to three years, so if you haven't recently done so, then now's the time to treat yourself to some new ones. It's important to use pillow protectors to stop skin getting into them and these should be washed regularly with the bed sheets. Tumble drying pillows once a month will kill bugs thanks to the heat and is also a good way to keep them nice and plump. Happy sleeping!



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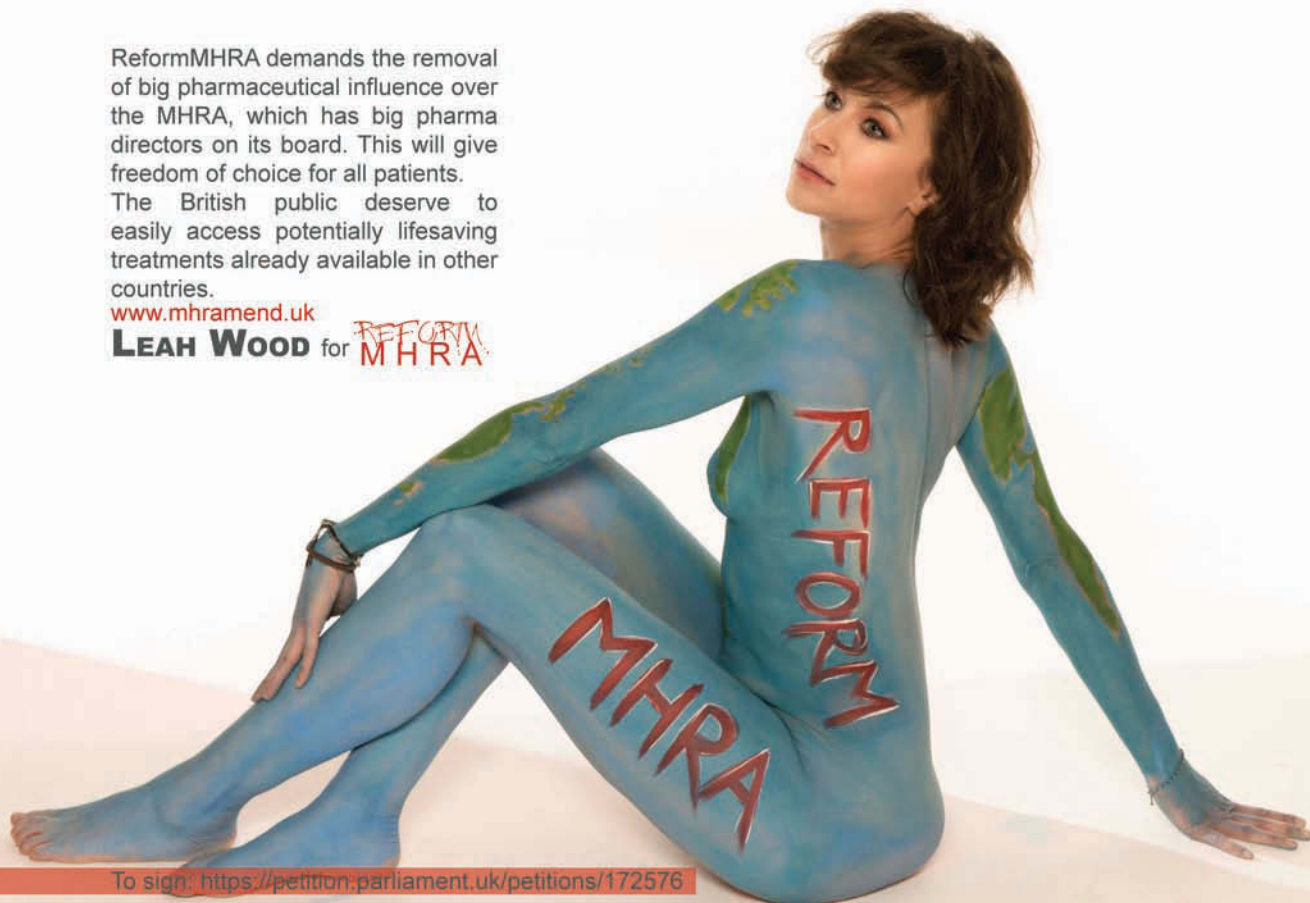
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CONQUER the CLUTTER

Clutter and mess isn't just bad news for your home, it could also be harming your health. Here's how a spring clean can rejuvenate your body and mind...

Is your living room filled with magazines and books, and your kitchen counter overflowing with gadgets, dishes and paperwork? You're not alone. According to research, the average Brit has 3,370 cubic feet of items that they rarely – or never – use. And that's twice as high as 30 years ago.

Of course, we're well aware that untidiness can be bad for your physical health, breeding mould and bacteria, but how often do you consider the impact it's having on your mental health? A study at the Neuroscience Institute at Princeton University revealed that clutter can lead to mental exhaustion – meaning that your untidy house could be the reason why you always feel tired. The same research also found that a messy and chaotic environment can make it harder to focus and process information, so your decision-making skills can take a hit if you're surrounded by items.

And that's not all. Researchers at the UCLA's Centre on Everyday Lives and Families have discovered a link between high cortisol levels in females and the number of household items they own. In other words – the more stuff in the house, the more stress women feel.

Feeling inspired to declutter? Spring is the perfect time to make a start, so here are our top four tips for a more tidy house...

1 Make time to sort through items: That's right – pencil it in your diary and make a date with your home. Having a specific hour (or two) set aside to sort items out, with an aim in mind, means you'll be more likely to do it – and achieve your goals.

2 Tidy by category: Queen of cluttering Marie Kondo (author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and *Spark Joy*), says we should tidy by category, not location. So, for example, if you're tackling your clothes, don't just sort through your wardrobe – instead gather all your clothing items out of cupboards, drawers and ironing pile and go through everything at once.

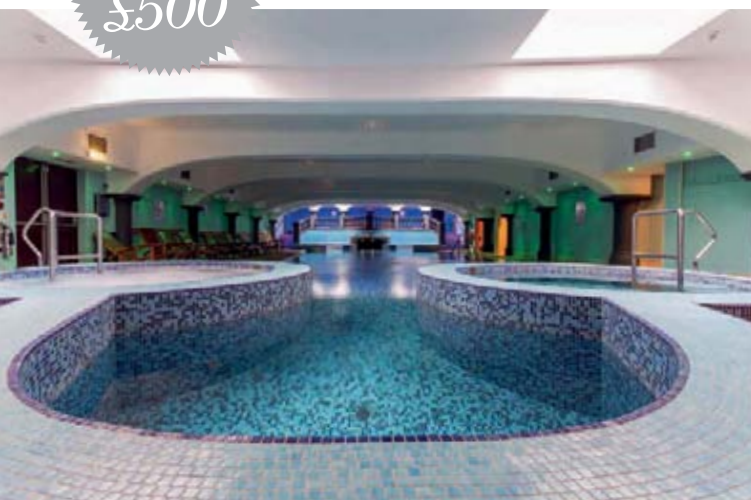
3 Leave sentimental items till last: Easily distracted by the memories old photographs and letters resurface? Marie Kondo advises following a certain order when tidying – clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous items and finally sentimental bits.

4 Wear the right clothes: In *Clear Your Clutter*, space clearing expert Karen Kingston (karenkingston.com) says the colour you wear when tidying can help the process. "Just as red dancing shoes make your feet feel like moving, so wearing red clothes make you feel like taking action," she explains. "If you don't have anything red, then wear colours from the warm end of the spectrum rather than cool colours such as blue. Many people keep clutter as a way of comforting themselves, so if you wear warm, comforting colours, you'll find it easier to let things go."

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A haven of peace and tranquillity, Hoar Cross Hall is set within a grade II listed stately home amongst 50 acres of magnificent woodland in the heart of rural Staffordshire. On offer is a complimentary Face and Body Treatment which involves a soothing, restorative massage, nourishing body wrap and an illuminating facial. You'll also find everything you would expect at a luxury spa, including a salt water vitality pool, Nordic Heat and Ice suite with a sauna, steam room and ice temple and a hydrotherapy pool. Book yourself in for one of the fitness and relaxation classes, work out in the state-of-the-art gym or try an outdoor activity, such as cycling or tennis. To find out more visit hoarcross.co.uk

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An Austrian idyll

Fresh air, winter activities and an indulgent thermal spa... it's little wonder that Filzmoos is fast becoming a go-to destination in Austria. Jonathan Webster finds out more

Nestled amongst the Austrian mountains, only 90 minutes from the chocolate box historic city of Salzburg is a rather special resort that's becoming a haven for those seeking to improve their health and fitness – the natural way. And have a fine holiday in the process. The place is called Filzmoos (filzmoos.at), and it's home to no less than three skiing and mountain-walking schools all doing a thriving business with large numbers of visitors.

I visited with my family in February when snow blanketed this part of Austria. My purpose for heading here was twofold: to have a family winter holiday, and to try to cure a malingering lung condition that had been making me feel perpetually run down.

We flew out from Gatwick courtesy of Inghams and our abode for the week was the traditional Austrian Pension Wieser – all oak beams, roaring fires and generous Austrian hospitality.

On the first morning, we stepped onto our balcony to be greeted by a scene that was like something out of *The Sound of Music*. As if on cue, it had snowed overnight, and the mountainside outside our window was covered in a soft deep blanket of inviting white.

Over a big breakfast I was advised by our host that in order to get healthy, I should start with some more gentle winter pursuits, such as snow shoe-walking. So I duly accompanied my family to get kitted out at one of Filzmoos' many ski equipment hire shops. Having made sure that we were properly clipped and zipped into our ski shoes (think tennis rackets that attach to snow boots), our mountain guide led us off hiking up the nearest trail. "Follow me and do what I do," he cheerfully yelled over his shoulder. And, like an obedient school party, that's just what we did, pole for pole and step for step!

At first it took some getting used to, but once we got into our rhythm time seemed to slip by as we ascended up the gentle mountain paths. That evening, I could feel my lungs easing. The crisp mountain air was clearly starting to do me some good.

Over the next few days, I did more snow-shoe walking and even tried skiing at the Schischule Filzmoos (schischule-filzmoos.at), interjecting vigorous bouts of exercise with some indulgent visits to The Therme Amadé Spa. The water at this spa is enriched with medicinal salt, from the famous mine of Bad Ischl in upper Austria. Most of the pools at this facility contain 1.5 to 2.5 percent saline water and this is perfect for bolstering lung health as salt water has a positive effect on the skin and respiratory system. I found that the salt inhaled in the steam grotto or applied during a sauna produced immediate beneficial effects, in that I could breathe more easily, especially with my troubled right lung.

Looking back, perhaps the most memorable experience was a trip we took by a horse-drawn sleigh up into the mountains. The weather was perfect: sunny and crisp with crystal clear bright blue skies, and, as if strangely on cue, ruddy-voiced Tyrolean farmers yodeling in the distance. You don't get more Austrian than that! And, as for my lungs: well, thanks to this holiday, they are in pretty good shape again!

Inghams is offering seven nights, half board at the three-star Hotel Pension Wieser, Filzmoos, Austria from £619 per person. Price includes return flight from London Gatwick to Salzburg and transfers. For more information visit ingham.co.uk/ski-holidays.

Stars

Find out what April has in store for you with Marjorie Orr

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20

Close partners will be supportive though not always realistic. Later in the month you'll be ruffling feathers with your honesty but will be more outgoing, and you'll receive compliments and admiring glances. Money will materialise as a result of your determination.

TAURUS *Apr 21 - May 20*

You won't know whether to push or pull, be proactive or drift along. Just try to pace yourself, especially when arguments arise – be willing to agree to differ. Affectionate friends will improve your morale and your birthday sun in the final days will give you a confidence boost.

GEMINI *May 21 - Jun 21*

You'll be in a mischievous and adventurous mood and will be surrounded by fun friends. Not all of your plans will be able to happen immediately, however, which will give you moments of frustration, but just be patient. After the 21st you'll be raring to go.

CANCER *Jun 22 - Jul 23*

Close partners may be difficult early on so try to skirt around differences of opinion. Aim to pack in as much work as possible before the 19th. Your social life will be full of excitement and later in the month you'll be on top form and flirting like mad!



LEO *Jul 24 - Aug 23*

Yearning for faraway places, your head will be filled with enthusiastic schemes. You'll be expecting everyone around you to dance to your tune, but emotionally you'll be secretive and keeping your thoughts and feelings to yourself.

VIRGO *Aug 24 - Sep 23*

You won't be afraid to state your opinion but remember that gentle persuasion usually works faster. The love of one special partner will keep you smiling, though it may be too possessive at times. Towards the end of the month you'll be aiming high and determined to walk your talk.

LIBRA *Sep 24 - Oct 22*

Hard work will be necessary to reach fair agreements about cooperation – persistence will pay off but you'll need to be flexible. Problems at home will have to be negotiated with tact, and talking to your nearest and dearest after the 20th should ease any remaining tensions.

SCORPIO *Oct 23 - Nov 22*

You'll be acting as peacemaker, but if everyone pulls together then you'll get to where you want to be faster. Towards the middle of the month there'll be sudden changes which will require you to stay on your toes and not react too hastily.

SAGITTARIUS *Nov 23 - Dec 22*

This month will be your chance to shine socially and taking time out for heart to heart chats with loved ones will resolve any recent tensions. Get creative with money and try not to be too much of a perfectionist when it comes to chores.

CAPRICORN *Dec 23 - Jan 20*

Embrace the opportunity to reconnect to your roots and those you feel most comfortable around. Your energy and enthusiasm will be high so you'll throw yourself into having a good time. Later you'll need to balance work with pleasure and focus on your health.

AQUARIUS *Jan 21 - Feb 19*

You'll be moving fast and rarely bored, but will need to get your priorities straight otherwise you'll end up running in circles. At home, opening up and explaining what's really bothering you will be helpful.

PISCES *Feb 20 - Mar 20*

Your appearance will draw compliments and you'll be turning on the charm, as well as being outspoken about delays and mistakes. Be understanding if a friend appears to be shutting you out. Your luck with money will continue although you'll be acting impulsively and spending liberally.

Marjorie Orr

is one of the world's leading astrologers, with more than 25 years' experience.



For a personal consultation with Marjorie visit star4cast.com

For your personalised stars from Marjorie call 0905 072 3804 or speak to one of her psychics – call 0906 539 0201.

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“

It felt like a
cleansing,
as if I were
about to be
scrubbed
clean of my
old *life*

”



Jane is the author of *Wellbeing & Mindfulness*, *The Energy Secret*, *The Weekend Healer* and many other wellbeing titles. See her Amazon author page.

JANE ALEXANDER

Our holistic hero feels reborn

I will always take the tough call, the hard challenge rather than submit to the softness. Even when I go on retreat, it's usually to do something extreme – a tough week of fasting, days of silent meditation, hours of extreme yoga or fitness challenges. So, when I was invited to experience the new ila-only spa in Rajasthan, India, I paused. It sounded simply... too blissful, too kind, too nurturing.

When Denise Leicester, founder of ila (ila-spa.com), discovered RAAS Devigarh (raasdevigarh.com), a magical hotel created from a former hilltop palace, she knew this was the place to run deep soul-shifting retreats (see healingholidays.co.uk for packages). Devi Garh means 'abode of the goddess' and Denise was inspired by the Hindu festival of Navaratri, which takes place twice a year, in April and October. Navaratri honours the nine aspects of the goddess Durga with each devi (goddess) reflecting a different chakra, a different aspect of the divine feminine. A series of 'Devi Blessings' – a potent yet gentle mixture of bodywork, yoga, meditation, ritual and prayer – bring women back to the goddess within.

I arrived in pieces, worn out by being strong and tough. "You don't have to do anything," said Denise. "Just rest; move back into a space of being." So I crashed onto the bed in my suite, and woke to the sound of rain. Not just a quiet shower but an elemental torrent, as if the sky were sobbing. It felt like a cleansing, as if I were about to be scrubbed clean of my old life.

My first blessing was that of the goddess Shaliputri, focusing on

Muladhara, the root chakra. My feet were washed, my body smoked with frankincense. The sound of crystal singing bowls surrounded me as my body was massaged back into a sense of grounding with the earth, the mother of all. I floated into a sea of bliss.

My days at Devigarh passed in a dreamy haze. Everything here is gentle, loving, soothing, kind. The yoga nourishes, the meditation stills, the spa blessings remind the body that it's okay to let go, to trust, to be yourself, without the need for masks, for tough ego façades against the world. Devigarh itself is less a hotel than a state of mind, a beautiful dream of kindness, inspiration and deep holding.

"As a woman there is a part of us that doesn't even know who we are," says Denise. "Here we have a chance to experience rebirth. A special place where you can go in, be held, get back in touch with a memory, an essence."

I left Devigarh with my heart as soft as my newly nourished skin. I felt baby-fresh, as if I had emerged from a nourishing womb. Devigarh was my birthing place and the devi blessings the entrance to a new life.

Healing Holidays (healingholidays.co.uk) offers a five-night stay at Raas Devigarh including a five-day devi blessings package from £2,499 per person, sharing a room. Including economy class flights from London Heathrow, transfers and accommodation on a full-board basis.

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