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THE TEAM



DEPUTY EDITOR
Allison Jacobs

Good sleep is so important - if you struggle, you'll find some genius hacks on page 48



EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Emily McMullin

If you're a vegetarian or a vegan, turn to page 19 to find out how to get your protein fix without eating meat



HEALTH AND FITNESS WRITER
Jody-Ann Miller

Deepening crows feet have been piling on the years, so I'm excited to try out the next-gen anti-ageing skincare on page 76



CONTENT WRITER
Lauren Godfrey

Want to get more health and beauty news before the April issue? Head on over to naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk for daily reads



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WELCOME...

How are you feeling today? If the answer is tired, you're not alone. It seems that in today's busy society, struggling to get out of bed or constantly feeling drained can be the norm. In fact, recent research has revealed that one of three of us feel worn out because of the pace of our modern lives and in another survey a whopping 97 percent of people said they felt tired most of the time.

But whether you're suffering from the 4pm slump, can't seem to get enough sleep or are simply exhausted from juggling too much, don't worry. This issue we've got a range of holistic tips and advice that will help you feel more energised, naturally. On page 56, our experts share 20 easy natural boosters that will soon make a difference to your energy levels, and on page 48 we look at how to get a more restful slumber. Can't concentrate because you feel tired? On page 39 we've got five energy poses to help you improve your focus.

Happy reading!

Claire

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





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March OVER TO YOU...



MARCH'S STAR LETTER

After devouring the January issue of *Natural Health*, I went back through it and cut out images of everything I wanted to try, cook, read, experience and learn more about in 2017. I made it into a collage in my journal – much more inspiring than my usual new year's resolutions list of dos and don'ts! Thank you for getting the year off to such a positive, inspiring start.

Kim, via email



THIS MONTH'S STAR LETTER WINS...

a Sleep Suite set from Puriskin worth more than £25! Powerfully grasping the anti-inflammatory and soothing potency of high-grade lavender, every item is specifically blended to rebalance the sleep cycle. The bath oil offers hydrating nourishment and the emollient balm, made with ylang ylang, marjoram and lavender essential oils, induces relaxation and improves sleep. Topped off with an aerated lavender pouch, this set is guaranteed to give you sweet dreams! (puriskinbyvb.com)

SCRUMMY SCONES

My husband gave me a copy of *Natural Health* for Christmas. I was so excited to make the scones on page 70 in the January issue but I forgot to buy kale, so I substituted it for leftover Brussels sprouts instead – they tasted great! I loved reading the magazine and will definitely be buying it again.

Helen, via email



ACROSS THE POND

I live in the USA and was so happy to discover that I could subscribe to your e-magazine. I thoroughly enjoy every page and learn so much – I was thrilled to discover hygge thanks to your feature (*NH's talking about*, p19, December issue). Thank you for producing such a great magazine!

Nicole, via email

PINCH OF SALT

I was really intrigued by Jo Wood's article about Himalayan rock salt (*Salt of the earth*, p55, January issue) and found it very interesting, particularly as I am a self-proclaimed salt lover. I'll definitely be trying it out and will hopefully reap its supposed benefits!

Steven, via email



NUMBER ONE FAN

I recently purchased the February issue which, as always, I am loving. I especially enjoyed the wellbeing supplement. Thank you for all of the inspiring information in *Natural Health* – it's my favourite magazine and I really look forward to it every month!

Laura, 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 for your chance to win our star letter prize!

This MONTH

MARCH IS THE MONTH TO...

MAKE BEAUTY TEA

This brew supports the liver and kidneys.

When these organs are well taken care of, you will notice clear, naturally radiant skin and feel energetic.

Ingredients

- 1 part dandelion root
- 1 part burdock root
- 0.5 part nettle leaf
- 0.25 part licorice
- 0.15 part calendula flowers

Combine three tablespoons of the above mix and three cups of cold water in a lidded saucepan. Slowly bring to a simmer without allowing the water to boil over. Let it simmer over a high heat for at least 20 minutes. Strain and enjoy.

From Healing Herbal Teas by Sarah Farr (Storey).



INSPIRATION

BE INFORMED

Are you trying for a baby, or know someone who is?

The Ava bracelet, launched this month and worn like a watch, has been found to predict a woman's five most fertile days of the month with 89 percent accuracy.

Its sensors collect data while you sleep, and its clever algorithm tells you the best days to conceive.

£199, avawomen.com



PLAN A BREAK

To celebrate Wales's Year of Legends,

Epic Retreats has partnered with Best of Wales to create the country's first 'disappearing' hotel. The pop-up boutique will appear at three places of natural beauty over the coming year, and vanish again once tourists have left, leaving the landscapes untouched. The locations are being kept under wraps for now, but you can register your interest at epicretreats.wales to be one of the first to find out the details.



TREAT MUM

The Bliss Sanctuary for Women in Bali offers proper pampering for mums and daughters this Mother's Day – think deep rest and nurturing minus couples and children. You can spend quality time together in idyllic surroundings, enjoy unlimited massages, spa treatments, yoga and sightseeing tours, and there is no schedule to stick to so you do what you want when you want. Visit blissanctuaryforwomen.com

The latest in NATURAL HEALTH

Homeopathy ABC

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

X is for *Xanthoxylum* #1 remedy for paralysis and neuralgia

Xanthoxylum, also known as prickly ash, comes from a shrub found in the Himalayan mountains in Nepal and is known for its effect on the nervous system. While it is often used to treat paralysis, especially hemiplegia, and neuralgia, it is a versatile remedy and helps with a range of other ailments, such as period pain, insomnia, respiratory and throat problems and headaches.



WELLNESS WARRIOR

Meet Abha Sharma, founder of TOSé Apothecary (toseapothecary.com)

NH: What inspired you to start your skincare range?

AS: I decided to create 100 percent natural products after experiencing the power and purity of plant-based ingredients. Working with nature and creating well balanced formulas thrills me!

NH: In your opinion, what are the key benefits of using natural ingredients in skincare and beauty products?

AS: Natural ingredients contain gentle oils and vitamins that help to balance the skin's pH and strengthen its barrier by encouraging regeneration. By using natural skincare and beauty products, we avoid hormone-disrupting chemicals and the build up of toxins which can create skin problems.

NH: What advice would you give to someone who is new to natural beauty?

AS: Have a little faith in plant-based ingredients. It's true that the benefits of natural skincare can take longer to show, but once they do they are long-lasting and will make you feel great inside and out.

NH: What skincare products do you swear by?

AS: Our French Clay & Lemongrass Body Scrub never fails to make my skin feel soft and energised and the Ylang Ylang & Macadamia Body Oil has helped to keep my skin troubles at bay this winter.

SUPP SPOT

Fay Higginbotham at Solgar (solgar.co.uk) on the importance of iron

Mention iron to a man and he may think of ships and bridges, but for women, who lose iron on a monthly basis through their periods, it can mean the difference between feeling fine or being exhausted.

Iron is important for healthy red blood cells as it aids the transportation of oxygen, as well as contributing to an energy-yielding metabolism. A deficiency is most common in teenage girls and pregnant women and, paradoxically, a lack of iron may lead to heavier periods instead of making them lighter. Poor digestion in the elderly can also lead to a deficiency as can a vegetarian diet, as the iron found in plants absorbs less well than the iron in meat.

Meat, beans, nuts, wholegrains and green leafy vegetables are all good sources of iron, or you can try a supplement such as iron bisglycinate.



"It's never been true that you have to be a carnivore to consume a sufficient amount of protein" - we look at plant-based protein on p19

WHAT'S THE BUZZ ABOUT? TURMERIC LATTES

It turns out that turmeric is a pretty incredible multitasker when it comes to the health benefits it has to offer, and adding it to drinks is a great way to up your intake. Thanks to its anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties, the yellow spice is good for combatting skin irritation, blemishes and acne and can help to ease joint pain and reduce infection in the gut. On top of that, it's also been found to delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, lower cholesterol and relieve depression. And don't worry if you're sceptical about the taste - while recipes vary slightly (a quick google search will give you plenty of results), most contain ginger, honey and cinnamon in addition to the turmeric and warmed milk of your choice, hence why the beverage has become so popular. Go on, give it a go!



Pay rise

Researchers have found that the presence of high-performing co-workers can improve an individual's earnings. The effect is most likely driven by increased productivity due to pressure to keep up with colleagues.

A helping hand

A recent study has concluded that older people who help and support others live longer. The results showed that grandparents who look after their grandchildren on average die later than those who don't.

Short and sweet

It has been discovered that one 20 minute session of moderate exercise can stimulate the immune system, producing an anti-inflammatory cellular response.

The BAROMETER



Red meat

According to new research, regularly eating red meat may be linked to a higher chance of developing the common inflammatory bowel condition diverticulitis.

Pollution

A recent study has estimated that one in 10 cases of Alzheimer's in urban areas could be associated with living amongst heavy traffic.

Eating disorders

It has been revealed that three percent of females in their 40s and 50s in the UK are living with eating disorders. Researchers said that the figure was surprisingly high as these illnesses are primarily associated with adolescents.

#EndRestlessNights

Good nights start here

“ When used as part of a healthy bedtime routine, Magnesium can help you relax and improve your sleep. ”

James Wilson, sleep expert



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THERAPY OF THE MONTH

Balneotherapy

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

Balneotherapy is a form of therapeutic bathing, usually in naturally mineral-rich waters and thermal springs, aimed at treating various injuries and illnesses. It is an ancient therapy that has been used in alternative medicine for centuries across the world – think of the Roman Baths, for example.

Balneotherapy is thought to encourage healing by increasing circulation, stimulating detox and easing stress. Soaking in warm water can relieve stiff muscles by accelerating blood flow and decrease swelling and inflammation. The range of specific ailments that the therapy is believed to help with is vast – cardiovascular disease, chronic fatigue, arthritis, fibromyalgia and skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema, to name but a few. It's also considered to be an effective remedy for back ache, helping to reduce pain and improve mobility and quality of life for sufferers.

Spring waters contain a variety of naturally occurring minerals such as magnesium, sodium and calcium, and these are thought to offer healing properties when absorbed by the skin. Here at *Natural Health* we're big fans of magnesium in particular thanks to its numerous health benefits, which include increasing energy, helping with digestion, calming nerves and preventing migraines. The power of these minerals is why people frequently add salts known for their therapeutic effects (e.g. Dead Sea salt) to baths.

What we love about balneotherapy is that it's broad and can be enjoyed by everyone in a variety of contexts, and is beneficial even without a specific health problem that needs healing. As Diane Nettleton, director of Gaia Spa (gaiaboringdon.co.uk), says: "The natural minerals benefit the body and just the simple act of being in water and bathing relaxes both the body and mind to achieve a sense of calm."

ON TRIAL

Everything you need to know about your first session

Balneotherapy can take a number of forms and a lot of spas will offer various treatments under the umbrella of the therapy. Some will feature specific balneotherapy pools, or, even better, you can take a trip to a resort with hot springs, such as Iceland's Blue Lagoon. If you're short on time and money, you can even try it out at home by soaking in a bath with some form of salt, such as Epsom salt or sea salts. This therapy is generally experienced without the guidance of a practitioner, so you can relax and enjoy it on your own terms.

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SUPPLEMENTS



Plant-based protein is becoming so popular that even meat companies are investing in it

NH's talking about: PLANT-BASED PROTEIN

It's a common misconception that non-meat eaters don't get enough protein, and a potential deficiency is often the first thing that someone will raise concerns about when you tell them that you've cut meat from your diet. But, while it's never been true that you have to be a carnivore to consume a sufficient amount of protein, nowadays there's really no justification for buying into this myth.

The popularity of vegetarianism and veganism continues to rise – it's estimated that two percent of the UK population now follow a vegetarian diet and the number of vegans in Britain has increased by 360 percent over the last 10 years. This has had a significant impact on the ingredients and foods we see in supermarkets and restaurants and led to a focus on alternatives to animal products, of which plant-based protein is a big one.

So, why is protein important? Because it's a macronutrient (as opposed to a micronutrient), we need quite a lot of it to stay healthy, and, unlike carbohydrates and fat, our bodies

Meat is old news when it comes to sources of protein

don't store it, so they can't draw from a reservoir when we're running low. As for what it does...well, where to begin? Protein builds and repairs tissue, makes enzymes, hormones and other body chemicals and

is a key part of our bones, muscles, skin, cartilage and blood. Definitely something worth paying attention to then!

Now onto plant-based protein. The list of foods that serve as a good source is endless – quinoa, nuts, beans, legumes, seeds, lentils, brown rice, spirulina, a wide range of vegetables including broccoli and corn, and many more! And, thanks to the increase in people following plant-based diets, we are seeing more and more products and recipes that offer tasty alternatives to meat and pack a protein punch at the same time (who needs beef when you can have a delicious veggie burger?). Natural protein powders are also a great way to get your fix – try the Super Elixir Nourishing Protein (£48, welleco.co.uk), Body Brilliance (£50, bodyism.com) or Good Hemp's Pure Protein (£13.99, goodhempfood.com).



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Our top pick of ethical goods

1 BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

Make a statement with these funky trousers from sustainable fairtrade brand Mayamiko. Pair with a plain shirt or blouse or go all out with the matching peplum top. Mayamiko Erenive Cigarette Trousers in Floral Reef, £50, mayamiko.com

2 SILKY SMOOTH

This 100 percent crepe silk scarf is hand woven, dyed and block printed by Indian artisans, helping to preserve their traditional crafts and provide a sustainable income. Perfect for the transition from winter to spring! Peace Treaty Hand-Woven Silk Manda Scarf, £160, ethicalcollection.com

3 JET SETTER

Ideal for storing make-up, toiletries and jewellery, this bag is an essential for any trip. It's also made using a fairtrade production process with minimal waste and the materials are chemical-free, so you can show it off with pride. O My Bag Canvas Toiletry Bag, £34, ethicalcollection.com

4 LATHER UP

Unwind in the shower with this natural shower gel. The organic honey and antioxidant-rich rooibos will leave you feeling and smelling divine! Neal's Yard Remedies Jasmine & Ylang Ylang Shower Gel, £14, nealsyardremedies.com

5 MINTY FRESH

Ditch the After Eights and opt for a hot cup of tea instead with this organic double mint and fennel infusion from Clipper. Clipper Organic After Dinner Mints, Double Mint Infusion, £2.25, clipper-teas.com

6 LIP SERVICE

Inika's organic, vegan and cruelty-free lipsticks are created with natural shea butter and jojoba oil to moisturise and protect the lips. We love this shimmery orange shade but there are also 13 others to choose from. Inika Certified Organic Vegan Lipstick in Cherry Blossom, £18, inikaorganic.com

7 SWEET TOOTH

Rich dark chocolate with real pieces of mango from Burkina Faso and coconut from Sri Lanka – perfect for nights in on the sofa. Divine 70% Dark Chocolate with Mango & Coconut, £2.39, divinechocolate.com

8 HIT THE MAT

Recommended for ashtanga and hatha yoga, this rug is made from densely woven cotton that retains shape and absorbs moisture. Pink Namaste Organic Yoga Mat in Orange/Saffron, £42, pinknamaste.com



Think yourself YOUNGER

Don't believe that ageing is all in the mind? You can turn back your biological clock, says Jayney Goddard, and the evidence is all here

Ageing is a really intriguing topic. We all age differently – some more successfully than others. It's also a holistic phenomenon, because we humans are such complex biological systems, and we have these tricky things called minds too, which further complicate matters. Most of the really compelling research into successful, healthy ageing, and even biological age reversal, centres around the idea that much of the cause of (and cure for) ageing and decline into illness is a social construct.

Ellen Langer PhD, a professor of psychology from Harvard Medical School, is well known for running several ground-breaking and thought-provoking experiments. The central tenet of much of Langer's work is that she believes that "Social conditions may foster what may erroneously appear to be necessary consequences of ageing." In other words, we age because society expects us to.

Langer's experiments clearly show that given the right circumstances, we can reverse a person's age – not chronologically, of course, but biologically. The surprising truth is that your real (biological) age can be very easily manipulated. In fact, Langer believes that we have almost complete mental control over our diseases. And these diseases include the conditions we perceive to be an inevitable counterpart to ageing. Here are a few of Langer's most intriguing experiments that indicate that ageing really is 'all in the mind'.

• THE COUNTER CLOCKWISE STUDY – TOTAL IMMERSION IN ORDER TO REVERSE BIOLOGICAL AGE

One of the most influential and intriguing studies by Langer and her colleagues in the 1970s is the now very famous Counter Clockwise study. Langer and her research group hypothesised that by immersing a group of elderly men in an environment where all sensory clues pointed to a time when

they felt at their very best (the late 50s), the men might get biologically younger. They spent the week immersed in paraphernalia from twenty years earlier, they listened to radio shows from that time, and discussed news from the period. They were not allowed to bring up any events that happened after 1959, and they were asked to refer to themselves, their families, and their careers as they were at that time.

This immersion in sensory cues from the time sent signals to the body which resulted in the manifestation of both the energetic responses and biological profile of a much younger person. The men, by acting as if they were still in their late fifties and early sixties, actually changed their performance on benchmark tests of age. By the end of the study, the experimental group demonstrated marked improvement in their hearing, eyesight, memory, dexterity and appetite. Those who had arrived using canes, and were dependent on the aid of their children, walked out under their own power, and were able to carry their own suitcases.

Langer believes that by expecting these men to function independently and engaging with them as independent individuals rather than as old people, she and her students gave them the opportunity to view themselves differently. This, then, had a huge impact on them biologically.

• THE YOUNG ONES

In a BBC Horizon programme, six well-loved British celebrities who were household names in the 1970s – Liz Smith, Lionel Blair, Dickie Bird, Sylvia Syms, Derek Jameson and Kenneth Kendal – were taken back to this time by being immersed into a 1970s environment for a week – when they felt that they were at their 'prime'. They had to lug their own suitcases upstairs, had to cook for themselves, navigate their way through shag-pile carpet to change the television channel, cope with standard 70s psychedelic wallpaper,



Jayne Goddard
is president of
The Complementary
Medical Association.
Visit The-CMA.org.uk or
JayneyGoddard.org

consume chow mein, and all other sensory input was from that time – including having pictures of themselves and their families on display.

As with Langer's first group in the Counter Clockwise study, this group benefitted from the most incredible biological age rewind. Astonishingly, the group became physically and psychologically younger. Their hearing, grip strength and manual dexterity improved. Memory and IQ scores also grew. Balance improved dramatically and they even became taller – all in just one week. In fact, Dr Michael Mosely, who hosted the programme said: "The changes were amazing. And I'm not easily amazed."

Because the celebrities' minds were actively engaged in living 20 years earlier, their bodies seemed to follow. Langer believes this profound – and extremely rapid – age reversal is a demonstration of how our bodies don't let us down as we get older, but our minds accept the labels of ageing. Freeing ourselves from that state of mind can turn back the clock.

• THE EFFECT OF SPEEDING UP OR SLOWING DOWN TIME

Another intriguing example of how profoundly our minds affect our biology comes from a study on people with type 2 diabetes. Once again Dr Langer hypothesised that our mind has much more control of our body than most people believe. In this experiment, she and her colleagues wanted

to find out whether the mind can affect blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes, by asking them to perform simple tasks for a period of 90 minutes. The 46 participants' perception of time was manipulated by having them refer to clocks that were either accurate or altered to run fast or slow. Blood glucose levels changed in accordance with how much time they believed had passed instead of how much time had actually passed. These results are an example of the influence psychological processes can directly exert on the body.

• BELIEVING YOU ARE EXERCISING CONFERS THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE – IN THE REAL WORLD

Langer and one of her students Alia Crum conducted a study, published in the journal *Psychological Science*, which involved 84 hotel chambermaids. All the women had stated that they didn't feel that they got much exercise in a typical week. Two groups were formed randomly; one was an experimental group and the other a control group. The women in the experimental group were primed by the researchers to think differently about their work by informing them that cleaning rooms was fairly serious exercise – that they were doing as much if not more exercise than the USA's Surgeon General's recommendations. The women in the control group were not similarly primed – and both groups just got on with their jobs as normal. Once their expectations were shifted, the maids who were told that they were doing lots of exercise lost weight, and also improved on other measures like body mass index and hip-to-waist ratio. Nothing changed in the control group. Everything else being equal, the only difference between the two groups was the change in mind-set.

• MINDSET MANIPULATION WORKS – YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS CAN MAKE YOU BIOLOGICALLY YOUNGER

So if Langer and her colleagues are correct, and feeling, looking and behaving more youthfully makes you healthier, what can you do about it? Langer has the solution, she says: "Don't buy the mindset in the first place. Then you won't be vulnerable to it," she states. "I think we have far more control over our health and wellbeing than most of us realise."

My advice is to incorporate as many 'youth cues' into your life as you can. Whenever you have the opportunity, listen (and dance!) to the music you adored when you were a teenager or young adult and were biologically in your prime. Spend time looking back at your pin-ups from the era – try not to laugh – this is doing you good. Enrol some of your friends of a similar age and have a rewind party, where you play that music you all loved (think school disco!), talk about who you fancied then, bands, fashion, get some back copies of *Jackie* or *Smash Hits* and even dress the part – honestly, it all helps. Do let your friends in on why you are doing this though – it may make things go more smoothly – and they too will reap the anti-ageing benefits of your wild (yet strangely effective) anti-ageing experiment.



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JANEY LEE GRACE

*These things
I know...*

Matcha tea should be on your shopping list

As another birthday comes around (ahem), I turn my thoughts to life expectancy. Ageing is the biggest risk factor for the major diseases facing us today, including cancer, heart disease, stroke and dementia. To help us to enjoy our longer lives, we need to tackle age-related illness. I remember reading the ground-breaking book *Healthy at 100* by John Robbins. It was remarkable that as he travelled the world visiting various indigenous tribes, he found many people who were very old (way beyond the average 81 year life expectancy here). And yet they were in great health, physically and mentally. They were happy, alert, and in most cases, even had their own teeth and good eyesight!

So can we prevent age-related illnesses and extend healthy life span? A charity called The Healthy Life Foundation has been set up to fund age-related research and support scientific and medical research targeted at preventing degenerative disease to improve the quality of life nationally and globally.

One of the founder members is Katherine Swift whose mother was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“How can we prevent
age-related illnesses and
extend *healthy life span*”



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



She decided to investigate which foods were highest in antioxidants, and she discovered the benefits of green tea and specifically matcha tea, and then went on to create her own high-quality organic matcha under the name of OMGTEA. During her research she was introduced to the inspirational and ground-breaking research of Professor Michael Lisanti, listed amongst the top 100 most-cited researchers in biochemistry and biology. Together they aim to fund research programmes in a whole range of disease-related areas.

So for Katherine, more research is in the pipeline – especially about the benefits of matcha tea for breast cancer patients. Their latest studies show it's great for fat burning, which sounds like good news. Ditch the diet, just drink matcha!

DEBORAH MITCHELL

“ I HAVE A VISION: to make the world feel beautiful ”

With a clientèle that includes Gwyneth Paltrow, Victoria Beckham and the Duchess of Cambridge, it seems that beauty therapist Deborah Mitchell has mastered the art of natural anti-ageing

When Deborah Mitchell embarked on a career as a beauty therapist, she had no idea that she would soon discover the key to developing a multi-million-pound beauty empire. Eager to find a natural solution to her own skincare concerns, she formulated abeetoxin – a complex combination of bee venom, honey and botulism – and it sits at the heart of every one of her products to date. The effective results of the Heaven skincare and treatment range speak for themselves, with A list clients acting as avid ambassadors, so we sat down with the beauty mogul to get the 411 on how it all began...

I never set out to be a beauty therapist. I thought that acting was my one true calling, but when you're destined to do something else, life has a subtle way of steering you in the right direction. I've always had an innate knowledge about how to heal using plants and flowers, so when I began doing facials (usually on friends), I felt like I was finally home. I knew right away that it was what I was meant to be doing.

My big break came when I discovered the ground-breaking anti-ageing benefits of bee venom. When applied topically this powerful ingredient increases collagen production by up to 300 percent. I knew that I'd found the natural answer to skin ageing and so I became the pioneer for using it in skincare treatments.

I never dreamed that I'd have clients such as Kate Middleton and Gwyneth Paltrow. But I guess good news travels fast! I had a lot of clients with celebrity friends, and my facials really do make a significant difference to the skin, so when the celebs saw my client's skin, they all started to book in. The rest, as they say, is history!


The Bee Sting Facial has become something of a cult offering in the salon. It combines a range of Deborah Mitchell products, all of which contain my signature abeetoxin bee venom complex. The specific massage movements that I use are what makes it so unique. It tricks the skin into thinking it has been stung and encourages the body's own natural healing response which results in perfect skin from within. Obviously, no bees are harmed in the collection of my venom, though!

I adore everything about my job. Nothing beats the feeling of making a new product to help a customer with their skin concerns. When you have bad skin, you can lose a lot of confidence and I can't bear to see someone feeling bad about themselves if I can help. I treat a lot of different conditions on a daily basis. Acne as an adult is always a common concern, as well as pigmentation and scarring. Obviously the Bee-Venom Mask is famous for anti-ageing, so see a lot of people for this, too.

I truly believe that natural and organic skincare is the better choice for looking after your skin so I always advise my clients to make the switch to green beauty. There are just so many benefits to avoiding synthetic ingredients and toxins. I also like to put an emphasis on always cleansing and moisturising with a serum or night cream before bed. This supports the skin as goes about its nightly regeneration. Good quality sleep is also very important!

I think the worst thing you can do for your skin is sleep in your make-up, because that can become a nightly habit! As I said before, your body heals overnight so you need to make everything as good as it can be so your body can do its job to look after you! Also, picking at spots! Leave them alone or you could cause scarring and make your pores bigger.

For 2017, I plan to take on the USA in a big way – watch this space. Every step I take is to fulfil a vision I have, to make the world feel beautiful. America seems like the next logical step to fulfilling this ambition!



*"I can't bear to
see someone
feeling bad
about themselves
if I can help"*

"My own skincare regime actually changes quite a lot. It depends what I'm doing. If I'm working very hard, I always use my Dream Oil Serum to make sure I get a good sleep. If I'm flying a lot I slather on my Overnight Success Cream, which actually releases oxygen into the skin! The thing that makes the most difference to my skin, though, is using the Bee-Venom Mask daily. I use it on top of my moisturiser, under my make-up, as a primer so I look fresh and luminous! It's great to use the Bee-Venom Mask like this as the effects last all day and it prevents any further ageing – a bit like stopping the clock!"

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PATSY KENSIT

What I've Learned: DECLUTTERING

The TV actress on why she's not afraid
of throwing things out

Is your house bursting at the seams with boxes and bags of things you don't ever look at? For many people this time of year is when they focus on clearing out – and I personally think it can be so liberating.

I'm certainly not a hoarder – in fact, I can't bear to be surrounded by clutter – but there's always stuff appearing in my house. A delivery comes daily and it tends to be a box of something or other.

If things start piling up, I'm known for going on a rampage and I've even bagged my boys up before! I thrive on order and if you come to my home now it's very organised and everything is labeled. I will admit though, that there's one drawer in my house that I never touch – it has wires, chargers and other electrical things in it and I can't go through it. It terrifies me and I get the sweats just thinking about it!

I use this time of year to get myself sorted – I always buy new towels and linen and throw away the old and I try to do a big edit on my clothes every two years around March time too. Like a lot of people, I end up wearing the same things most days and I just literally wear things out. Having a good clear out is so good for your mind and for me it's wonderful to see things out the door. As a family, we don't chuck things away – we give it to the charity shop just around the corner. We try to make good with what we're getting rid of – I know how true it is that one man's junk is another man's treasure.

People talk about hanging onto things, but I'm not

sentimental about a lot. I lost 90 percent of my jewellery on a flight back from Qatar about a year and a half ago, and I was heartbroken about it for days. But then I realised that it was all just belongings – it's essentially just stuff.

There hadn't been a death and no-one had been hurt. I had to put it into perspective and tell myself that it's just one of those things. You've got to get your priorities straight and that event made me understand that.

Of course, I do have some things that I call priceless and that I would be really distraught if I lost. Mostly, they're things that the boys have made me – one of my sons made a heart shape dish at a pottery class at school and I've kept this for years. Lennon also once bought me this little wooden dolphin which is beautifully carved and James bought me a swarovski red rose crystal. I've got these on my dressing table.

There are also all the letters that the boys have written me, and I bet other parents are nodding their heads at this. I would say that 90 percent of these letters involved the boys asking for forgiveness for something naughty they'd done and begging me to let them go and play with their friends. They're really irreplaceable and make me smile whenever I look at them. Some things just aren't meant to be thrown away!

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.



ASK THE EXPERTS

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

I suffer from blepharitis – are there any natural remedies that might help?

Daniel Ezra, a consultant ophthalmic and oculoplastic surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital (danielezra.co.uk), says:

Blepharitis is an inflammatory condition which causes the eyelids to become red and swollen and can be successfully managed using natural remedies. Cleaning your eyes as often as possible is key – use warm water to wash the area as this will get rid of the oily build-up that comes with the condition.

Another effective remedy is coconut oil, as it contains a variety of nutrients, including fats that help to restore eye health and reduce inflammation. I suggest soaking a cotton pad in the oil and placing it on the eyelids for approximately 20 minutes.

Tea tree oil is a particularly powerful natural remedy due to its antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral properties. It helps to treat the underlying cause of blepharitis as well as the symptoms and can ease itching. To apply, gently rub the oil on the affected area using a cotton bud or a clean finger before bed.

When it comes to treating blepharitis, consistency is key, so whichever natural remedy you use, make sure you keep it up until the symptoms are gone.

I've recently joined a gym. What foods should I be eating before and after exercising?

Cheryl Fayolle, a nutritional therapist (nutritionist-resource.org.uk), says:

The most important nutrient when it comes to exercise is water. Our muscle tissue is 75 percent water and dehydration leads to fatigue, so make sure you drink a few glasses during the two hours before your gym session.

After water, carbohydrate is the reigning nutrient as it is the most accessible energy source for high and low impact exercise and endurance training. Your pre-gym snack should be carbohydrate-based and include some protein to slow the release of energy, but go for something fairly light so you don't feel sluggish. This could be a handful of trail mix, a banana smoothie made with a protein-rich nut milk or a piece of fruit and some nuts.

For lengthier exercise sessions, drinks containing carbohydrate and electrolytes have been found to improve performance, speed up recovery and aid repair. Instead of reaching for a sugary energy drink, try coconut water, which is a good source of potassium and helps to replenish lost fluids.

Your next meal after a workout should be nourishing. Choose foods high in antioxidants (think brightly coloured fruits and vegetables) and include a good source of protein, such as lean chicken or salmon, as it is essential for muscle repair. Finish it off with some complex carbohydrates and good fats.

I want to start using homeopathy. Where do I begin?

Gemma Hurditch, a naturopath and lecturer at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (naturopathy-uk.com), says:

Find a beginner's course or start by using homeopathic remedies for minor ailments that would benefit from the support. They are usually taken in the form of either a pill, spray or dropper under the tongue. Various homeopathic first aid kits are available or you can try some of the options below.

- For bruises and tissue damage – arnica 12/30c
- For the side-effects of over-indulging in food and alcohol – nux vomica 30c
- For anxiety and nervousness – gelsemium 30c
- For early stage inflammatory problems, such as colds, flu and rheumatism – ferrum phos 12c

Take three doses of a remedy over six hours – if there's no improvement, then it's probably not the right fit and you can try something else. Once you have developed confidence in homeopathic remedies you can expand upon these basics.



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Body

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*New research undertaken by London City Airport has found that **airports may be one of the most active workplaces**. The results showed that baggage handlers process over seven tonnes of hold luggage by hand every day – that's more than the weight of an African elephant! Airport managers based in the terminal walk 9.1 miles on average each shift while cabin crew manage to cover roughly three miles during a 1.5 hour flight. The study also found that marshallers do 160 bicep curls with the marshalling batons over the course of a shift. Who needs the gym?*



The latest in PHYSICAL HEALTH

DENTIST DODGERS

A recent survey has found that a quarter of people in the UK have attempted DIY dental care instead of paying a visit to the dentist (we don't even want to think about what that might involve!). And, of those who do make an appointment, almost a third will pull out – according to the study, 29 percent of Brits have missed or cancelled a trip because they hate going so much. Money was found to be the biggest reason for avoiding the dentist, with 41 percent of people saying that it's just too expensive. Nearly a quarter cited the sound of the drill as the thing they dislike most, while 13 percent said it was a fear of needles and 12 percent admitted that they don't appreciate being lectured about dental care. Whatever your reason for not being a fan of the dentist, you'll save yourself time, money and probably pain by taking good care of your teeth, so make sure you go for regular check-ups!



WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE? *BLOATING*

We've all experienced a post-dinner food baby before, but for some people bloating can be a more frequent occurrence. Not only is it pretty uncomfortable and sometimes painful, but it can also make us feel self-conscious. Here are our top tips for beating the bloat!

1 Constipation is a common cause of bloating and often arises due to a lack of fibre, fluids or exercise. To keep your bowels functioning properly, make sure you're getting enough fibre – the RDA for adults is 30g and grains, fruit, beans and pulses, vegetables, nuts and seeds are all good sources. Drink lots (preferably water) throughout the day and aim for 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week.

2 Go easy with beans and gassy vegetables, particularly those from the cruciferous family, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. It doesn't mean that you can't eat them, but try to consume small individual amounts at a time and work them slowly into your diet if you're not used to them.

3 It's not just what you eat, but how you eat that counts when it comes to avoiding the bloat. Eating quickly and not chewing properly can lead to air swallowing which causes bloating, so slow down and savour your food. Also, digestion starts in the mouth so simply chewing more slowly can help to stop your stomach from swelling.

Making a racket

According to new research, playing racket sports could help us to live longer. The study, conducted by the University of Oxford and researchers in Finland and Australia, surveyed more than 80,000 people for an average of nine years to analyse and compare the impact of different sports on protection against early death. The results found that those who played racket sports regularly were the least likely to die over the study period, reducing their individual risk by 47 percent compared to people who did no exercise. Simon Moyes, an orthopaedic surgeon specialising in sports injuries, says: "Tennis is particularly beneficial, both in its ability to help you live longer but also to improve your quality of life. Combining exercise with a sociable, recreational activity is the best way to lead a long, healthy and happy life." See you on the court!



Aiming high

New research suggests that setting unrealistic targets is the key to losing weight. In the study, those who aimed to drop to their dream weight lost around 19 percent of their body weight, while people who set themselves more realistic targets lost significantly less.

Exercise

According to recent findings, just one or two sessions of physical activity a week may be enough to lower the risk of death from all causes in both men and women.

Yoga

It has been found that compared to doing no exercise, practising yoga may lead to a reduction in pain and improve back-related function in people with chronic lower back problems.

The BAROMETER



Late night snack

Scientists have discovered why we crave food when we're drunk – the ethanol in alcohol triggers neurons in the brain which are usually activated by starvation and evoke strong hunger pangs.

Harassment

A recent poll of female runners has revealed that a third of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment while running.

Bad habits

Analysis from Public Health England (PHE) has shown that eight out of 10 middle-aged people in the UK are overweight, drink too much alcohol or don't do enough exercise.

Nutritional therapist Cassandra Burns explains three of the most common sleep problems and what we can do about them on p48

OH HAPPY DAYS

A recent study has found that the most physically active people are also the happiest. The research, conducted by health charity Central YMCA (ymca.co.uk), revealed a 32 percent gap in wellbeing scores between the most and least active in society. Almost half of people also said that they felt at their best when playing a sport or exercising. Rosie Prescott, chief executive of Central YMCA, said: "Even something as simple as a brisk 15 minute walk can make a world of difference. But don't be fooled into thinking that physical activity alone is the answer to better wellbeing – we need to ensure we have a mix of exercise, mental stimulation and positive relationships in our lives." Sounds good to us!



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YOGA

FOR energy

These poses will improve your focus and concentration, says *Sue Fuller*

USTRASANA

The camel

This posture will open the chest and hips.

Begin on all fours and lift your shoulders so that they are above your hips. Lengthen your spine and lift your chest. Now reach your right hand down to your right ankle and your left hand towards your left ankle, lift your hips up and forwards and open your chest. Keep your neck in line with your spine. Breathe slowly for 10 or more complete breaths and then lower your bottom onto your heels. Relax your forehead to the floor, resting in pose of the child.

If this posture feels uncomfortable, try taking just one hand to the ankle at a time. Reach the right hand towards the right ankle and breathe slowly for five breaths and then change sides. If you want to move a little deeper place your hands on to the floor beside your feet.



URDHVA DHANURASANA

Upward facing bow

This is a very strong posture and will not be suitable for everyone. It will strengthen the legs and shoulders, open the chest, stretch the abdomen and increase flexibility of the spine.

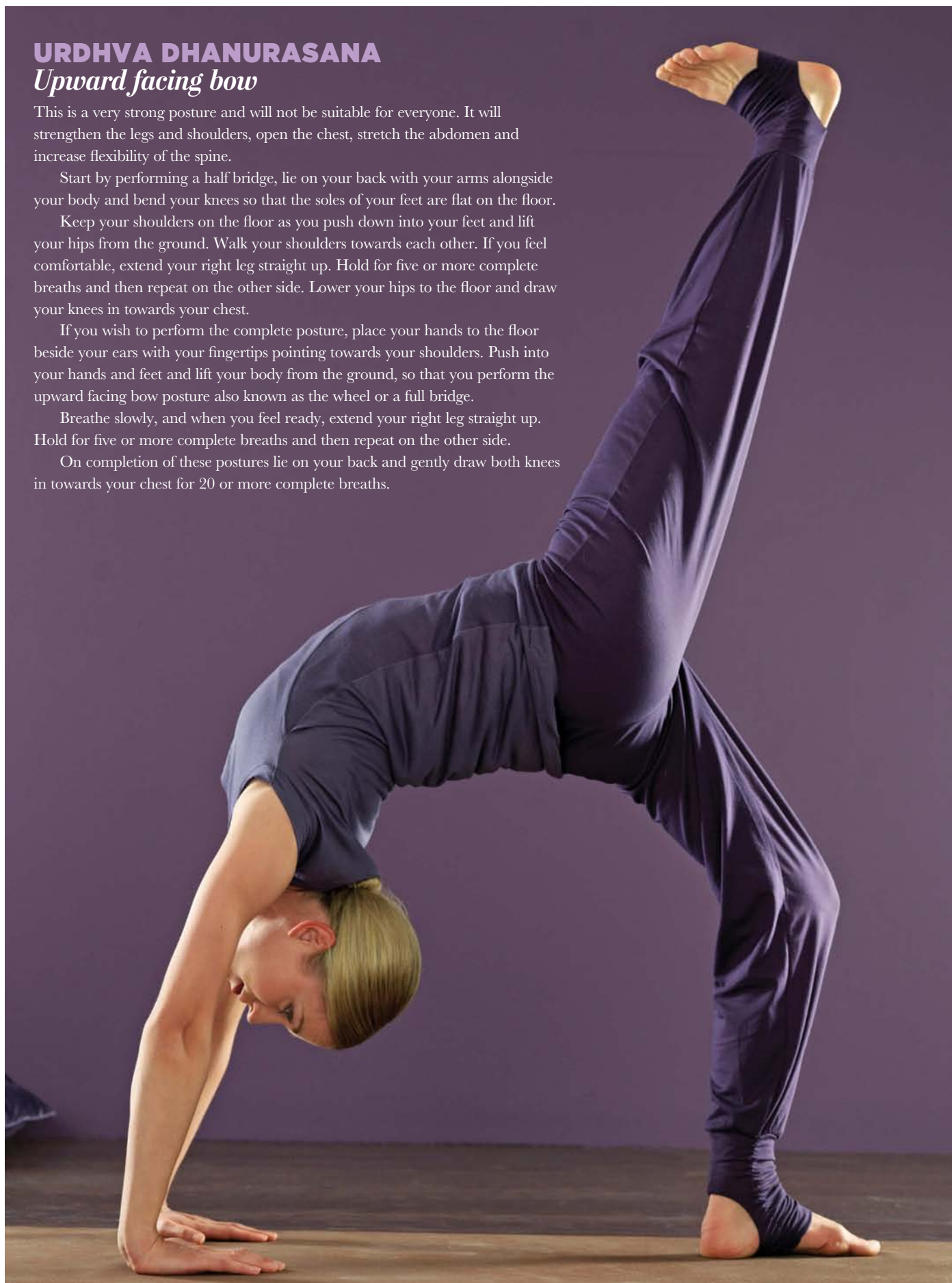
Start by performing a half bridge, lie on your back with your arms alongside your body and bend your knees so that the soles of your feet are flat on the floor.

Keep your shoulders on the floor as you push down into your feet and lift your hips from the ground. Walk your shoulders towards each other. If you feel comfortable, extend your right leg straight up. Hold for five or more complete breaths and then repeat on the other side. Lower your hips to the floor and draw your knees in towards your chest.

If you wish to perform the complete posture, place your hands to the floor beside your ears with your fingertips pointing towards your shoulders. Push into your hands and feet and lift your body from the ground, so that you perform the upward facing bow posture also known as the wheel or a full bridge.

Breathe slowly, and when you feel ready, extend your right leg straight up. Hold for five or more complete breaths and then repeat on the other side.

On completion of these postures lie on your back and gently draw both knees in towards your chest for 20 or more complete breaths.



UTTANASANA *Standing forward bend*

This posture will release tension in the backs of the legs, lower back and shoulders. Begin standing with your feet hip-distance apart. Relax your upper body forwards and draw your navel back towards your spine. Relax your shoulders and drop your chin on to your chest.

Hold opposite elbows and allow your body to relax and soften. If you experience pulling in the backs of your legs allow your knees to soften.

Breathe slowly for 10 or more complete breaths through your nose.



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“

This pose *increases energy flow* to the entire body and provides a *deep release* for the pelvis and lower back

”

MARICHYASANA A

The sages posture

This is a great posture as it will increase the energy flow to the entire body, open the shoulders and provide a deep release for the pelvis and lower back.

Begin sitting on your bottom with your legs extended and your feet about a foot's length apart. Bend your left knee and draw the foot in as close to your pelvis as you comfortably can, keep a space between your left foot and your right inner thigh. Lift your torso and lean forward. Reach your left arm as far forward as possible and then bend the left elbow so that your left arm binds the left leg, reach your right arm behind your back and hold onto your right wrist with your left hand.

If you cannot reach your wrist clasp your hands, you can even use a yoga strap or a soft belt to bind the posture.

Binding a yoga posture increases energy levels within your body. Breathe slowly through your nose for 10 or more complete breaths, then repeat on the other side.



Sue is a leading yoga teacher and writer with over 20 years of experience. She is also the creator of the Yoga 2 Hear range of audio yoga classes. Visit yoga2hear.co.uk.

Photography: Jumpfoto.de

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What do the customers think?



Maria, 50

I've recommended Betavivo to all my friends who are looking for a healthy breakfast, rich in both fibre and protein.



Marie, 49

Started eating it for my cholesterol, now I eat Betavivo because it makes me feel good. It also makes me feel fuller longer!



Liz, 55

I proved to my GP that it worked in lowering my cholesterol.



James, 48

Betavivo helps me lower both cholesterol and blood sugar. I recommend it to friends and family – and also others!

One serving of Betavivo cereal gives you the full three grams of oat beta-glucan fibre needed daily to lower cholesterol. Coronary heart disease has many risk factors. Altering one of these risk factors may or may not have a beneficial effect. A varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle are always important.

¹Ref: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Parma, Italy. 2009. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1175, 1-9 | *Netigate marketing survey, April 2016

The thyroid CURE

Could an imbalance be causing your symptoms? *Emma Cannon* explains

The thyroid belongs to the endocrine system. It is a small gland the shape of a butterfly in the front of the neck. Its main function is to control metabolism; which can be understood as the rate at which the systems and chemistry of the body work. Its other function is stabilising growth in early life.

In a diseased state the thyroid can present as either hyper (over active) or hypo (underactive). It can take time to diagnose thyroid disease as symptoms often come on gradually and are similar to symptoms of other conditions. Hypo symptoms range from tiredness, loss of libido, weight gain and depression, and on the other end of the spectrum, inability to gain weight, insomnia and anxiety.

Most mainstream practitioners ignore the role of thyroid antibodies and focus on bringing the thyroid back into normal range with the use of Levothyroxine. This drug, when used to treat hypo, replaces the thyroxine hormone, which your thyroid doesn't make enough of. Or in the case of hyperthyroidism; radioactive iodine, anti-thyroid medications, beta blockers or surgery are used.

I have always been interested in the role of antibodies. They tell us that there is autoimmune activity – in other words the immune system is attacking healthy cells in the body. For me the important question is always why is it doing this and what can be done to prevent it?

I often find that my patients who present with autoimmune antibodies often suffer from emotional problems such as depression, anxiety or are highly stressed individuals. Another observation that I have made which is now backed up by research is that an



individual's perception of stress is more damaging than stress itself. It is not uncommon for someone to come into my office and say: "I'm really stressed about being stressed." I have more concerns for these types than the more robust individual who is stressed yet has good resources and does not potentiate the stress by dwelling on it.

If you suspect you have thyroid issues or have been diagnosed with thyroid disease, make sure you have your antibodies checked and if you have autoimmune antibodies think about the following:

- 1) Am I depressed? Do I have feelings of hopelessness?
- 2) Am I stressed about being stressed? Do I feel trapped by the stress in my life and unable to do anything about it?
- 3) Am I exposed to something that I am reacting to in my environment, such as allergens?
- 4) How is my gut health?

If you think you might have antibodies it is well worth doing a holistic programme in combination with a nutritionist, a practitioner of Chinese medicine (acupuncturist or herbalist), or similar, with an aim to reduce the autoimmune activity in the body and bring it back into balance.

Emma is an integrated women's health expert, registered acupuncturist and author emmacannon.co.uk



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With an on-site ESPA spa, guests can choose from a range of seasonal experiences including a tailored collection of treatments designed for unwinding and rejuvenation. Castello del Nero's signature Relaxation Ritual treatment combines the natural antioxidants of the estate's home-grown extra virgin olive oil with sea salts to give guests a full body exfoliation. Coupling local lavender with the olive oil, the Balinese-influenced massage is the ultimate relaxing experience for both mind and body.

The medieval castle also offers a variety of authentic Italian activities such as wine tasting. Guests can try a range of local Chianti region wines in the famous Castello del Nero wine cellar, which houses over 1,000 wines including some of Tuscany's hidden gems. You can enjoy locally sourced food in the on-site restaurants – choose from the Michelin starred La Torre or the more casual La Taverna which serves authentic traditional cuisine. Guests can also venture out on one of the many hiking and cycling trails or even go truffle hunting with a local expert. With incredible amenities, Castello del Nero offers everything you need for a cultural and luxurious Italian escape.

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Terms and conditions apply

Trouble sleeping?

Do you often find yourself tossing and turning, and unable to doze off? Nutritional therapist Cassandra Barns reveals how to beat three common sleep problems

PROBLEM 1: YOU'RE TOO STRESSED TO SLEEP

This is a particularly common scenario. You lie awake going over a problem at work, wondering how you're going to meet a project deadline, or even worrying about your home life or relationship. Your mind is buzzing, and no matter how hard you try, you can't calm it down.

Do this...

Have a set wind-down routine. If you have to work in the evening, then stop at least an hour before you need to get to bed. Write down your to-dos for the next day. Then do anything that relaxes you, such as having a bath and reading for 20 minutes. This helps your mind and body to 'let go' of the day and prepare for sleep. Extra tip: add magnesium flakes or Epsom salts to your bath to help with calming and relaxation.

Never email or work in bed. To sleep well, you need your mind and body to associate your bed with sleep, not with work. In fact, unless it's unavoidable, don't work in your bedroom at all.

Take up meditation. We can never get rid of all stress from our life – it's the way we manage it that's key, and this is what meditation can help with. Meditation practices don't all rely on 'clearing your mind' – check out Vedic or transcendental meditation, which can be more approachable and enjoyable for people with busy minds.

Eat and drink this...

Eat to balance your blood sugar. Eating regular meals, avoiding refined carbohydrates and sugary foods and including a good source of protein and complex carbohydrates with every meal

can help to regulate your stress hormones and keep you calm.

Magnesium-rich foods. Magnesium is known as 'nature's tranquiliser' as it's associated with relaxation. Green leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, beans and pulses, buckwheat pasta and rye bread are all good sources.

After dinner, sip a herbal tea containing calming herbs such as chamomile, valerian and lavender.

Take this...

Specific night time supplements, such as Pukka's Night Time Capsules which contain a combination of seven organic herbs traditionally used to support relaxation and sleep.

Magnesium. As well as using it in a bath – and getting it in food – taking a magnesium supplement could be beneficial. Studies have found that magnesium supplements can improve sleep in people with insomnia.

PROBLEM 2: YOU'RE TIRED IN THE MORNING, BUT NOT AT NIGHT

You struggle to get out of bed, wishing you had another hour or two to snooze, and need a cup or two of strong coffee to get you going. But come 10pm, when you should be winding down for bed, you feel wide awake. The problem is often that your circadian rhythm is out of sync.

Do this...

Cut the bright light in the evening. Particularly problematic is blue light from phones, computers and TV, as it suppresses melatonin – the primary hormone that regulates sleep. Either stay away from your devices for at least two hours before bed, or dim the screen and use a blue light filter app or setting.

But get as much bright light as

you can early in the day. Not only does it make you feel more awake in the morning, it also helps to regulate your circadian rhythm so that you feel sleepier in the evening too. Make it a priority to get outside for at least 20 minutes in the morning, even on a grey day.

Exercise in the morning, not the evening. Exercise can really help improve your sleep, simply by tiring you out. But the last thing you want is to feel 'wired' after a late evening exercise session. Do it in the morning or afternoon to help keep your circadian rhythm on track.

Eat this...

Eat protein in the morning, and carbohydrates in the evening. Carbs help tryptophan to get into the brain so it can be converted to melatonin. Eating more protein, on the other hand, suppresses this process and can make us feel more awake. This doesn't mean have only protein in the morning, or only carbs at dinner though.

Avoid caffeine after midday. It can take hours for your body to completely get rid of the stimulating effects of caffeine from your blood.

Take this...

Cherry juice or powder such as Viridian Cherry Night powder. Tart cherries have been found to contain a small amount of melatonin, and so may help to regulate our sleep-wake cycle.



Use this...

Bergamot essential oil. You've no doubt heard of the benefits of lavender essential oil when it comes to calming and sleep, and bergamot oil can have the same effect. Add a few drops to a bath or use it in a diffuser.

PROBLEM 3: YOU WAKE UP IN THE NIGHT, OR WAKE TOO EARLY

Contrary to popular opinion, we don't all need eight or nine hours' sleep every night. So if you're waking up early even though you didn't set an alarm, this isn't necessarily a problem, provided your energy levels are good during the day. But if you're waking several times during the night, or waking after just four or five hours' sleep and being unable to doze off again, then it's worth addressing.

Do this...

Give your mind the chance to process your thoughts before bed. Rather than distracting yourself with the TV or social media at the end of the day, take a wind-down hour to think through your day and write down worries or to-dos. **Don't give up when you wake up.** Give yourself half an hour – or even an hour – to lie quietly in the dark, just appreciating the rest. You might find that you fall asleep again, even if you weren't expecting to.

Eat this...

Have a snack containing complex carbs and protein before bed. If your blood sugar falls too low in the early hours of the morning, this can trigger adrenaline to be released. The result is that you'll wake up, often with a racing heart and a racing

SLEEP SAVIOURS

NH's top hero buys



Pukka Herbs Night Time Capsules, £7.45 for 30, pukkaherbs.com



Pukka Night Time Tea, £2.49, pukkaherbs.com



Dr Organic's Organic Lavender Oil, £6.59, hollandandbarrett.com



Sweet Dreams Spritz with Orange Flower Water, £12 for 100ml, baseformula.com



Fragrant Earth Sleep Drift, £13.45 for 20mls, fragrantearth.com



Kiss the Moon Night Cream for Hands, £25 for 90g, kissthemoon.com



Tick Tock Tea Earl Grey Rooibos, £1.99, ticktocktea.com

mind. So as well as balancing your blood sugar by eating whole foods and including protein with every meal, try having a snack containing complex carbohydrates in the late evening to help stop your blood sugar dropping in the night. A good example is a couple of oatcakes with a teaspoon of nut butter.

Take this...

Ashwagandha. Ashwagandha specifically could be beneficial if you're an early waker. According to herbalist and founder of Pukka Herbs Sebastian Pole, it's the go-to herb for those who wake in the night with worries on their mind, helping to reduce hyperactive symptoms and calm the body and mind. This may be because its effects come on more slowly than other herbs, so it works later in the night, when you tend to wake up.

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.

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.



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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



Jo Wood

COFFEE BREAK

Our green goddess on the benefits of caffeine

In today's health-conscious society, drinking coffee can often get a bad rap, particularly if you're partial to a few cups a day. But I love nothing more than starting my day with a rich, aromatic blend – provided that it's organic, of course!

Organically grown coffee is free of harmful pesticides and chemical residues. But this is not the only reason to enjoy your morning cuppa. Studies show that regular coffee-drinkers experience less inflammation and increased mental focus as well as a reduction in cardiovascular illnesses and diabetes.

In addition to the health benefits, coffee lovers like myself are convinced that it also has a fuller, richer flavour than conventionally grown coffee.

But although organic coffee beans can provide you with a quick antioxidant fix, even a health-boosting cup can be made unhealthy by adding bad ingredients. So be careful about what flavour enhancers you add, they certainly do add up!

My absolute favourite coffee combo is an organic espresso with half a teaspoon of maca powder. It takes the term energy boost to a whole new level and maca is a natural hormone balancer, too!

Not a fan of maca? Try one of my other favourite recipes instead. They will enhance the flavour of your coffee whilst making it even more nutritious...

SPICE IT UP WITH A DASH OF CINNAMON

Over and above its amazing taste, cinnamon lowers cholesterol and helps regulate blood sugar levels for people with diabetes. Yum!

SWEET LIKE CHOCOLATE

Add one or two teaspoons of organic, unsweetened cocoa powder to make your cuppa even more delicious. Cocoa in coffee helps to satisfy chocolate cravings, advances antioxidants already present in coffee and reduces the risk of heart disease.

ADD A TOUCH OF NATURAL GOODNESS

If you need a sweet taste, use aspartame-free, natural sweeteners. Sugar, whether white or brown, and artificial sweeteners should never make contact with your coffee! Stevia is a better option and my preference. I also love to add a teaspoon of yacon syrup to my wake-up coffee. Even too much natural sugar can be bad for you, though, so avoid going crazy with super-sweet syrups such as honey and maple.

HOLD THE MILK AND CREAM

I believe everyone should cut out dairy. Milk and cream are filled with artificial hormones and new studies show that around 75 percent of the population has some degree of intolerance to lactose. Artificial coffee creamers, which use colouring as well as added sugar and sodium, should also be avoided. Instead, try adding delicious nut milks like almond or hazelnut or drinking your coffee black.

OIL THINGS UP WITH SOME HEALTHY FATS

Coconut oil gets a huge yes from me – add a generous teaspoon to support heart and brain function. Another idea is to try

butter coffee which contains small amounts of MCT (the same nutritious fatty acids found in coconut oil). Not too much though, as the calorie count is quite high.

SAY GOODBYE TO TOXIC COFFEE FILTERS

Last but not least, I recommend using only paper filters. These will capture any potential impurities while preventing BPA's from seeping into your drink.

So, provided that it's organic and you only use healthy flavour enhancers, enjoy your coffee! It's good for you in moderation and even better when shared with a friend!



“Regular coffee-drinkers experience less inflammation and increased mental focus”

THE GOOD BUG DIET

Calorie counting is so last season!
This spring, start feeding your healthy
stomach bugs to eat yourself slim!

You've tried the Atkins, the Dukan and the 5:2, you've tried cutting out fats and carbs, but those pesky pounds still won't shift. Could your diet woes be down to something as simple as a lack of healthy bugs in your body?

Your digestive system plays host to thousands of different microbial species including bacteria, viruses, fungi and other micro-organisms, all of them working diligently to keep your body functioning properly. And there are trillions of them: it is estimated that they could outnumber our own cells in our bodies by an astonishing 10 to one!

Microbes traditionally get a bad press but less than a tiny fraction of the millions of species are harmful to us. In fact, this vast army of microorganisms, known collectively as your 'microbiome', contributes towards the proper functioning of your body, helps to boost your immune system, fight off illness and metabolise food properly, which in turn could help you to stay slim.

A DIVERSE DIET

"What exactly makes up a healthy microbiome is a subject of much research," says nutritional expert Patrick

Holford, author of *Improve Your Digestion* (£14.99, Piatkus). "Slim people, for example, have a different microbiota to obese people which begs the question as to whether the microbiota of slim people could be keeping them slim."

He highlights a study in 2013 that suggested a possible cause and effect relationship between gut microbes and the prevention of obesity. Four sets of human twins, where one twin was a healthy weight and the other was obese, donated their microbe profile to mice. The mice who received an obese twin's microbes gained weight, regardless of their diet.

Professor Tim Spector, a professor of genetic epidemiology is one of the leading figures into the research on twins. He believes a diverse microbiome is the key to optimum health and says that when it comes to losing weight we should quit calorie counting and nurture our body bugs instead. "Microbes are not only essential to how we digest food, they also control the calories we absorb and provide vital enzymes and vitamins," says Prof Spector, who heads up the British Gut Project (britishgut.org) and is author of *The Diet Myth: The Real Science Behind What We Eat* (£14.99, Orion).

4 STEPS TO HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS

Kick-start your diet by creating a diverse microbiome with these bacteria-boosting foods

1 EAT A WIDE RANGE OF VEGETABLES

Vegetables are rich in fibre and plant chemicals that nourish the microbes in your gut. You should be aiming for at least seven or eight different types a day.

2 CHOOSE FOODS RICH IN POLYPHENOLS

Certain plant chemicals called polyphenols are an important energy source for microbes in your gut. Find them in foods including nuts, seeds, coffee, tea, dark chocolate, red wine and olive oil and in brightly coloured fruits such as kiwis, blueberries, papayas, oranges, melons, watermelon and peaches.

3 INCREASE YOUR PREBIOTIC INTAKE

Some vegetables and fruits pack an extra punch as they contain non-digestible fibres called prebiotics. Essentially prebiotics are fuel to feed the probiotics (healthy bacteria) in your digestive tract. They include Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus, fennel, garlic, fennel, leeks, onions, bananas and apples.

4 EAT MORE FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented foods contain a combination of probiotics and prebiotics and are therefore one of star players in maintaining a healthy gut. These include yoghurt, kefir (a fermented milk popular in Eastern Europe, sauerkraut and miso (make sure they are the live variety) and kimchi (Korean fermented vegetables).

AT A GLANCE

GOOD FOR BUGS

- Fruit and vegetables ● Live yoghurt
- Coffee ● Tea ● Red wine

BAD FOR BUGS

- A high-calorie diet
- A high-carbohydrate diet
- Sugar-sweetened drinks
- Processed foods
- Antibiotics

However modern day living has had a detrimental effect on the bug in our bodies. The rise in popularity of processed foods, sugar and refined carbohydrate grains and over-use of antibiotics has led to a drastic decrease in the diversity of our microbes. And fad diets that cut calories or ban entire food groups don't help either. "The increasing promotion and use of restrictive diets that depend on just a few ingredients, will inevitably lead to further reduction in microbe diversity and eventually to ill-health," warns Professor Spector.

EAT YOURSELF SLIM!

So how do we go about supporting our friendly bacterial army? "You need to have a diet that increases the diversity of your microbes," advises Professor Spector. "That involves avoiding antibiotics, pesticides and chemicals in food and increasing your fibre intake as well as its diversity, because for each little change in fruit or vegetable, you've got a whole community of different microbes that will feed off it." So nourish your body with a varied diet, rich in fibre, fruits and vegetables and cut out processed foods and you could find yourself dropping a dress size without even dieting!

BEST BUYS

Boost good bacteria with these healthy foods and supplements



Wild Nutrition Multi Strain Biotic. £35, wildnutrition.com

The Village Bakery
Melmerby Organic Rye
Bread, £1.80, try-rye.com



Magastic digestive
supplements. £4.99,
magastic.co.uk

St Helen's Farm
Semi Skimmed
Goats Milk. £1.60
from **Tesco**,
Sainsbury's
and **Ocado**



CRANBERRY SUPPLEMENTS MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE PICK OF THE BUNCH



Cranberries have long been known to have a positive effect on the urinary tract system and general wellbeing. But what not many people know is which kinds of cranberries are the most effective. Recent studies into different cranberry varieties have revealed some incredible differences in these tiny berries.

Cranberries are a group of evergreen shrubs which grow all over the world. However, it is only those native to North America that have high concentrations of beneficial substances.

This is because although cranberries in North America and Europe have the same genus, they are of a different species, it's like comparing lions with tigers.

Those native to Europe are called *Vaccinium oxycoccos* L whilst those in North America are *Vaccinium macrocarpon* L.

Found in Canada and North America, the *Vaccinium macrocarpon* L species contains much higher levels of proanthocyanidins (PACs) than its less effective European cousin. Further research has shown that supplements should contain 36mg PACs per daily dose to be effective. Remarkably few supplements meet this target.

North American cranberries have been used to boost health for 200 years. In 1816 Captain Henry Hall, who fought in the American Revolutionary War, became the first person to successfully cultivate cranberries. Delia Smith's cranberry sauce was a long way behind!

Luckily you will not have to farm to the extreme lengths that Captain Hall went to. That is thanks to the launch of a new supplement from the Cambridge-based brand FutureYou.

Cranberry+ from FutureYou contains a unique patented extract with 36mg of PACs in each capsule.

Chris Meaney of the FutureYou Product Development team said, 'We take great pride in sourcing products that we know are effective. By including this unique extract in our cranberry formulation, we can be sure we deliver more of the good stuff to your body.'



Packed with North American CRANBERRIES

- ✓ Contains **36mg** of **proanthocyanidins (PACs)**
- ✓ Contains **North American** cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon* L)
- ✓ **Scientifically researched** unique formulation
- ✓ **Free delivery**



Order your supplements from www.FutureYouHealth.com
Or call our office **01223 750 874**

Cambridge Nutraceuticals Ltd,
Bishop Bateman Court,
Cambridge, CB5 8AQ

FutureYou
Supplements developed by  Cambridge Nutraceuticals

*Discount valid until 30th April 2017. One use per customer. Cranberry+ from FutureYou should be consumed as part of a healthy and balanced diet and lifestyle. Discount code cannot be combined with any other offer.



Glynis Barber *Need a DRINK?*

Our wellbeing guru on why
we shouldn't be scared of
feeling thirsty

When we were children in the days before computers, we would run around and play and then drink water when we were thirsty. It was natural and we didn't think about it. But somewhere along the way, we got scared of being thirsty and thought if we didn't continually sip water throughout the day, we would become dehydrated which was like some terrible disease.

While it's true that being dehydrated is not great, that's not because it's a disease, but because some research shows when dehydrated the body goes into survival mode and begins to store fat. But here's the really interesting thing – sipping little bits of water may not fully hydrate you properly. That's because we are not drinking enough at one time to fully satisfy our cells. Nutritionist Fleur Borrelli, my co-author on *The In Sync Diet* book, looks at our diet from an evolutionary point of view and she believes that our natural instincts as children were spot on. In other words, we should only drink when thirsty and then drink a good amount.

The brain is very sensitive to changes in the water level in the body because it needs to regulate the thickness of the blood or osmolality. When the blood is too thick we become thirsty. And according to Fleur: "Being a little thirsty is completely natural and a signal to drink water and hydrate properly." South African exercise physiologist Professor Tim Noakes also says there is no scientific evidence to support 'staying ahead of thirst' rather than allowing yourself to get a little thirsty.

As the name suggests, the In Sync diet is all about getting back 'in sync' with our natural rhythms and I believe drinking in this way is an ideal way to do so. The problem with constantly 'topping-up' our water levels is that we may be losing the ability to recognise when we are really thirsty, and instead we may be mistaking thirst for hunger or a craving. More often than not, hunger cravings are quenched with sugary, processed snacks which can have a large impact on the health of our body and lead to weight gain. To get our thirst back, the In Sync Diet suggests that we should stop sipping through the day and only drink when we first sense we are thirsty. Try to decipher if you are thirsty or hungry, and don't snack on processed or sugary foods.

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



WISE WORDS

ADVICE FROM THE IN SYNC DIET

1. Only drink when you feel thirsty

Don't sip water through the day. Instead drink a good amount when thirsty.

2. Drink on waking

It's good to drink plenty of water on waking as your body will have been on a mini fast overnight. One pint or two should be right, depending on your size.

3. Drink after sport or a sauna

Sweating can make you dehydrated so drink a good amount of water afterwards.

4. Drink water with alcohol

Alcohol can have a dehydrating effect so drink water alongside it.

5. Don't graze all the time

Try not to confuse hunger with thirst. Have breaks between meals when you only drink water. When we graze, we lose sense of whether we were hungry or actually thirsty all along and this can cause cravings.





20 NATURAL WAYS TO

BOOST YOUR ENERGY

Next time fatigue starts to set in, or you find yourself slumping at your desk, avoid the caffeine and try one of these simple tricks to give your body a little oomph

1 SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Studies suggest that just a handful of raisins can fuel a workout, so when you're feeling a little slow reach for these tiny bites of goodness.

2 SCENTSATIONAL

Try aromatherapy to help you stay alert. "Diffusing citrus essential oils such as orange, lemon or grapefruit is a great way to refresh and boost energy," explains Mary Dagleish, vice president of the Federation of Holistic Therapists (fht.org.uk). "Rosemary is excellent if you need to be alert," she adds.

3 FOOD EXCHANGE

"Swap white carbs for brown," explains The Medicinal Chef, Dale Pinnock (dalepinnock.com). "These have much more fibre which means they are digested slower, preventing the highs and lows that cause our energy to crash."

4 COLOUR THERAPY

According to science, yellow is the colour most commonly linked with a healthy mood and alertness, closely followed by positive shades orange and lilac, so why not place a bold array of

blooms on your desk? The gorgeous smell will help to boost your mind too!

5 WE'RE ALL EARS

"Massaging your ears can increase energy, creating a sense of wakefulness," explains Mary. "Simply rub the edges of your ears between two fingers, from top to bottom a few times." Voila!

6 RHYTHM IS A DANCER

Tara Stiles, yoga instructor and author of *Strala Yoga* (£14.99, Hay House UK), recommends dancer's pose to ignite energy levels. "Shift your weight onto your right leg, bend your left knee and grab hold of your left foot with your left hand. Hold, then when you're ready hug your knee into your chest, before placing it back down. Take a few breaths then repeat on the other leg," she explains.

7 STAY HYDRATED

"Even a five percent drop in hydration can make you feel fatigued and fuzzy," Dale explains. When you hit the 4pm wall, swerve the coffee and simply reach for a glass of H2O.

“

Even a five percent drop in *hydration* can make you feel fatigued and fuzzy.

When you hit the 4pm wall, swerve the coffee and reach for a glass of H2O

”

8 A HEAD START

Give yourself an Indian head massage when you're feeling lethargic. "A vigorous scalp massage is a wonderful pick-me-up that can be done at any time to increase circulation to the head and boost energy," says Mary.

9 PHONE A FRIEND

Research conducted by the department of psychology at the University of Wisconsin found that hearing a supportive or familiar voice prompts the brain to release oxytocin, a stress-fighting mood-elevating hormone. So when you need a boost, give mum a ring.

10 SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

In ayurvedic medicine, turmeric has been used to raise energy levels in people suffering from lethargy or depression. The scent and taste of turmeric, when used in foods and teas, can uplift your senses and invigorate your body.

11 GET PICKING

"If you are prone to energy ups and downs, grazing on low glycaemic, high protein foods can be great," suggests Dale. "Nuts, seeds, hummus and even boiled eggs all make good in between meal snacks – just don't go overboard on the serving size."

12 60-SECOND ACUPRESSURE

Give this traditional Chinese medicine first-aid revival technique a try. "To promote mental alertness, use the tip of the index finger to apply pressure (for up to one minute) between your upper lip and nose," says Mary.

13 REAL LIFE MUSICAL

Listening to music for an hour each day can help reduce fatigue. Your mental and physical energy gets a boost when you listen to an upbeat track you can't sit still to – maybe steer clear of Adele.

14 REACH FOR IT

Love yoga? Practise this pose to give yourself a little boost. "Stand with your feet a bit apart so you are nice and stable," says Tara. "Soften here for a moment then take a big inhale and reach everything up. Exhale, soften and bring your arms down. Move through this a few times with each breath."

15 EASY FACE MASSAGE

"Massaging the 'third eye' between the eyebrows and bridge of the nose can help release stress, headaches and fatigue," says Mary. "Use your first two fingers to massage clockwise and anticlockwise for 30 seconds at a time."

16 WHITE KNUCKLE RIDE

"Avoid white carbohydrates like the plague," says Dale. "These foods have their fibre removed so

it takes very little digestive effort to liberate the sugars they contain. This floods our blood sugar, sending it soaring and then crashing back down again causing a huge energy slump."

17 PLANK YOU

A side plank pose is a good way to up your energy levels. "In the plank position, roll onto your right side, opening up your whole body," Tara says. "Take a big inhale, then exhale as you move back into the plank position. Repeat on the other side."

18 B GOOD TO YOURSELF

"B vitamins are some of the single most important nutrients for energy production as they are heavily involved in the process within our cells that converts glucose to ATP – the fuel that our body runs on," explains Dale. "Load up on leafy greens and whole grains – or even try supplements."

19 LUNGE, TWIST AND SHOUT*

Try the high lunge twist yoga pose with open arms. "In the lunge position, take a big inhale and lift your hips and arms up," describes Tara. "Exhale and open your body up to the right side. Repeat a few times before switching legs and repeating on the other side." *shouting optional.

20 STAY ON YOUR TOES

"Use the knuckle of your index finger to press and twist into the pituitary reflex point (middle of the big toe) for 15 to 30 seconds," advises Mary. "This important gland regulates the functions of most other endocrine glands."



HANDBAG ESSENTIALS

Keep these products close by for when you hit the 4pm wall



Yerba Mate, £5.99 for 40 teabags, riohealth.co.uk



Wayk, £2.99, wayk.co.uk



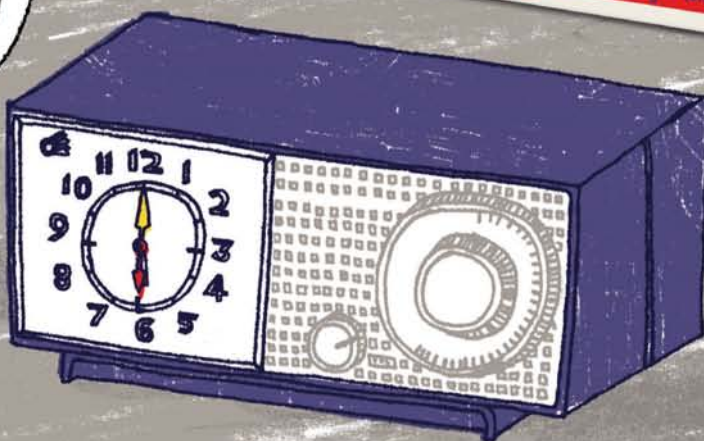
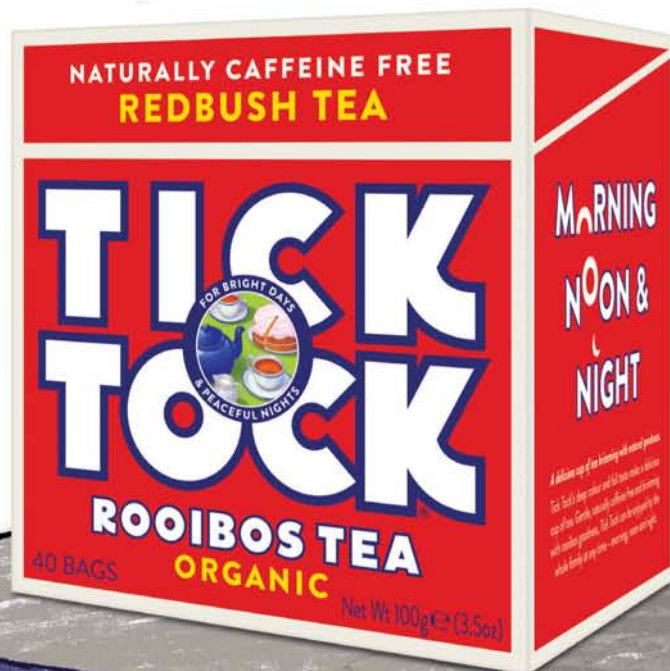
LoveLife Nuts and Raisins, £2.69, waitrose.com



Busy B with Vitamin C, £13.49, hollandandbarrett.com

KICK THE CAFFEINE

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KICK THE CAFFEINE WITH TICK TOCK TEA AND WIN A LUXURY NATURALMAT BED WORTH OVER £2500

At Tick Tock, we're partnering with handmade organic mattress and bed makers Naturalmat to make sure your nights are peaceful and your days are bright. Simply visit ticktocktea.com for your chance to win a luxury Carrick King size bed and mattress worth over £2500, as well as a year's worth of delicious Tick Tock tea! Gentle, naturally caffeine free and brimming with rooibos goodness, all natural Tick Tock can be enjoyed at any time – morning, noon and night.

For your chance to win visit ticktocktea.com/kickthecaffeine

Terms and conditions apply

Eat natural

Living healthily from the inside out



*It turns out you can't have your cake and eat it...well, you can, but it's advisable not to. The faculty of dental surgery (FDS) at the Royal College of Surgeons has **criticised office 'cake culture'** and claimed that it is contributing to the UK's obesity epidemic and poor oral health. It has urged employers to swap biscuits for fruit and nuts in meetings and remove the most sugary treats from vending machines. The faculty is also encouraging people to cut back on sugar by snacking less, keeping sweet treats out of view and eating them as an occasional indulgence instead of every day.*

Banana anyone?

The superfood HOTLIST

Fill your basket with these latest healthy eating must-haves



MILKING IT

Another delicious nut milk free from sugar and rice. Plenish Long-Life Organic Hazelnut M*lk, £3.49, plenishcleanse.com



DRIZZLE KICKS

Packed with dates, cashews, coconut and a tang of real lemon, this bar is a dream. Nakd Lemon Drizzle Bar, 75p, eatnakd.com



SMOOTH CRIMINAL

Five selections of fresh fruit washed and chopped for fuss-free smoothies. Morrisons Frozen Smoothies, £2, Morrisons



GO GREEN

Choose from three unique blends of green tea – energise, detox or sleepy decaf. Clipper Super Green Teas, £1.99, Sainsbury's



TRAIL BLAZER

These tubes of trail mix are the perfect snack and went down a storm at NH HQ! Wyldsson ProMix, £16.99 (10 tubes), wyldsson.com



PURE AND SIMPLE

The UK's first pure red maple syrup – perfect for baking and drizzling on pancakes! Clark's Red Maple Syrup, £6, Sainsbury's



A TIPPLE OR TWO

Alcohol that contains antioxidants, fibre and good fats...what more could you want? Fair Acai Liqueur, £17.50, 31Dover.com



PROTEIN PUNCH

A vegan protein shake designed for women. Missfits Nutrition The Multitasker, £16 (12 sachets), missfitsnutrition.com



FULL OF BEANS

Fairtrade sugar-free chocolate. Seed and Bean Wild & Organic 100% Cocoa, £4.29, seedandbean.co.uk



EDITOR'S PICK

A natural alternative to energy drinks in three tasty flavours. POW Natural Energy Waters, £1.49, Waitrose



ICE ICE BABY

These tubs contain 60 percent less sugar and calories than regular ice cream. Oppo Ice Cream, £4.99, Waitrose



COCONUT CRAZE

Fair trade coconut water that supports farmers in Thailand. Coco Community Organic Coconut Water, £2.29, Ocado



POWDER POWER

Add to smoothies, soups and curries for a superfood hit. Indigo Herbs Organic Kale Powder, £9.99, indigo-herbs.co.uk



FAKERS DOZEN

Vegans rejoice! You can now buy eggs made from algae. Follow Your Heart Vegan Eggs, £7.99, Holland & Barrett



SPICE IT UP

A nutrient-rich cold-pressed milk featuring turmeric, ginger, pepper and almonds. Plenish Elevate, £9.90, plenishcleanse.com

NUTRITIOUS INSPIRATION & IDEAS



FEELING SHEEPISH

Move over goat cheese, there's a new kid on the block! Unusual but very tasty. Delamere Dairy Sheep Cheese, £3.75, Ocado



NH LOVES

Rich in good bacteria, essential amino acids and B vitamins. Yorlife Kefir Smoothies, £2.70 - £2.99, yorlife-kefir.co.uk



CRUNCH TIME

These macaroons from Whitworths come in vanilla and cacao. Whitworths Macaroons, £1.49, Tesco



ON TRIAL *Magimix 5200XL*

Health & Fitness Writer Jody-Ann Miller is bowled over by brilliance

There comes a point in every health-seeker's life when budget appliances no longer cut it, which is why I turned to Magimix's 5200XL, the Rolls Royce of food processors in all things from style to function.

I threw everything I could think of into the bowl of this processor and it over-performed in every scenario. Want to whip up a nut butter? No problem - it'll take just a couple of minutes. How about a week's worth of protein balls? Child's play for this machine. Chopping up vegetables? Just chuck them in whole! You won't even need to lift the top as the extra large chute accommodates pretty much everything. It's very fast though - 10 seconds of extra whizzing and your chopped carrots will turn to liquid thanks to the 1100W motor.

The extra attachments are every bit as ingenious as the rest of the machine. There's a dough blade that produces the fluffiest of mixtures, a whisk attachment for avid bakers and a citrus press that will squeeze every last bit of juice out of your favourite fruits.

The Magimix 5200XL has made such a difference to my health. Sunday meal prep takes less than half the time and effort and the processor's large capacity means preparing a healthy feast for dinner parties is an absolute doodle! It's price-point is high, there's no denying it, but it will last you a lifetime (seriously, there's a 20 year guarantee), and it handles everything so well that you won't ever want to upgrade.

Magimix 5200XL Premium Edition Satin Food Processor, £399.99, lakeland.co.uk



SUPER SALAD

Packed with flavour and nutrients, this is the perfect base for lunchtime salads. Florette Superfood Salad, £1.50, Waitrose



FUNKY FRUIT

These packs of frozen fruit are great for smoothies and as breakfast toppings. Dole Frozen Fruit, £2.29, Sainsbury's



FUEL FOR THOUGHT

These nutritionally complete bars contain all 26 essential vitamins and minerals. Huel Bar, £12 (box of five), huel.com



SPREAD THE LOVE

This natural chocolate spread is sweetened with fruit syrup instead of refined sugar. Sweet Freedom Choc Pot, £3.69, Asda



ALL HAIL KALE

Air dried kale crisps in two flavours - original and tomato & oregano. Yum! Leafy Kale Crisps, £1.99, leafyfoods.co.uk



TEA TIME

Organic herbal tea blends, each with a unique health purpose. Heath & Heather Organic Super Teas, £2.99, Holland & Barrett

IN THE KITCHEN WITH...

*Emily Leary, founder of lifestyle
blog A Mummy Too*



ABOUT
EMILY

STUDIED

English Literature
at University of
Sheffield and
Open University

CAREER
HIGHLIGHT

Probably cooking
in a live broadcast
with Gino
D'Acampo - so
much fun!

SKILLS

In addition to
writing my
own blog, I'm
a freelance
journalist and
I also produce
video content
on my YouTube
channel and
appear regularly
on local and
national radio
and TV.



basil-fried tomatoes is proving popular with the kids right now as it's creamy yet packed with greens.

If you want to start cooking dishes that are healthier, I would say don't be intimidated, and don't assume you have to completely abandon your existing repertoire of meals. Instead, I'd suggest thinking about which ingredients you can swap for healthier options in the meals you already cook. Start by switching from white rice to brown rice, for example. As well as being more achievable, it's a great way to introduce healthier dishes to kids without arousing suspicion!

Another key piece of advice is to plan ahead. I spend a few minutes at the weekend reviewing the contents of the fridge and food cupboards, then I plan the week's meals and make a shopping list. It allows you to avoid multiple trips to the shops, and helps you resist the lure of convenience food when time is tight.

I think snacks can be where a lot of our healthy eating intentions fall down, so I tend to prepare batches of healthy snacks to enjoy throughout the week, such as savoury red pepper muffins, which can be popped in my handbag before a day out and make for a far healthier option than a pastry from the bakers!

I can't remember ever not being interested in cooking.

My mum always encouraged me and my brothers and sisters to help out in the kitchen; food was a big part of family life when I was growing up, and I have lots of memories of fun baking sessions and 'experimental' recipes. I've carried this on with my own kids, who love getting stuck in with me on all kinds of dishes.

Cooking for my children has made me think more about the ingredients I use and the nutritional value of the meals I prepare. Over the years I've built up a collection of healthy meals that work for our family, and I'm adding to this all the time. We try to eat together as a family as often as possible. Sitting down and chatting about our day while sharing food is one of my favourite ways to spend time with my husband and the kids.

Having children has also made me more creative with my cooking. There's nothing quite like the will of a toddler who won't tolerate veggies to get you motivated! I've learned a whole host of tricks and tips for boosting healthy ingredients while still meeting the kids' approval – well, most of the time anyway!

My son had a dairy intolerance as a baby, and it was pretty scary at first. I think the fact that his intolerance was quite severe helped me just get on with finding alternative ingredients and recipes.

My health visitor was a big help in the early days, and as I started out as a food writer while he was still small, I was able to call on the online community for advice and support. I would absolutely recommend that parents dealing with food allergies seek out this kind of professional and community support – as well as being great sources of information and advice, hearing real people's experiences online can be a real lifeline for those tricky days when labels and rules cause confusion, or your carefully-prepared meal is met with rejection.

My kids love being taste testers, and if my recipe gets a double thumbs-up, I know I'm on the right track. Our all-time favourite family meal is probably pasta-based, but we've been mixing that up recently with spiralised carrot or courgette. Cavolo nero penne with

3 foods I'll be eating THIS MONTH

Courgettes

I love courgette and wholewheat pasta with poached egg, because it's healthy, balanced and satisfying.



Beetroot

A beetroot and Bramley apple salad in a honey balsamic vinaigrette is a fresh, vibrant dish.



Cauliflower rice

I love tofu red curry with cauliflower rice, because I'm hooked on all things Thai and cauliflower rice is incredibly satisfying and packed with vitamin C.





HEALTHY CHOICES

Put down those chocolate biscuits and move away from the crisps – it's time to stock your cupboards with healthy snacks and foods to boost your wellbeing



NOODLES ARE KING

Versatile and nourishing, noodles are a staple of Eastern culture, so why not liven up your cooking with King Soba's range? The brand's Organic Fairtrade Pad Thai Noodles are flat, silky noodles that are traditionally used in pad Thai. But, they don't

just have to be used in this dish – try them in salads and spaghetti dishes as a healthy, gluten-free alternative. King Soba Organic Vermicelli is also delicious in stir fry dishes, soups, and salads. All King Soba noodles are kosher, ideal for vegetarians, vegans, and coeliacs. **£2.29, kingsoba.co.uk**

TRY RYE

If you've been searching for a healthy type of bread made without using wheat, then look no further than Village Bakery Melmerby's 100% Organic Rye bread. It's slowly baked the proper way, keeping it simple with the best, natural ingredients - you'll love it's nutty, tangy taste. Delicious with something as simple as mashed avocado or as bold as smoked salmon, it's a lunchtime go-to.

£1.80, Waitrose & Ocado.



GO GLUTEN-FREE

What could be better on a dark chilly winter night than a warming pie? If you're going gluten-free this year, you may think pastry is out of the question, but not now! Handcrafted Voakes' steak pie is made with gluten and wheat-free pastry, slowly braised tender steak and a rich, peppery gravy, making it ideal for those with gluten intolerances. We suggest serving it with sweet potato mash and a healthy pile of greens. **From £2.50, voakesfreefrom.co.uk**

SUPERFOOD SNACK

We love these sweet and chewy dried jujube fruits from Abakus Foods which are packed with phytonutrients and antioxidants. Jujube fruits are an ancient superfood with more than 20 times the amount of vitamin C in citrus fruits! Gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan and with no added sugar, you can enjoy them as a snack, or sprinkle on porridge for natural sweetness.



RRP £1.79, Wholefoods, Revital, independent health food shops and abakusfoods.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. **£2.69 available at Holland and Barrett. treevitalise.com**



HEALTHY DISHES

for glowing skin

*Liz Earle shares three delicious
recipes from her book Skin*





A BOWLFUL OF GOODNESS

SERVES 4

- 150g short-grain brown rice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red or white onion, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, sliced
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 fennel bulb, chopped
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 450g butternut squash, chopped
- 50g red lentils
- 1 tbsp sundried tomato purée
- 800ml hot vegetable stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 400g can cannellini beans
- 8 tenderstem broccoli spears
- Sea salt and black pepper

To serve:

- 50g feta, cut into four wedges
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 Put the rice into a saucepan and add 500ml hot water. Cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Turn the heat down low and simmer

for around 25 minutes, until all the water has been absorbed.

2 Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion until it starts to turn golden. Stir in the garlic and fennel seeds and cook for one minute. Season well.

3 Add the fennel, pepper, squash and lentils, and give everything a good stir. Allow to cook for five minutes, stirring every now and then, to soften the vegetables. Whisk the tomato purée into the hot stock, then pour this into the pan. Add the bay leaves and cannellini beans and season again, then cover and bring to the boil.

4 Turn the heat down low and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. After 15 minutes, place the broccoli spears on top of the stew and push them just under the top – the heat and remaining liquid will steam them until tender.

5 Divide the cooked rice between four bowls and spoon the stew over the top, sharing out the broccoli and feta. Scatter the parsley on top, and serve.



BUCKWHEAT NOODLE SALAD

SERVES 4

- 200g soba (buckwheat) noodles
- 5g seaweed
- 1 red pepper, halved and deseeded
- 2 spring onions, ends removed
- 1 carrot
- 100g mangetout, trimmed
- 100g green beans, trimmed

For the pumpkin dressing:

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp cold water
- 10g parsley
- 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds, toasted
- 15g unsalted peanuts, toasted
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Soak the noodles and the seaweed according to the packet instructions.

2 Prepare the vegetables – finely shred the pepper into thin strips and do the same with the spring onions. Chop the carrot into matchstick-size shreds. Halve the mangetout lengthways, and do the same with the green beans. Steam the veg until tender – this will take around three to five minutes. You still want there to be a little crunch.

3 Whizz all the dressing ingredients in a food processor and season.

4 Drain the buckwheat noodles and the seaweed, and mix together. Divide between four bowls, and do the same with the vegetables. Drizzle over the dressing, and serve.



BLACKBERRY, HAZELNUT AND SPELT CAKE BITES

MAKES 20

- Rapeseed or olive oil, for greasing
- 130g dried, stoned prunes
- 130ml boiling water
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- 1 Cox's apple, cored and finely chopped
- 50g sultanas
- 100g jumbo or rolled oats
- 3 eggs
- 25g set honey
- 50g olive or rapeseed oil
- 50g spelt flour
- 50g wheatbran
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 50g hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 150g blackberries

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C. Grease and line a 20cm square cake tin with baking parchment.

2 Put the prunes into a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Set aside to soak. Mix the orange zest, juice, apple and sultanas together in a separate bowl.

3 Put the oats into a mini food processor and whizz to make a fine flour.

4 Drain the prunes, reserving the liquid, then whizz in a food processor until smooth. Stir the liquid back in, then spoon this mixture into a sieve resting over a bowl, and use a spoon to extract the purée.

5 Whisk the eggs, honey and oil in a bowl until foamy – this will take around three minutes, then fold in the prune purée, apple mixture, oats, oil, spelt flour, wheatbran, baking powder and hazelnuts to combine.

6 Spoon the mixture into the cake tin, then scatter over the blackberries.

7 Bake in the oven for around 40 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack, then cut into 20 squares and serve.

BOOK shelf



Recipes taken from *SKIN: Delicious recipes and the ultimate wellbeing plan for radiant skin in 6 weeks* by Liz Earle, Orion Spring, £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

 **Nutritionist Resource**



Try Rye

and feel the

TUMMY LOVE

this Lunchtime

Here's Why

✓ NO WHEAT ✓ ORGANIC ✓ HIGH FIBRE

Tummylove is the satisfying feeling you'll get from a slice of Village Bakery 100% Organic Rye bread. You'll love its nutty, tangy taste and so will your tummy.

try-rye.com

Available from **Waitrose**

 **ocado.com**
The online supermarket

THE
Village Bakery
MELMERBY



Seeded
Organic Rye bread



Organic Rye bread

IAN MARBER

“Do you know the truth about health food claims?”



Are you a savvy shopper? Nutritional therapist Ian Marber examines the new rules on food claims to ensure we know the difference between fact and fiction



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

We are all familiar with the health claims made on food labels and adverts but did you know that the rules on what companies can and can't say have changed?

A decade ago some food manufacturers might simply add the words 'high in fibre' or 'contains vitamin C' to their product (assuming that they believed that to be true), but in the past five years guidelines have been introduced that say that brands can't make any claims unless their food contains a specific amount of said nutrient.

WORDING IS KEY

For example, a food that claims to be a source of protein must have at least 12 percent of its energy value provided by protein (or 12 percent of the calories have to be protein-sourced) and to say 'high protein' there must be at least 20 percent present. Fibre is slightly different, as the product needs to have 3g of fibre per 100g, or 1.5g per 100 calories. 'High fibre' claims need to relate to foods

containing 6g of fibre per 100g to be legal, or at least 3.5 per 100 calories.

When it comes to nutrients, rather than just saying a food product 'contains vitamin C' now it needs to feature at least 15 percent of the Reference Nutrient Intake (or RNI) per 100g while something that is 'high' or 'rich' in vitamin C needs at least 30 percent. If the food doesn't contain at least the basic level then the nutrient can't even be name checked at all, so writing 'vitamin C' on the packet wouldn't be legal. There are several words that shouldn't be used but still are and it's worth taking a look online to find out more.

Approved terms include those relating to sugar, fat, protein and fibre content so when you see a food label with such things referred to it is likely that the claim has been properly assessed and approved.

RULES ARE RULES

It's worth remembering that these rules don't just apply to the food you might buy in a shop, but equally to something

you might see listed on a restaurant or a take-away menu. When we think about food manufacturers we think of factories and big corporations, but artisan food makers are subject to the same laws too. Even your local coffee shop needs to abide by the laws, but in practice many don't. All too often I see claims that are unlawful, but probably written with all good intentions. Typically this includes juices labelled 'detox' or 'energy' or the like (given that a juice is mostly water it's highly unlikely to contain 15 percent of the right nutrients).

So, the next time you see health claims you might want to think about whether they could be true or simply a marketing ploy to get you to spend money.

“Rules have been *introduced* that say brands can't make any *claims* unless their food contains a *specific amount* of said nutrient”

EAT TO BEAT: HEADACHES

Nutritional therapist **Henrietta Norton** reveals how you can beat pain through the foods you eat

A headache is one way your body can tell you that something is out of balance – whether this is a psychological pressure or a hormonal issue. Using it as an opportunity to delve into the cause, especially if they are reoccurring, can be a really productive approach to wellness.

There are many causes of headaches such as high blood pressure, low or high blood sugar, dehydration, tension, hormones, medications and infections to name a few. Here are some actions you can take to support your body to reduce the chance of suffering from headaches.

SUPPORT YOUR LIVER

The liver is responsible for many functions which includes cleansing our blood, digesting our food, producing energy and metabolising hormones. If any of these functions are underperforming due to poor diet and lifestyle, a headache could develop.

You can support your liver with food and herbs like garlic, onions, leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables (think Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, broccoli and watercress), dandelion root, artichoke leaf, burdock root, milk thistle and more B vitamins. Extra protein will also help to support the liver. If you have a headache, try eating a protein-rich meal or snack and you may find this will alleviate the pain. A well-used naturopathic remedy is to undergo a gentle liver and gut cleansing programme.

BALANCE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

When you eat high sugar foods, or go too long without eating, your body can swing between having high or low blood sugar levels which can cause headaches. Poor blood sugar control will also impact other hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol which will increase your susceptibility to head pain. The solution is to eat protein-rich meals with plenty of vegetables and healthy fats. Avoid or minimise all



refined, processed foods and ingredients you do not recognise. Better still, stick to foods that don't need a lengthy ingredients label at all. Focus on real foods that are as natural and unprocessed as possible. Some foods will impact your blood sugar more than you realise – the worst offenders are bread, cereal, white rice, high sugar fruits such as grapes, bananas and mangoes, low fat yoghurt and sauces such as ketchup.

OPT FOR SPECIFIC NUTRIENTS

Headaches can also result from a deficiency in certain nutrients, most commonly magnesium, vitamin B6 and folate (also known as vitamin B9). Magnesium and vitamin B6 support the production of the neurotransmitter serotonin, blood sugar regulation and the efficient metabolism of oestrogen (excess or deficiency of which can lead to headaches). Similarly folate and magnesium influence blood circulation by lessening vasoconstriction which can generate pressure headaches. You can boost your dietary intake of these nutrients by eating more green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

REHYDRATE

An obvious solution to start with, but it's surprising how many people forget to drink enough water throughout their day or only drink coffee and tea.

If you don't like water try adding some fresh lemon or lime to improve the taste. The quality of water is also important as you don't want to burden your body with more chemicals, such as chlorine, from unfiltered water. An excellent investment is the British Berkefeld water filter (berkey-waterfilters.co.uk). You could also start the day with a fresh vegetable juice to provide condensed nourishment from the vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Cucumber, celery, lettuce, fennel, ginger, lemons, limes and herbs like parsley, basil and mint all work well in green juice.

LOOK AT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Most people will have experienced a tension headache at some point from staring at a computer screen for too long. We are constantly surrounded by mobile phones, wi-fi and portable house phones so it's impossible to avoid the electromagnetic radiation they emit. However, we can switch them off at night, have regular breaks from electronic devices and get out into nature. It is also important to note that children absorb more radiation than adults as they have thinner skin and bones and a higher water content. It is therefore wise to limit their exposure.

Henrietta Norton is a nutritional therapist, author and co-founder of Wild Nutrition (wildnutrition.com). She has clinics at Grace Belgravia and SP & Co in London.

HEALING KEDGEREE

Rich in omega 3, B12, B3, B1, B2, B6, folic acid, iron, magnesium, calcium, fibre and protein, this will help give your body what it needs to fight head pain

SERVES 2

- 350g undyed smoked haddock
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp curry powder
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 90g brown rice, rinsed
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 125g spinach leaves
- 2 tbsp goat's yoghurt (optional)
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, quartered
- Spinach and kale, to serve

1. Bring 600ml water to the boil in a large frying pan. Reduce the heat, add the smoked haddock and simmer for three to four minutes, until just cooked. Remove the fish, strain the cooking liquid into a bowl and set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a pan, add the onion and cook over a medium heat for two to three minutes, then add the curry powder and turmeric and cook for two minutes.

3. Add the rice and tomato purée and stir to mix. Add the reserved cooking liquid

and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 40 to 50 minutes until the rice is tender, stirring in the spinach just before the rice is cooked.

4. Meanwhile, remove and discard the skin and any bones from the haddock and separate into flakes.

5. Stir the yoghurt (if using) into the rice, with salt and pepper to taste, then gently mix in the flaked haddock. Spoon onto a warm serving dish, arrange the eggs on the rice and serve with steamed spinach and kale.



Breeze the menopause

Control unwanted symptoms with Cleanmarine MenoMin

Cleanmarine MenoMin is specifically designed to combat menopause symptoms. Each small but mighty capsule is packed with fast-absorbing omega 3 phospholipids as well as folate, biotin, B vitamins, soy isoflavones and vitamin D3. This synergistic combination helps to regulate hormonal activity as well as reducing tiredness and fatigue. Here's how...

OMEGA 3

This essential fatty acid boasts potent anti-inflammatory properties which have been shown to reduce symptoms such as menopausal arthritis, cramping and osteoporosis. Omega 3 also helps to lubricate the body in general, alleviating vaginal dryness and other mucous related side-effects.

B VITAMINS AND FOLATE

Depression and stress is often associated with the menopause due to the sheer amount of hormonal shifts that the body experiences in this time period. A reduction in progesterone and oestrogen can often lead to an unwelcome surge

in the stress hormone cortisol, but the B vitamins, which include thiamine, niacin, B12 and folate (or folic acid), can help to balance things out. Known as the stress vitamins, they are great at reducing irritability, poor concentration, anxiety and emotional tension. They do this by boosting the production of the sex hormones, supporting adrenal health, increasing levels of the feel-good hormone serotonin and enhancing liver function, the organ responsible for eliminating excess hormones and maintaining balance.

BIOTIN

Many women will notice that their hair starts to thin as they go through the menopause. This is because the body's oestrogen levels are decreasing and the female hormone is responsible for keeping your hair in the growing phase. The longer this stage, the longer your hair has to remunerate before the shedding cycle. Biotin may help to counteract this by boosting the metabolism of the fats, carbohydrates and amino acids needed to manufacture hair strands.

SOY ISOFLAVONES

Soy isoflavones are a type of phytochemical, a naturally-occurring plant-based compound found in soy products. Some of these isoflavones have mild oestrogenic effects and have therefore been labelled phytoestrogens. Structurally similar to the female hormone, they bind to empty oestrogen receptors and relieve the hormonally-based symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, fatigue, vaginal dryness, loss of libido, headaches, anxiety and insomnia.

VITAMIN D3

During and after the menopause, the body's ability to produce vitamin D is significantly lowered. This can seriously impact calcium absorption, which relies on the sunshine vitamin, generating a higher risk of osteoporosis. Increasing your intake via supplementation is one of the best ways to counteract this.

Cleanmarine MenoMin is priced at £23.99 and can be purchased from cleanmarinekrill.co.uk

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



A new **skincare app** has been launched to analyse **people's skin** and even guess their age based on the condition of their face. The Skin Advisor app, which recently launched in the UK, evaluates a person's complexion based on a photo of the user and asks questions about their skincare habits, before stating which areas are good and which ones need a bit more TLC. The app has learned to perceive age and skin flaws by being shown tens of thousands of ageing faces and now has a better success rate at guessing age from a visage than expert dermatologists.

Sounds like something worth trying out!

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BerryWorld Overnight Oats with Raspberry Chia Jam

SERVES 1

FOR THE JAM

500g raspberries
4-5 tbsp agave or maple syrup, to taste
3 tbsp chia seeds
1 tsp lemon juice

FOR THE OATS

2tsp agave or maple syrup
120ml almond milk
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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Origins Plantscription Powerful Lifting Concentrate, £52, origins.co.uk



Neom Organics Energy Burst Eau De Parfum, £49, neomorganics.com



Benecos Classic Lip Balm, £2.45, benecos.co.uk

Clean Beauty Co. Love Soak, £32, cleanbeautyco.com



L'Occitane Shea Butter Intensive Hand Balm, £21, uk.loccitane.com



Tropic Good Skin Day Resurfacing Serum, £42, tropicskincare.com

NEW MUST-HAVES

These gorgeous winter buys
are hot off the press



Burt's Bees Lipstick, £9.99, burtsbees.co.uk



Oskia Rose de Mai Massage Candle, £36, oskiaskincare.com

Vanderohé No. 1 Nourishing Face Serum, £88, vanderohé.com



Trilogy Pure Plant Body Oil, £15.50, trilogyproms.com

10 WAYS TO AMP UP YOUR ANTI-AGEING ROUTINE

Next-gen skincare that promises to turn back the hands of time

1

DRINK COLLAGEN

Even if you're not sure exactly how it works, you probably know that collagen contributes to plumper, firmer-looking skin. On a very basic level, the less of the protein present in your skin, the more wrinkles and sagging you'll see on your visage. That's why you'll find it listed in a number of skincare products. But new clinical research suggests that *ingesting* collagen peptides is much more effective at boosting your skin, with significant visible results in just 30 days of daily supplementation!

Skinade, £99 for a 30-day supply, skinade.com



2

UPGRADE YOUR BOTANICALS

Stem cell research is becoming more and more widespread, and for all its benefits, it's not hard to see why. Plant stem cells are basically the extracts pulled from botanicals and fruits that regenerate on their own. This regenerative ability is transferred to skin cells when applied topically, promoting cell turnover, collagen production and enhanced elastin structures. In a nutshell: they repair damaged skin while also strengthening this skin's defence system to prevent premature ageing.

Intelligent Nutrients Plant Stem Cell Renewal Complex, £56, naturisimo.com



3

STEP UP YOUR HYDRATION

If you thought collagen was the be-all-and-end-all of ingestible anti-ageing, think again. Hyaluronic acid is gaining traction, too! This gel-like molecule is found in virtually every part of the body, including the skin. It holds more than 1,000 times its weight in water which makes it one of the best hydrating ingredients around and it's also responsible for binding collagen to elastin in the dermis (read: plumper skin with significantly less wrinkles and sagging).

Sarah Chapman Overnight Facial Supplement, £46, sarahchapman.net



4

HARNESS THE POWER OF GRAPES

Resveratrol, which is commonly found in the skins of grapes (and wine!), has always been highly regarded for its heart-healthy benefits (decreasing blood clots, lowering cholesterol and soothing inflammation, to name a few), and now it's proven to be a potent anti-ageing compound, too! Researchers have found that when applied to the skin, it has 17 times greater antioxidant potency than idebenone, an expensive antioxidant used in clinical-strength wrinkle creams. Bad news for free radicals, really good news for your skin.

Caudalie Resveratrol Lift Night Infusion Cream, £42, caudalie.co.uk



5

NOURISH FROM WITHIN

Ingestible beauty is having a serious moment in terms of science, and the latest ingredient causing a stir in the skincare world

is astaxanthin. This compound is the world's strongest known antioxidant of natural origin (sayonara, free radicals) and when ingested, it mixes with both water and fats, allowing it to be transported throughout the entire body to provide complete protection to every cell. Studies show that it even defends against the damaging effects, ultraviolet light (yes, ingestible SPF is now a thing!).

Green People Age Defy+ Green Beauty with Astaxanthin (60 capsules), £34, greenpeople.co.uk



7

TRY A TROPICAL TOUCH

Dragon blood sap, sourced from the Brazilian Sangre de Grado tree, is quickly making its mark in the anti-ageing hall of fame. Composed of more than 40 different anti-oxidising, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial molecules, clinical trials found that within just 24 hours from first application, the number of skin cells responsible for the production of collagen and elastin increased by 40 percent.

Ekia Radiance Face Serum, £56, ekiaskincare.co.uk



6

GET BUZZY WITH IT

Hey, if it's good enough for Kate Middleton, it's good enough for us! Ever since facialist to the stars Deborah Mitchell revealed that the Duchess enjoys facials made with bee venom, beauty insiders have been obsessed with this plumping ingredient. Studies show that topical application can boost collagen production by up to 300 percent!

Antipodes Skin Brightening Manuka Honey Day Cream with Bee Venom, £39.99, planetorganic.com

GO SLOW

Concentration of active ingredients makes the biggest difference to your skin. But as a general rule, powerful anti-agers are best administered in small doses at regular intervals. Problem is no one has the time (or patience) to reapply products throughout the day, so researchers have developed time-release technology instead. These ingredients can be slowly dissolved into the skin over a prolonged period for maximum impact with minimal irritation!

Liz Earle Superskin Face Serum, £48, lizearle.co.uk

8



10

GET TECHNICAL

Contrary to popular belief, lasers are not just for the professionals. Recent developments have led to a surge in at-home devices that can be safely and effectively administered

at home. Using the same technology as expensive dermatologist treatments, they work by sending targeted beams deep into the layers of the skin to stimulate collagen production at the deepest level.

Tria Age-defying Laser, £442, triabeauty.co.uk



9



TOP UP YOUR PEPTIDES

Peptides are great for anti-ageing because they serve more than one purpose. That's why they're always recommended for strong, healthy skin. "There's a lot to be said for focusing on overall skin health instead of addressing individual signs of ageing, which is commonplace in skincare today," says founder of Deciem Brandon Truaxe. "Copper peptides in particular drop by as much as 70 percent by age 60 and while copper in the body doesn't drop in the same way, without copper peptides, your body cannot use this mineral to repair damaged cells."

Korres Golden Krocus Ageless Saffron Elixir, £50, pharmeden.co.uk



Organic Aromas makes the most effective Essential Oil Diffusers on the market. They are made from recycled plantation wood and hand-blown glass. These diffusers use no heat, no water and are plastic free.

THE BEAUTY *detective*

Take a tip from ancient India to ramp up the pamper power says our beauty editor at large **Emma Van Hinsbergh**

A recent trip to the west coast of India has left me full of renewed enthusiasm for the gentle harmony and wisdom of ayurveda. The 5,000-year-old healing system promotes the therapeutic power of plants and living simply with the rhythms of nature.

A heady cocktail of nourishing herbs, oils, fruits and spices, sensuous massage, healing yoga and spiritual practice, it couldn't be more natural if it tried – and boy, is it effective when it comes to beauty. The women on the beaches of Goa were astoundingly radiant, like iridescent birds of paradise in their jewel-coloured saris. While most of us looked like ragged surf bums, they would glide across the sand like sun-kissed goddesses, immaculately groomed and not a hair out of place. This is partly because morning rituals such as bathing, meditation, abhyanga (self-massage) and gentle yoga practice play a big part in the tradition of dinacharya, or daily routine. It is a beautiful way to start the day, harmonising mind, body and spirit and making you look rather fabulous in the process.

HERBAL HEAVEN

When it comes to skincare, ayurveda's natural credentials are second to none. While modern methods often rely on synthetic ingredients and harsh invasive treatments, this nurturing ancient system is proper holistic heaven. Traditionally, it shuns harsh soaps and cleansers and instead uses gentle ubtans (pastes or face masks) packed full of health-boosting ingredients such as almonds and cashew nuts, turmeric, sandalwood, saffron, yoghurt and



rose water. Moisturisers take the form of natural oils of coconut, sweet almond, sesame and sunflower oils and are fortified with healing herbs and spices to nourish the skin.

Ayurveda, which means 'life knowledge' in Sanskrit, also excels in pampering therapies. One of my absolute favourites is shirodhara, a blissfully relaxing treatment often used in panchakarma cleansing rituals. Warm oil is poured in continuous stream over your forehead or 'ajna marma', helping to banish stress, promote wellbeing and generally make you feel like you're floating on cloud nine.

There are some great places to experience all of this. If you want to blow the budget, head off to the Himalayas to the Ananda, which is generally agreed to be one of the best spas in the world. Closer to home, the charming Clover Mill in the Malvern Hills offers bespoke health and yoga programmes based on ayurvedic principles while the Tor Spa Retreat in Kent has authentic therapies and intensive detox programmes to rejuvenate body and soul. It's the perfect way to welcome in the spring and start living more simply and holistically. Start taking some tips from this gorgeous healing tradition today – you certainly won't regret it.

SECRET WEAPONS *Healing ayurvedic treats*



SMOOTH

Urban Veda Neem and Botanicals Purifying Body Lotion is rich in cold pressed neem oil to strengthen skin. £12.99, beautybase.com



NOURISH

Khadi Hibiscus Face Oil for Sensitive Skin contains nourishing sandalwood for a radiant complexion. £11.90, khadihair.co.uk



SOFTEN

Ayumi Naturals Sandalwood and Walnut Body Scrub contains gentle exfoliants to smooth your skin. £3.99, beautybase.com

YOUR OVERNIGHT Beauty Success Plan

Want to look brighter and more beautiful after just one sleep? Follow these expert tips and you'll be bright eyed and bushy-tailed come morning...

You might have a good anti-ageing plan in place during the day, but while your body is asleep is when all the magic really happens. Here's how to give it the help it needs to roll back the years...

BACK TO BASICS

It's the mantra we've all known (and sometimes skipped) since we were teenagers: remove your make-up properly. "Your skin accumulates oxidative stress from free radical damage caused by the sun, pollution and environmental stresses all day long; it's almost an additional layer on it," says dermatologist Dr Gary Goldfaden. "When you don't properly wash your face and make-up off at night, those free radicals break down the healthy collagen in your skin which leads to premature aging. Additionally, sleeping with your make-up on clogs pores which is the leading cause of breakouts."

"Use a gentle, oil-based balm that is nourishing as well as purifying," says ayurvedic expert Abida Halstenberg, founder of Samaya (samayaayurveda.com). "Avoid harsh foaming cleansers that strip your skin dry and dehydrate it."

GET MASSAGING

Now your skin's clean, choose a good nightcream. We love Caudalie Renewal Night Cream, £32, caudalie.com – and take the tension out of your face with this unwinding massage technique from Beata Aleksandrowicz, who trains top spas around the world:

1 Every ache and pain in your body is reflected on your face. After a long and stressful day, it's important to deal with the tension that has accumulated on your body to ensure that you sleep well and wake up with

a fresh, relaxed face. After an evening bath or shower, lie down with a rolled up towel under your knees. Close your eyes.

2 Breathe in through your nose. Hold, counting to three, and slowly breathe out. Observe your body and any areas of discomfort. Place your hand on a sore area and direct your breath there. Imagine your out-breath is brushing away the tensions. Continue for two minutes.

“

The anti-inflammatory characteristics of *turmeric* will soothe your *insides* and do wonders for your skin

”

3 Place the middle fingers of both hands on the middle-most points of your cheekbone, and slide your fingers under the bone – a stress-related pressure point is located here. With your out breath press in and up, as if you were lifting your cheekbones. Hold, counting for five, and slowly release. Repeat three times.

4 Pain when you press this point indicates that you are storing a lot of tension. To release this tension gradually, press in and up again, this time using less pressure. Hold for a count of 10. Repeat three times, then place your hands on your cheekbones and breathe deeply.

CUT CARBS

As with so many things, it all starts with what you eat. A diet high in glycemic carbohydrates causes our features to take on a soft, doughy appearance, so skip chips and ditch the sugar. For chiseled cheekbones in the morning, eat a protein-rich meal such as salmon, mackerel or trout with green leafy vegetables for dinner. And avoid adding salt, which can cause your eyelids to retain excess fluids, making them look puffy come the morning.

GOLDEN MILK

"An hour before bedtime, drink a glass of warm organic milk (either dairy or nut) with some grated turmeric root or powder mixed in," says Abida. "The strong anti-inflammatory characteristics of turmeric will soothe your insides and do wonders for your skin when you wake. You can also include a few strands of saffron if you like as it has similar anti-inflammatory properties."

MEDITATION

"Make the time to meditate for a few minutes before you go to bed or when you wake up," says Abida. "If you simply cannot find time in your busy routine to practice classic mindfulness, then make the most of your skincare routine and incorporate products that also provide holistic wellness. This way you make your skincare work harder for you. You find a few easy minutes of peaceful tranquility from the natural aromas and constitution balancing ingredients, all of which help your skin look younger as your stress levels are alleviated and your facial muscles relaxed."

SILK PILLOWCASE

The knit of silk is closer than cotton, which makes it less irritating to skin. It won't drag it to the same extent and so can help reduce the



formation of new wrinkles. Plus it's better for your hair and some hairdressers recommend sleeping on a silk pillowcase to make your blowdry last longer!

Try Illuminage Skin Rejuvenating Pillowcase, £50, lookfantastic.com

HEAD HELD HIGH

When we lie down, fluid is naturally drawn towards the head due to gravity, and can lead to a puffy appearance come 7am. "The eyes can be very revealing when it comes to age," says Natalie Hart, beauty expert at Titanic Spa (titanicspa.com). "Whilst eye cream can help to reduce wrinkles, sleeping with an extra pillow so that your head is higher than the rest of the body can help to reduce puffiness by encouraging any excess fluid under the eyes to

drain away." Dipping a cotton pad into rose water and placing it over your eyelids for 10 minutes every night before bed is said to make a difference too after a couple of weeks.

TURN OVER

Sleeping on your front can cause lines and wrinkles – the average head weighs around seven or eight pounds, which is a lot of pressure to put on the skin on your face. Try to fall asleep on your back, and alternate the side you nap on too.

CASTOR OIL

Nothing screams youth like luscious, face-framing eyebrows and lashes. Applying castor oil before bed to yours can help stimulate their growth, leading to fuller, thicker, stronger hairs.

PEARLY WHITES

A brighter, whiter smile can take years off your face. For a quick DIY, dip your toothbrush into baking soda after your normal brushing routine. Brush them again with the soda, then wait at least an hour before you eat or drink anything. Don't do this more than once a week though or you could damage the enamel.

GO NUTS

Coconut oil is your friend in the bedroom as well as the kitchen. For a soft, youthful barnet, slather a handful through your locks, and wrap it in a towel before going to sleep. Wash it off in the morning for hair that gleams. And you can do the same for your hands too – just pop on gloves overnight after covering them in oil and they'll look youthful come morning.



Treat mum to younger-looking skin

Looking for the ideal gift for Mother's Day? A course of natural collagen supplement Skinade could be just the thing

Flowers and bath salts are always a winner on Mother's Day but if you're searching for something a little bit different for your mum this year, perhaps Skinade could be the answer.

Designed to help revitalise tired skin, this natural collagen supplement has been used by A-list celebrities, beauty journalists and skin health experts, and great results have been reported. And, if your mum has been noticing wrinkles around her eyes, dry patches on her skin or a dull and lacklustre complexion, Skinade is well worth a closer look!

Collagen is key to youthful skin. It is a naturally occurring protein that keeps our skin looking good and supple. When we are young, it makes up around 75 percent of our skin but as we get older we start to produce less of it. This results in a loss of elasticity, sagging skin and fine lines and wrinkles – something all mums often complain about!

"Skinade is a drink that contains peptides which have been shown to stimulate the cells in our skin, the fibroblasts, that generate collagen,"

explains Dr Benji Dhillon, an aesthetic surgeon at PHI Clinic. "It's this kickstarter that increases the amount of collagen in our body and helps improve our skin's appearance. An increase in the thickness of the skin has been demonstrated after taking a course of Skinade. Interestingly Skinade has also been proven to stimulate the cells that produce hyaluronic acid which provide hydration to our skin."

That covers the science, but when it comes to real women, the results speak for themselves. *Natural Health's* sister magazine, *Your Fitness*, recently gave readers a chance to put Skinade on trial and they had plenty of good words to say. Ilenia Barausse said: "My face looks much more radiant and youthful and I have seen improvements in the fine lines around my eyes. Even my friends have been saying how refreshed I looked," while Caroline Asquith added: "It has made a bigger difference than any face cream".

GREAT FOR ALL AGES

Of course, it's not just your mum that could benefit from Skinade. A loss of collagen starts as early as your twenties, meaning that every one of us could benefit from taking this supplement. So what's not to love?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Skinade is a daily supplement and comes in a ready-to-drink 150ml bottle or a handy 15ml travel sachet (to be diluted in water). As well as collagen, it also contains vitamins B and C, l-lysine, msm and organic flax seed oil. Skin experts recommend that you drink one bottle each morning before or with breakfast.

Everybody's skin is different so depending on your skin's needs, Skinade comes in 30, 60 or 90-day courses. For more information, visit skinade.com.



English ROSE

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JANE IREDALE MINERAL BRONZER in Rose Dawn, £29.95, janeiredale.co.uk
BENECOS NATURAL FRESH BRONZING DUO in Ibiza Nights, £6.95, benecos.uk
PACIFICA COCONUT MULTIPLES PALETTE (one shade of three), £12.39, naturisimo.com

KJAER WEIS CREAM BLUSH in Abundance, £40, naturisimo.com
PACIFICA COCONUT MULTIPLES PALETTE (one shade of three), £12.39, naturisimo.com
BENECOS NATURAL FRESH BRONZING DUO in Ibiza Nights, £6.95, benecos.uk
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AVEDA FACE ACCENTS in 185 Rose Blossom, £23, aveda.co.uk

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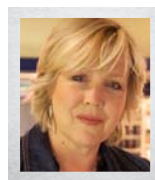
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JO FAIRLEY'S

NATURAL NAIL TREATMENTS

The *Beauty Bible* guru reveals her favourite nailcare products



There are a few bedtime beauty rituals that we all happily follow – cleansing, moisturising, sometimes toning (and in my case, massaging my feet with a rich butter!). But a habit that's worth getting into, and which will truly pay off, is giving our nails a little bit of late-night TLC

by massaging them with oils.

This might only seem like a small thing, but it dramatically improves blood flow to the nail bed, encouraging the growth of strong and healthy nails. Beyond that, the oil nourishes our talons which helps to make them robust yet flexible. To me, boosting nail health naturally beats using one of the many chemical hardeners out there, as while these products do strengthen nails, it's often to the point where they are susceptible to dramatic snapping.

If you're prone to nodding off and know that you're unlikely to add nailcare to your night-time to-do list, I would suggest keeping a balm-like product in your handbag and trying to get into the habit of massaging your nails whenever you're kept waiting instead. (That's got to be more productive than scrolling mindlessly through Instagram, hasn't it...?) The following products are all a pleasure to use – try them out and see the results for yourself!

● **Viridian Ultimate Beauty Organic Nail & Cuticle Oil, £12.95, viridian-nutrition.com**

This product features fortifying horsetail alongside jojoba and sunflower oils, marigold extract and a lovely blend of rosemary, lemon myrtle and lavender oils to create a pleasurable and inviting scent. It's also anti-bacterial, making it a good choice for those who do manual work.



● **Dr. Hauschka Neem Nail and Cuticle Pen, £16.25, dr.hauschka.com**

Neem is renowned in ayurvedic medicine for its nail-strengthening powers. You can buy this oil in a pump bottle but the pen is more portable and easier to use – click it a few times and the applicator brush will release the perfect amount of oil for each nail. What more could you want!

● **Burt's Bees Lemon Butter Cuticle Cream, £6.49, burtsbees.co.uk**

A little tin of wonder for your nails, this cream slips into even the smallest of handbags so that next time you find yourself twiddling your thumbs, you can massage them with this lemon-scented balm which will intensively moisturise the nail zone.

● **Lanolips Original 101 Ointment, £10.99, boots.com**

It's claimed that there are 101 uses for this 100 percent natural Aussie product made from lanolin, a substance which holds 200 percent of its weight in moisture. So, if you'd rather carry around a serious multi-tasker instead of a product dedicated solely to nailcare, then this is your best bet.

● **Fresh Therapies Nourishing Nail Elixir, £11.95, freshtherapies.com**

If this doesn't get you into the habit of nightly nail TLC, then nothing will. The blend of neroli and frankincense oils is sheer bliss and will probably have you sniffing your nails! Personally, I like to add a drop or two to my palms and spread the oil all over my hands after tending to my nails.

Why not tweet me your top picks? I'm [@jojosams](https://twitter.com/jojosams) and always keen to hear other people's favourites!



Sleep tight

You'll be drifting off to the land of nod in no time thanks to these hero products



2



3



4

5



- 1** Unwind after a long day with a relaxing blend of lavender, sandalwood and jasmine thanks to Sweet Dreams Pillow Mist, £12.95, tisserand.com
- 2** An independent clinical study found that those who took collagen supplements had a more restful sleep. There are many collagen supplements on the market so why not try Skinade, £99 for one month's supply, skinade.com
- 3** Amphora Aromatics' Relaxing Bath Oil (£4.80 for 100ml, amphora-retail.com) is all you need to calm a busy mind and soul. Simply add a glug under running water and feel your stresses melt away.
- 4** Pop the kettle on and finish the day with a cup of Tick Tock Organic Rooibos Green Tea, (£1.99, ticktocktea.com). Your body, and health, will thank you for it!
- 5** Made with ayurvedic herbs, essential oils and natural ingredients, this shower gel is jam packed with ingredients to help your skin glow and your eyes close. AA Skincare's Ylang Ylang, Argan and Rosemary Shower and Bath Gel, £5.95, aaskincare.co.uk
- 6** A 100 percent natural balm to help clear the head and quieten the mind, Scentered Sleep Well Therapy Balm (£14.50, scentered.me) supports a restful and restorative sleep.
- 7** The unique combination of bioactive micronutrients and herbal extracts in Melissa Dream Restful Sleep tablets (£7.99, newnordic.co.uk) helps contribute to the normal function of the nervous system and a peaceful night's sleep.
- 8** Keep your spine aligned and sleep with the correct posture all night long with a little help from this Organic Buckwheat Pillow. This travel size version (£15.95, razzmatazz.co.uk) allows you to get some relaxing shut-eye anytime, anywhere.
- 9** Puriskin Sleep Suite is a calm-inducing set designed to quiet the senses and promote the optimal physiological state for rest. £29.99, includes a lavender body oil, sleep soothe balm and lavender pouch, puriskinbyvb.com

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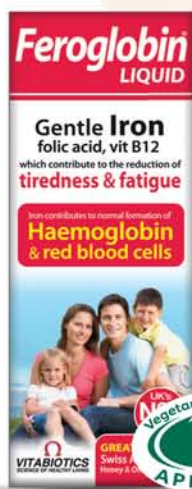
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Self

Simple steps to balance your mind, body and soul

New research has revealed that **financial worries are the single biggest cause of stress for UK adults**. Concerns about money were found to cause the largest difference in wellbeing scores, creating a 52 percent divide between the most and least financially confident people. Other factors that significantly impact our wellbeing include the quality of personal relationships and mental stimulation. If you are struggling with your finances, you can find help and advice at stepchange.org, citizensadvice.org.uk or debtadvicefoundation.org.



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LYNNE FRANKS

"I am meeting more women and men who are dedicated to creating positive change using love, not fear or greed"

Our empowerment guru on the roles we play

Are you a good listener, a woman of action, a strategist, or a natural facilitator? You are probably all of these and more. But just imagine how powerful it would be to work closely with a small circle of like-minded others with different, complementary skills, where together you can create so much more than on your own.

As I have been known to say many times, there has to be a new way of creating community initiatives or businesses that are no longer using the hierarchal linear systems of the past, and sadly, so often still of the present. To begin with, we need to be open and transparent in all our dealings with others, which is not how the world currently works. Yet despite all the upheavals that have taken place globally recently, and are continuing to take place (or perhaps because of them), I am meeting more and more women and men who are dedicated to creating positive change from a very different perspective of love, not fear and greed.

For the last year or so I have been developing my ideas on how small circles or 'pods' of seven women, based on the seven interconnected circles of the SEED of Life, can be the basis of a new organisational system dedicated to change. And I am very excited to say I think I'm almost there.

We all play many roles in our lives – mothers, daughters, friends, businesswomen, artists and many more. And yet when I took a look at how a circle of seven can create, work and lead collaboratively, I see a very different set of roles which are interdependent on each other and yet quite individual.

And that brings me back to how we can all work together from a place of heart rather than competition and fear. By taking a group of seven like-minded women with the same values as an example, I have identified seven roles which each member of the group can take ownership of – or rotate as appropriate.

Firstly, there has to be a facilitator to hold the space and the conversations. This is a leadership role but it is important that the facilitator comes from a place of service from the bottom up, ensuring that all those in the pod have a chance to speak and be heard.

The facilitator ensures that there is a commitment to time and place for discussions, whether on and offline, and it is she or he who will guide these conversations from a

group meditation to practical ideas where all can contribute.

The other key six roles in my SEED pods are storyteller, innovator, councillor, manifestor, vision keeper and gardener. The different roles include tasks such as negotiation, marketing, strategising, building action plans and listening.

By naming these roles in a feminine and more humane style, rather than the traditional 'start at the top and move down the ladder' titles, it opens the way for feelings of mutual respect and service between this group of collaborative leaders, which in turn allows a new powerful dynamic.

I am starting to share these new tools at my talks, workshops and retreats being held this year to a wide range of different audiences and I am so looking forward to working with others in developing how these roles can grow to serve ourselves, our communities and our world.

From the top universities in the land, women's networking groups, international peace conferences and most specifically, my BLOOM women's creative leadership retreats and workshops, I will be spreading news of these seven SEED of Life leadership roles making up the whole POD, and asking the question: what kind of leader are you? Find out more about my first BLOOM Women's Creative Retreat in Somerset this spring at bloomretreats.com

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 MINUTE STRESS SOOTHER

*Use havening to alter your brain waves for a deeper calm,
says Janey Lee Grace*



It's official, as a nation we have never been more stressed, and despite being generally happy, healthy and loving my work, I still find myself sometimes gripped with anxiety, tipping into addictive behavioural patterns and waking up in the middle of the night feeling fearful, loathing myself and

vowing to do better the next day.

Whatever hand of cards life has thrown at us, most of us struggle to be truly at peace, and for those of us who are switched on enough to recognise we must take some responsibility for our own health and happiness, our towering wall of self help books might result in us feeling even more pressure. By that I mean we think the workshops, classes and online learning didn't work as well as we'd hoped, because we are still not 'fixed'.

I have been there, done it, got the t-shirt. Trust me, until a few months ago I didn't think there was a therapy I *hadn't* experienced. Why then was I yet again feeling out of sorts and stuck – putting on a good impression on the outside and inwardly feeling a sense of panic?

Then I was introduced to havening therapy. Don't be put off by the name; I know it sounds like a massage session in a caravan park, but it's actually a psychological therapy that is gentle and safe and great at helping with anxiety and any powerful negative emotions. It's also super for resilience and confidence. The founders of the havening technique are Dr Ron Ruden and Dr Steve Ruden. Well known celebrity and author Paul McKenna is a big advocate. I remember interviewing him for *Steve Wright in the Afternoon* and watching as he crossed and then stroked his arms to demonstrate how havening worked. Of course, it didn't quite come across on radio, but it definitely made an impression on me! In more recent years I have used emotional freedom technique (EFT) to great effect. Tapping on various acupressure points definitely brings helpful results, so I was willing to try havening, described by some as 'speed EFT'. For someone as time-stretched as I am, that can only be good.

Havening is a technique we can do for ourselves (or try out with a practitioner), and it works on the state of our brain. It's accepted that we all have old beliefs and patterns – difficult life experiences can affect how we behave and react in certain situations. Sometimes we can be irrational, and feel more vulnerable than we should feel, because we have 'stored' traumatic memories. When it comes to how confident we feel, it can be as simple as the effects of having the memory of hearing someone laugh when we read aloud in class as a child. Our brain may have inadvertently 'stored' that as a negative experience of standing and speaking in public.

In our brain, our amygdala is the sensor which decides if an event is safe or threatening. If it perceives a threat, and our 'old beliefs' are already vulnerable, we may feel we have no way out, hence we sometimes feel stuck or out of control. The havening touch can help to restore new patterns – it can remove the charged emotional response. To increase a positive emotion we can use gentle calm movements, across our arms with our hands or across our cheeks, and this creates the delta wave, similar to deep sleep. This changes the state of our brain and alters the chemical balance to increase our serotonin and decreases our stress levels, to make us feel calmer. It dissolves the pathway so that if the negative trigger occurs it's not linked to the emotional response, so the memory may no longer be traumatic, but just a memory.

I met with Tam Johnson, the founder of Fresh Insight Coaching (freshinsightcoaching.com). She is a life coach, NLP master practitioner, hypnotherapist and ex matron who works with people who have anxiety, stress, issues with self-esteem and confidence, right through to deep-rooted emotional trauma. She is one of the first 50 practitioners in the world to use the havening techniques that she believes can help to resolve emotional trauma, even with sexual abuse, which can conventionally take years to abate, in just a few sessions. There is even published evidence that havening is effective for

“
Just as our
computers
sometimes
become
overloaded,
so do we
”



post-traumatic stress disorder in war veterans. Tam cured her own severe phobia of heights using the havening technique as she stood at the side of a cliff top with no fear. After 30 minutes she was able to fully enjoy a spectacular view for the first time in 20 years!

She calls herself a mindologist too, because she is a specialist in the structure of thinking and the science behind it. With a very no-nonsense approach, Tam asked me to imagine myself as someone else, a different version of myself watching my own state of mind and my actions. It was enlightening to see how she guided a different perspective. As she says: “I step into my client’s shoes and see the world through their eyes to create the changes *they* need.”

We all tell ourselves stories as to how we are feeling, what is holding us back, what has been ‘done’ to us, but Tam believes it is possible to restore new patterns. Just as our computers sometimes become overloaded and go a bit weird and need a re-boot, so we sometimes need to re-programme our thoughts and our responses. Tam taught me to pause and notice what was going on when I had certain negative thoughts and encouraged me to use a simple havening technique as often as possible, at least for 10 minutes a day.

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

TRY AT HOME

It’s easy to do this for yourself. Just cross your arms and slowly stroke downwards from the shoulder to the elbow. You need to focus on the emotion, so say to yourself: “I am confident, I am powerful.” (Or whatever state you want to focus on.)

You can also slowly use your palms as if you are washing your hands in a steady way and repeat the positive state you want to feel. You can intensify the technique by closing your eyes and visualising going up a staircase which has 20 steps. Count from one to 20 out loud as you ascend in your imagination. When you are at the top, hum a few lines of a familiar song such as *Happy Birthday* (while still stroking your arms). Finally, take a deep breath and open your eyes, look from right to left, close your eyes, inhale and exhale. Continue with the havening arm stroking and ask yourself if the feelings of anxiousness or negativity have abated.

Havening is such a simple soothing technique it has to be worth a try. You can even lie in bed doing it. I defy you not to drop off to sleep! Or do it for five minutes when you take a loo break – has to be better than worrying about the work still left to do!

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4 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR MOOD!

In need of a lift? Try these top
tips to feel a little happier

1. HAVE A MASSAGE

A deep massage will not only relieve muscle soreness in the body, it's been proven to lift your mood significantly too. Having a treatment will increase your brain's

production of endorphins, the feel-good chemicals that make you feel on top of the world. And massage will help lower anxiety, stress and depression by increasing the production of neurotransmitters in the brain – a study from the University of Miami's Touch Research Institute found it lowers blood levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, by 25 percent. It also improves sleep quality, leaving you feeling more rested and alert. A one-off will give you a boost but try to work a weekly treatment into your routine – your body will thank you for it.

2. DO GOOD

Being nice to others can actually make you feel pretty good in return. Research has found that people who volunteer to help a worthy cause are much likelier to be happier than those who don't. One review, which looked at 40 different studies, discovered that regularly helping others can reduce early mortality rates by 22 percent compared to people who don't volunteer. Helpers also had reduced rates of depression, plus better life satisfaction and wellbeing. But there is a fine line – the study also warned that those who sacrificed a large amount of time to care for family members could become less healthy emotionally and physically as they

are often overwhelmed with conflicting responsibilities. Researchers suggest up to 10 hours of volunteering is the optimum, but even small kindness

gestures such as donating to charity help. Check out volunteermatters.org.uk

3. FLICK THROUGH PICS

Researchers at Open University tested which everyday activity would boost mood the most, and looking through old photos came out top. People were told to eat a chocolate snack, sip an alcoholic drink, watch TV, listen to music and look at personal photos. The scientists then examined how much their mood improved – surprisingly, the chocolate did nothing, alcohol and TV offered a modest one percent boost, yet flicking through old pics of happy occasions made mood rise by 11 percent.

4. TAKE A SUPPLEMENT

Amino acids are gaining traction in the health world, and one that's got a wealth of evidence to support its benefits is L-theanine, which is found almost exclusively in green tea. It's thought to be the key ingredient that makes tea both stimulating and relaxing, in the way that coffee doesn't (too much of it can give you jitters). It increases alpha brain wave activity, which is said to put you into a similar state as meditation can, and boosts serotonin, which makes you feel happier. You can drink green tea, or take a supplement. Try L-theanine capsules, £12.95, justvitamins.co.uk

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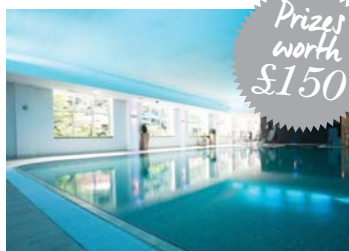
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THIS MONTH'S SELECTION OF FAB GIVEAWAYS

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don't miss the chance to win a Heat and Ice experience at the award-winning Titanic Spa in Huddersfield. This luxurious eco-spa is nestled within the rolling hills of the Yorkshire Pennines and offers state-of-the-art spa treatments within a tranquil atmosphere. The winner and one lucky guest will spend the day unwinding with a journey through a labyrinth of soothing thermal rooms, contrasting sumptuous heat with an invigorating cool freshness and guiding the body to deep relaxation. After a tasty bistro lunch, you can take a soak in the outdoor hot tub and admire the idyllic surroundings. Pure bliss! Visit titanicspa.com to see everything it has to offer. (The prize is valid Monday – Thursday excluding bank holidays and must be claimed within 6 months of the publication date).



WIN A GAIA CALMING COLLECTION

Gaia Spa is giving away six of its Calming Collections. Inspired by nature, the brand's handmade products blend together the finest natural ingredients, essential oils and plant actives. The calming collection, made up of a body oil and a bath oil, will help you to achieve a sense of inner peace and feel soothed in body and mind. Made with a combination of pure lavender

and chamomile essential oils and organic jojoba and vitamin E, the bath oil leaves skin feeling hydrated and replenished, while the body oil softens and moisturises the body thanks to olive and sweet almond oils. To see the full range of products, which are also used at the brand's flagship spa in Devon, Gaia Spa Boringdon, visit gaia-spa.co.uk

WIN AN OIL DIFFUSER AND A SELECTION OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Organic Aromas is giving away a radiance essential oil diffuser along with a collection of essential oil blends to one lucky *Natural Health* reader. Specially engineered to create the best method for diffusing oils and made with hand-blown glass and plantation hardwood, this diffuser is safe, beautiful

and powerful. Organic Aromas uses cold-air technology to distribute fragrance across a wide area in a short space of time while maintaining the maximum health and therapeutic benefits of essential oils. The diffuser is also equipped with LED mood lighting which can be turned on and off via a touch sensor switch, and the level of fragrance can be adjusted using a volume control. Visit organicaromas.com to find out more.



WIN TWO CELLUCENE CREAMS

Natural Health has teamed up with Cellucene to offer two lucky readers the chance to win a set of firming creams. The products, Phase One and Phase Two, are the only cellulite creams containing 40 natural actives in high concentrations for enhanced synergy and maximum results. The ingredients include gotu kola extract, forskolin and curcumin, and all of them are well known for their ability to boost circulation and tighten skin as well as their antioxidant and anti-glycation properties. The products are the result of 15 years of research and experience in cellulite reduction and 24 months of development by LipoTherapeia, London's dedicated cellulite clinic. The creams also leave legs feeling fresh and light within five minutes of application thanks to the lemon, mandarin and mint essential oils. To find out more visit lipotheapeia.com/cellucene



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UK women become the first to experience Lady Prelox®

Years of research pay off to make the 'natural pink pill' a reality

The Problem

Sexual function is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the various ways in which an individual is able or unable to participate in a sexual relationship as he or she would wish. It is estimated that at least half of all women, and up to 68% of post-menopausal women, can have a number of sexual concerns. This can be seen with issues such as discomfort, lack of lubrication, body temperature, energy levels, sensitivity and more.

Natural ingredients in synergy

Lady Prelox® is a premium plant-based food supplement, designed to help women with female pleasure, arousal,



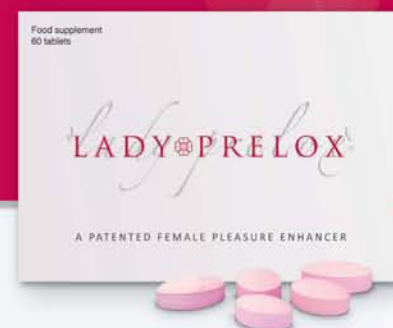
desire and comfort by combining four key active ingredients: Pycnogenol® French maritime pine bark extract, Rosvita® rosehip extract, L-Arginine and L-Citrulline. Experts at Pharma Nord UK explained that the active ingredients in Lady Prelox® are supported by decades of research, with published trials featuring over 7,000 participants and documented safety and absorption.



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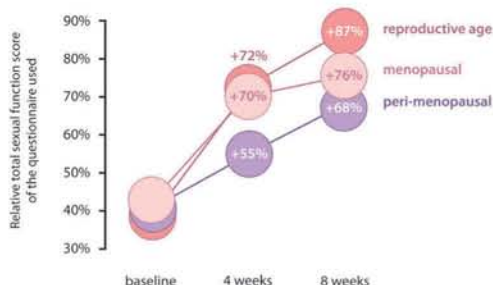
The hormonal changes in the years around the menopause can affect a woman's libido. Backed by research, Lady Prelox offers natural support to lift libido, recapture desire and feel like yourself again



Lady Prelox® is backed by research and contains key natural ingredients that offer daily support to women who want to maintain or **enhance** their body's sexual function.

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Three clinical trials with 255 women - including two published in recent issues of *Panminerva Medica* and one submitted for publication - found the natural supplement Lady Prelox® - a proprietary food supplement designed to improve female sexual pleasure - to be effective in helping women experiencing moderate sexual function impairment. All participants who supplemented with Lady Prelox® showed a significant improvement in desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, satisfaction and also recorded less discomfort and pain during intercourse.



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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white tank top and white shorts, is posing against a dark grey wall. She is smiling and looking towards the camera, with one leg raised and bent. Her right arm is extended upwards, and her left arm is pointing downwards.

SEX & relationship

SPECIAL

From self-love to intimacy after
menopause, we put your concerns
to our panel of wellbeing experts

PILLOW TALK

Your most personal (and provocative!) questions, answered

Q *Since menopause, sex has become painful. What can I do?*

Susi Lennox, co-founder of YES – the organic intimacy company (yesyesyes.com), says:

Painful sex is quite possibly the most distressing and least acknowledged symptom of the menopause. Unfortunately, many women do not discuss this sensitive issue with their doctors or even realise that there are remedies available. In actual fact, there are many things that you can do to ease discomfort during intercourse.

Menopause is characterised by the lowering of oestrogen levels, and dyspareunia (or painful sex) is caused by the inadequate lubrication that results

at the hands of this hormonal change. To get rid of sexual discomfort a woman can try to rebalance hormones through careful supplementation, restoring the body's ability to produce enough natural lubricant on its own, or simply replace the diminishing lubrication with a natural intimacy product.

Not all such products are the same, however. Your intimate tissues will have become more sensitive with menopause and more susceptible to irritation from concerning ingredients. So choose a trusted natural lubricant or moisturiser which is responsibly formulated by a respected brand. Ensure it is pH and osmolality matched to the vagina and that it's certified organic as this is your guarantee of its plant-based purity!

Q *My partner no longer wants to have sex very often. Does he find me unattractive?*

Sami Wunder, dating and relationship coach and author of *Your Feminine Roadmap To His Commitment* ([samiwundercoaching](http://samiwundercoaching.com)), says:

In my experience, this problem is hardly ever anything to do with the woman's attractiveness. Your partner could be under work stress, physically tired or struggling with depression. Relationship issues can deplete a man's libido and so can unresolved anger, disrespect and blame. I would recommend thinking outside of you. Usually a dip like this is temporary and fixable.

Try getting away one weekend to spend some quality time together. This will help you reconnect while reducing stress. If he's not open to this, talk to him about how this makes you feel. Sex is a sensitive topic for men, so be sure not to lay blame. If he opens up, listen without trying to fix him. Once you can offer a safe space for him to be vulnerable, you'll be able to decide together if further counselling is needed.

Q *I'd like to try online dating, but I'm worried that I won't be able to connect with someone in this way. Any tips?*

James Preece, dating coach and relationship expert (jamesprece.com), says:

The secret to connecting with someone online is positivity. Smile a genuine smile in your photo and look at the camera as if you are making eye contact with them. You should also try to use happy, positive words in your profile description. Write about the things you love doing and demonstrate a real passion for them, avoiding anything too generic. If you sound and look like someone having a wonderful life, people will naturally be drawn to you and want to be a part of it, too! Lastly, if you see someone you like, don't be shy. Initiate a conversation by talking directly to them through messaging or commenting features.

Q *We hardly ever have sex and when we do it's usually quick and devoid of emotion. How can we reclaim our spark?*

Hilda Burke, a London-based psychotherapist, life coach and couples counsellor (hildaburke.co.uk), says:

When couples have reached this stage, invariably their communication has broken down and that's why sex feels unconnected. The first step is to start becoming receptive to each other again as sex without receptivity is bad sex! If I were working with such a couple, I'd be curious to look at what point the intimacy started becoming cursory. Sex going awry is symptomatic of a breakdown in understanding between the partners, so the first step in improving that will be each person taking responsibility for their role in leading the relationship and sex life to where it currently is.



Q *I've never been able to orgasm with a partner. Please help!*

Hannah Witton, sex and relationships YouTuber and influencer (hannahwitton.com), says:

The catch-22 here is that the more pressure and stress you feel, the less likely it is to happen. It's easier said than done, but it's important to relax and not to think specifically about climaxing. Enjoy the pleasure in the moment. Communication is key and one day it may even take you by surprise.

You can find Hannah on twitter @HannahWitton

Q *I find it difficult to vocalise what I want in bed. Please help!*

You don't just have to use your words to communicate. Demonstrate what you want – on yourself, take their hand or get in a position where you're in control. You can also write it down if that's more comfortable. Or keep it simple with quick-fire commands such as "harder" "faster" "slower" "gentler" etc.

Q *Since the menopause, I don't feel much sexual desire. What's wrong?*

David Brown, founder at the ICASA sexual recovery programme (icasa.co.uk), says:

There is nothing wrong, except your thinking. You have entered a new and potentially exciting stage of your life. You have the opportunity now, to rediscover who you really are inside – not just a partner, wife or a mother – but a mature, sexual woman. Now is not the time to settle for less sex, simply because your body is going through some biological changes.

You are not your body: you have a body, but you are much more than your body, and your sexuality resides in your mind. The menopause has not diminished

your attractiveness – nor has it made you less desirable – unless you choose to allow it to.

Here are some action points. If you are in a current relationship, write a letter to your partner: tell him – or her – what you need in bed in order to feel desired. Be courageous enough to share your fantasies together. Buy some new underwear. Get out more. Be daring. Explore. Buy some new sex toys. When did you last masturbate, simply for your own pleasure? If you don't use it, you'll lose it.

Q *Is it too late to start experimenting with sex toys? What's out there and how do I know what's right for me?*

Superdrug Sexpert Alix Fox says:

It's never too late to begin experimenting with sex toys, and discovering fresh ways to make your love life more satisfying and sensual. In fact, sexcessories can be particularly beneficial for folks in their thirties, forties and beyond: if you've been in a relationship for a long time and lovemaking has perhaps become a little routine or stale, introducing a new toy to the bedroom can help reignite passion and playfulness. A basic bullet vibrator is a fantastic option for beginners. They're affordable (the Passionate Bullet is just £6.99, superdrug.com), small and subtle; and they're primarily designed to provide clitoral stimulation, which most women require in order to hit orgasm.



SELF SERVICE

Gala Darling, motivational speaker and author of *Radical Self Love*, on the importance of loving yourself within a relationship

Falling in love is easy: it happens all across the world, every minute of every day. Eyes lock across a crowded market, or you pass someone who makes your head swivel. It's all too easy to find someone who piques your interest, but finding a person who is right for you? That is a much taller order.

Relationships can be tricky. Some of us seem to be searching forever, while others appear to meet a soul mate on every corner. Why do some people have all the luck while the rest of us are left floundering?

It all comes down to my core philosophy: intimate relationships should always come secondary to your relationship with yourself and – like it or lump it – will always be directly impacted by how much you love yourself. If you don't think you're a badass babe, you will always be looking for someone to complete you or fill an emotional hole (spoiler alert: this doesn't work!).

The best relationships always happen when you combine two people who have their self-respect on lock. To put it simply, you've got to be in love with your wonderful

self. You should be able to look in the mirror, pout, flick your hair, wink at yourself, and think, babe, you are divine.

Now, before you start thinking you will never get to that point, take a breath. It takes time to get there, and loving yourself is not a destination, it's a journey. We all have down days where our skin looks awful, none of our clothing fits, and our brain doesn't seem to be working. But if you can pout at yourself in the mirror and put on hot-pink lipstick even when you're not feeling it, you're doing a damn good job!

The other option – lovers who don't love themselves – is a losing game. It just doesn't work. You'll need your partner to prop up your self-esteem (since you can't do it yourself), or you'll feel insecure and become convinced that your significant other is going to leave you for someone else (and then, since life is a self-fulfilling prophecy, they probably will.)

A relationship should be like an explosion of brilliance. You should both be contributing your own unique brand of marvellousness, and when your powers are combined, you should both increase in brightness and radiance like a supernova. Together, you are stronger, smarter, braver, and more amazing than ever before. Why be in a relationship if it doesn't make you happier? If it doesn't make you better person.

TRY THIS...

Gala's self-loving affirmations

- I love you. (This one is best in front of the mirror)
- Love is around every corner and joy fills my entire world
- I now deserve, love romance and excitement
- I am very thankful all the love in my life
- I respect myself
- I claim my own power
- I give myself the gift of freedom from the past
- I am discovering new ways to improve my health
- I am ready to be healed



Extracted from *Radical Self Love* by Gala Darling (£10.99, Hay House)

STRENGTHEN *your pelvic floor*

Are you neglecting the one muscle group that promises to boost your sex life?

Dr Hilary Jones, celebrity GP and brand ambassador for lights by TENA (lightsbytena.co.uk), says:

Many women over 50 report that they are able to enjoy a more satisfying sex life. They feel more confident about themselves and more liberated than ever before, being free from worries about relationships, periods or unwanted pregnancy. So it can be unfortunate when a weakened pelvic floor gets in the way of this.

Your pelvic floor muscles run from your pubic bone at the front of your body to the base of your spine. Shaped like a sling, they keep your pelvic organs (uterus, vagina, bowel and bladder) in place. What's more, the muscles give you control when you urinate, allowing you to relax at the same time as the bladder contracts.

Often, the pelvic floor can be weakened during pregnancy and after childbirth. This can result in little leaks as well as diminished sexual pleasure. Not maintaining your pelvic floor exercises can also contribute to weakness over time, as is being overweight and smoking.

An orgasm is essentially part of your pelvic floor muscles contracting. So, it's not surprising that strengthening them leads to better sex and a longer, stronger climax. What's more, firm muscles have more sensitive nerve endings and transmit the feeling of touch much more intensely. Therefore, a strong pelvic floor greatly improves sexual arousal, sexual response and the level of sensation you feel during penetration.

So what can you do to improve your pelvic strength? The answer is simple, work those muscles out! It's quick, easy (no sweating involved, promise) and it can be done anywhere...

Think about the muscles you are using when you start to pee and then deliberately stop the flow midstream. Memorise that feeling and practise contracting those muscles at different times of the day. To check you are using the correct technique place a finger in your vagina and make sure you can feel a squeeze when you contract. Take care not to bear down or use any abdominal, back or thigh muscles. Do these exercises for a count of four then relax for four. I recommend a five minute session twice daily for noticeable results in six to 12 weeks.

I recommend downloading a pelvic floor app. It'll prompt you to get your exercises in with subtle reminders, and you can tailor them to your individual requirements to make sure you're working at the right intensity for you.

TRY IT NOW....

Lights by TENA, my pelvic floor fitness app, free on Apple and Android. Download and request a free sample of the lights by TENA range!



FOODS TO BOOST YOUR SEX LIFE

Move over, oysters – nutritional physiologist
Rick Hay (rickhay.co.uk) has the 411 on
delicious foods that are good in bed

LADY IN RED

Studies have shown that women with higher levels of testosterone have a greater sex drive, so opt for foods that are red in colour. Not only do they help to increase production of the male hormone, but they also improve circulation to the sexual organs and assist in boosting your mood. Pomegranates should be at the top of your list together with vitamin C-rich red peppers, cherries and watermelon. Why not combine them all to make a great libido-boosting smoothie? While you're at it, throw in some beetroot, raspberries, strawberries, cherries and red grapes, too. 200ml of almond milk serves as a great starting base!

LUNCH DATE

Once you've had your breakfast smoothie, try chomping on a nice pesto to get you even further in the mood. Pine nuts are full of testosterone-boosting zinc, and when you combine this with the circulatory-boosting properties of basil and garlic, you're onto a serious winner. Brownie points for serving it with a healthy avocado salad. The omegas in this superfood can assist in combating vaginal dryness and improving mood.

THE MAIN EVENT

For dinner, go for oily fish such as salmon. The high levels of healthy omegas

will help to decrease dryness while also promoting good mood and healthy hair, skin and nails.

Serve with some vitamin E-rich asparagus to help further and add some energising spinach to keep your stamina high. Drizzle with moisturising olive oil and top with chilli give your circulation a kick.

SUGAR RUSH

For dessert, try some dark chocolate or a glass of red wine. The chocolate releases feel good chemicals, similar to those released when we are in love, which helps with bonding and positive mood. While the wine contains those circulation-boosting red pigments, plus testosterone-promoting boron!

ON THE SIDE

How about some sexy snacking as well? A handful of nuts and seeds will deliver a healthy dose of zinc and omega fatty acids while also helping to increase the intake of iron, B vitamins and magnesium. These nutrients are great for energy which is important if you've had a long day and magnesium helps to decrease stress, too. Figs are packed full of zinc and magnesium, so they also make a wonderful snack and there is lots written about their aphrodisiac properties as well!

Rick's new book, *The Little Red Dress*, is out this Spring





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Have you ever tried your hand at **pottery**? Not only is it a fun hobby that leaves you with pretty ornaments to use in your home or give to others as a gift, but it also **offers a number of health benefits**. The movement of making pottery is gentle yet strengthening to the hands, wrists and arms and can be particularly good for arthritis sufferers. It's also great for improving focus and relieving stress, as it shifts your attention to what you're making and helps the mind to relax and expand. And if you're looking for a creative outlet, pottery is an effective tool for self-expression and can boost confidence.

The latest in **NATURAL LIVING**

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

No matter what time of year it is, a bunch of flowers always brightens a room (and our spirits!) with colour and fragrance. Sometimes, however, they don't last for long and it's always sad to see stalks wilting and petals falling the day after you bought them. Luckily, floral stylist Stuart Fenwick has got some tips on how to best look after our bouquets and get the most out of them.

- Always take the flowers out of their packaging straight away, cut the stems and place them in fresh water
- Keep bouquets out of direct sunlight and away from radiators and any other sources of heat
- Change the water every three days, clean the vase with bleach and add a drop in the water to kill bacteria
- Make sure no foliage or leaves are dipped in the water, as this will cause the flowers to die quicker
- Fruit gives off ethylene gas which will make your blooms deteriorate faster so position them away from the fruit bowl!



POLLUTION PROBLEMS

It seems that there is still a long way to go to reduce pollution in London – the capital breached its annual air pollution limit for 2017 in the first five days of the year. By law, levels of toxic nitrogen dioxide mustn't exceed 200 micrograms per cubic metre more than 18 times in 12 months. But within the first week of January, Brixton Road in Lambeth had already surpassed this, and many other sites across the city are expected to do the same. NO₂ pollution, produced largely by diesel vehicles, causes 5,900 early deaths in the capital every year. Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has, however, pledged new measures and intends to double funding to £875m over five years to tackle the problem, so there is hope that we may eventually begin to see improvements.

3 of the best...REUSABLE BAGS

Avoid the 5p plastic bag charge and equip yourself with one of these shoppers



1 Cath Kidston Cavendish Rose Foldaway Shopper, £8, cathkidston.com

2 The Basket Room Mistari Natural Stripe Shopper, £60, thebasketroom.com



3 Seasalt Jute Shopper, £5, seasaltcornwall.co.uk

In the search for alternative fuels, some researchers are turning to metal powders, which are used in fireworks and explosives

GET IN THE GARDEN

March is now upon us, which means good times (and hopefully weather) are a-coming! "Spring usually arrives by the middle of the month and the sunny days provide opportunities to undertake an increasing range of gardening tasks," says the Royal Horticultural Society (rhs.org.uk). "It's time to get busy preparing seed beds, cutting back winter shrubs, sowing seeds and generally tidying up the garden." You can also start to plant things, such as shallots, onion sets, early potatoes and summer-flowering bulbs. It's wise to start hoeing and mulching weeds early on to keep them under control and you can get the lawn mower out on dry days.



A HYGGE HOME

The Scandinavians are well known for their stylish and quirky interiors (think IKEA), and this is demonstrated in the concept of hygge that's becoming increasingly popular in the UK. To incorporate it into your own house, try these suggestions from Danish actress Marie Tourell Söderberg.

1 SOUVENIRS

Bringing souvenirs home with us from travels leaves traces of where we have been. You can go for more functional items – a pasta machine from your trip to Sicily, wooden kitchen utensils from southern France or a soap dispenser made of Icelandic volcanic stone. Don't be afraid of the cliché of souvenirs; if a mini version of the Eiffel Tower reminds you of an unforgettable trip to Paris, bring it back with you and enjoy the memories that follow suit.

2 MIX AND MATCH

Mixing old and new is a good way to balance the home. Combine the old antique dresser you inherited with a beautiful new lamp or a chair from the flea market and a picture your friend painted for you.

3 CORNERS

When you decorate your home, make room for charging stations – not only for your phone or computer, but for yourself and your family. Corners give us a feeling of being safe and can be a great place to recharge. Place an armchair in a corner with a couple of soft cushions and a blanket. Have a lamp and a small table next to you, so you can lose yourself in a good book with a cup of tea and a snack on the side.

Extracted from *Hygge*, Penguin, £12.99



Sleep Well

Sleep Drift

No one understands the importance of a good nights sleep better than a person who has just woken up. To avoid the 'snooze morning syndrome' that follows a night of not enough hours of sleep, spray the relaxing Sleep Drift and take a deep breath.

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Detox your home

Toxins are everywhere, but knowledge is power. Here's our guide to banishing the baddies lurking in your house

When you think of pollution, you probably picture a busy road, or a smokey chimney pumping out industrial fumes from a factory. But indoor pollution is just as bad – a study in 2012 found that up to 99,000 deaths across Europe a year are caused by it. Here's how to banish some of the toxins that could be in your home.

LAUNDRY

Detergents can contain dozens of potentially harmful ingredients, and can damage not just our skin but marine life too. "Enzymes are added to laundry detergents to help clean stains from clothing," says scientist Jeffry May, author of *My House is Killing Me!* (Johns Hopkins University Press). "When they were first added, some factory workers who inhaled enzyme dust developed severe

allergies and asthma. Manufacturers insisted that customers would not develop similar symptoms, but as an indoor air quality expert, I have worked with a number of clients who experience respiratory symptoms, skin irritation and even fatigue when they started using enzyme-containing detergents.

"These people were sensitised to the enzymes in their detergents because they were breathing in residue on lint (microscopic fragments of fibres) in the air from their clothing and bedding. If your laundry detergent contains enzymes, try one that contains no ingredients with 'ase' in, and see if your indoor allergy symptoms go away."

Or, to avoid chemical nasties, why not make your own? Just grate a whole bar of natural soap, such as one of Dr Bronner's (£6.50, amazon.co.uk), and mix with 500ml of washing soda (£1, tesco.com).

TOXIC EMOTIONS

"Every time you have a thought or feeling, it doesn't just evaporate into nothing," says Jean Haner, author of *Clear Home, Clear Heart* (Hay House). "Instead, you make a little deposit of that energy into your environment. And over time, these deposits can gradually build up, like invisible house dust, to form a thick layer in the space. It's like an invisible cloud of whatever you've been feeling every time you pass there. If the feelings you're having are positive ones, those will accumulate and increase the possibility that every time you're there, you'll feel happy again. But if the thoughts or feelings are stressed or negative ones, those will build up as well, making it more likely that you'll continue to feel like that each time you're in that place."

In her book, Jean explains how to clear toxic energy from your home yourself, using

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nothing more than a pendulum and some spare time. “For example, when I’m doing a space clearing, I often find an area of stressed energy in front of the kitchen sink,” she says. “This is where people often stand for a while as they prepare a meal or put dishes in the dishwasher and, at the same time, run that repeating loop of rumination inside their heads. It may be frustration with their spouse, or worry about their child, or resentment about co-workers, or all of the above and then some. People often tend to think about the same issues day after day, week after week, so an invisible fog holding that information gradually develops in that spot. Then every time they stand there, they’re triggered to have those same feelings again, like a vicious cycle.”

BPA

Bisphenol A is a known hormone disruptor which mimicks oestrogen and has been linked to hormone-driven cancers, fertility problems and more. The substance actually started out as a synthetic oestrogen given to women, and experts are in agreement that it’s bad news, but the problem is, it’s everywhere. The lining of food cans, the coating on a receipt, plastic food containers and packaging, and other places. Heat especially makes it leach into food so avoid anything

tinned, use glass for storage rather than plastic and always spoon food out into a china or glass container before heating in the microwave.

PERFLURINATED CHEMICALS

Known as PFCs for short, these baddies can also be found lurking in your kitchen. Any pan that’s ‘non-stick’ has them in, so Teflon is a big no-no – use stainless steel instead. They are used in some food packaging too to repel water – things like pizza boxes, fast-food wrappers and microwave popcorn bags are key suspects and should all be avoided. PFCs have a detrimental impact on thyroid function and are linked to infertility in both men and women, with a recent study even suggesting the chemical stops the ovaries from producing eggs.

ANTIBACTERIAL SOAP

“One of the most toxic, and problematic, cleaning items in the home is the antibacterial product, of which the ingredient triclosan is the best known,” says Vanessa Willes of Mangle & Wringer (mangleandwringer.co.uk), the natural cleaning company. “Antibacterial products have enjoyed massive popularity on the back of fear based marketing and our anxiety about germs, but as we learn more about

the benefits of bacteria and the devastating effects of antibiotic resistance, we need to question their widespread use.

“Last year the United States FDA banned the use of triclosan in antibacterial soaps, stating that it found no evidence that it was more effective than plain soap and water, but it’s still being used in the UK. Unilever have pledged to phase out its use by the end of 2017, but since they have no legal obligation to declare every ingredient, choosing instead to use the phrase: “contains amongst other ingredients” on the label, we will never know if that’s true and the same goes for other large manufacturers. Many are choosing to replace triclosan with benzalkonium chloride, which poses its own risks and is potentially as toxic as triclosan.

“I suggest relying on good old fashioned soap and hot water for most cleaning jobs in the home. We don’t need to kill 99.9 percent of all germs and research shows that our immune systems suffer if we do. Choose manufacturers who declare all ingredients on the label of their products and ask questions. If you can’t get a satisfactory answer, and you don’t know what an ingredient is, find another product. There are plenty of companies who are proud to provide safe and non toxic cleaning products for you to keep your home and your family healthy.”



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120 NATURAL HEALTH

Shimmer and shine

Treat mum to an effortless, flawless look with **Pevonia's Radiant Mother's Day Gift Set** available for a limited time only. Comprising the award-winning YouthRenew Tinted Cream SPF30 and Mineral Body Shimmer and the soft Kabuki Brush all beautifully presented in a Pevonia black velvet purse. **£61.00, pevonia.co.uk**



Supple skin

Certified organic, the **Terre Verdi FranChouliPom Facial Serum** boasts a menu of vitamins, essential fatty acids and antioxidants to help feed skin with all the goodness it needs. Enriched with pomegranate seed oil and specially formulated for dry and mature skin, this is an ideal present for mum. Vegan and cruelty-free. **£27, terreverdi.com**



Love love

For wonderfully effective products that are sure to keep mum's skin feeling happy and healthy, look no further than **Balm Balm's Frankincense Organic Skincare Collection**. This set, which includes a Deep Cleansing Balm, Light Facial Oil, Soothing Facial Tonic and Organic Muslin Cloth, is all she'll need for a glowing complexion. **£27, available at lovelula.com**

Perfumed pendants

Why not treat mum to a beautifully scented piece of jewellery from aromatherapy brand **Essence of Arcadia**? Simply add a few drops of her favourite essential oil to one of the felt pads and she'll enjoy the beautiful aroma all day long as the scent diffuses from the pendant. Available in four styles that are all made from stainless steel, each necklace comes complete with nine felt pads and is beautifully packaged in a gift box. Prices from **£14.99**, essenceofarcadia.com



Award-winning relaxation

Does your mum deserve some R&R? Of course she does, so why not give her the **Beatitude Peace Bath Oil** this Mother's Day? This 100 percent natural aromatherapy blend is infused with calming and soothing essential oils that disperse in the water to leave skin silky smooth – a real treat indeed! From **£25**, beatitudeproducts.co.uk

Scent with love

Treat mum with one of the most effective essential oil diffusers on the market, **Elegance from Organic Aromas**. Made from recycled plantation wood and hand-blown glass, it uses no heat, no water and is plastic-free. Perfect for aromatherapy use at home or in the office. **£76.70**, organicaromas.com



A Skinade a day...

Why not give mum something a little different for Mother's Day this year? **Skinade** is a professional skincare drink that, when taken daily, helps nourish and support the skin from the inside. Make a start with a 30-day supply (**£99**), skinade.com



Roses are red

Bottle up mum's favourite flower with **Dr Organic's Rose Otto Facial Serum**. This gentle, light textured face oil absorbs quickly into the skin, instantly locking in moisture. It helps to renew elasticity and its precious, richly nourishing and balancing ingredients guard against fine lines and wrinkles. **£12.99**, hollandandbarrett.com

Wrinkle warrior

Keep fine lines at bay with help from **Rio Rosa Mosqueta Rosehip Discovery Set**. Featuring an anti-ageing day and night cream to help protect skin from harmful UV rays during the day and hydrate skin while you sleep, we like to keep a tube close-by for daily top-ups. The set also includes a lightweight rosehip seed oil to help repair scars, stretch marks, fine lines and sun damage as well as a gentle cleanser. **£12.95**, riorosa.co.uk



Secret escape

Transport your hardworking mum to a hidden oasis with help from SenSpa's new **Thai Rituals** range. Including a bath soak, body scrub, body wash and hand wash, this collection – complete with bold and beautiful packaging – is all she'll need to feel a world away from home in her own bathroom. Prices from **£5.50**, available at selected **Waitrose** stores and **senspa.co.uk**

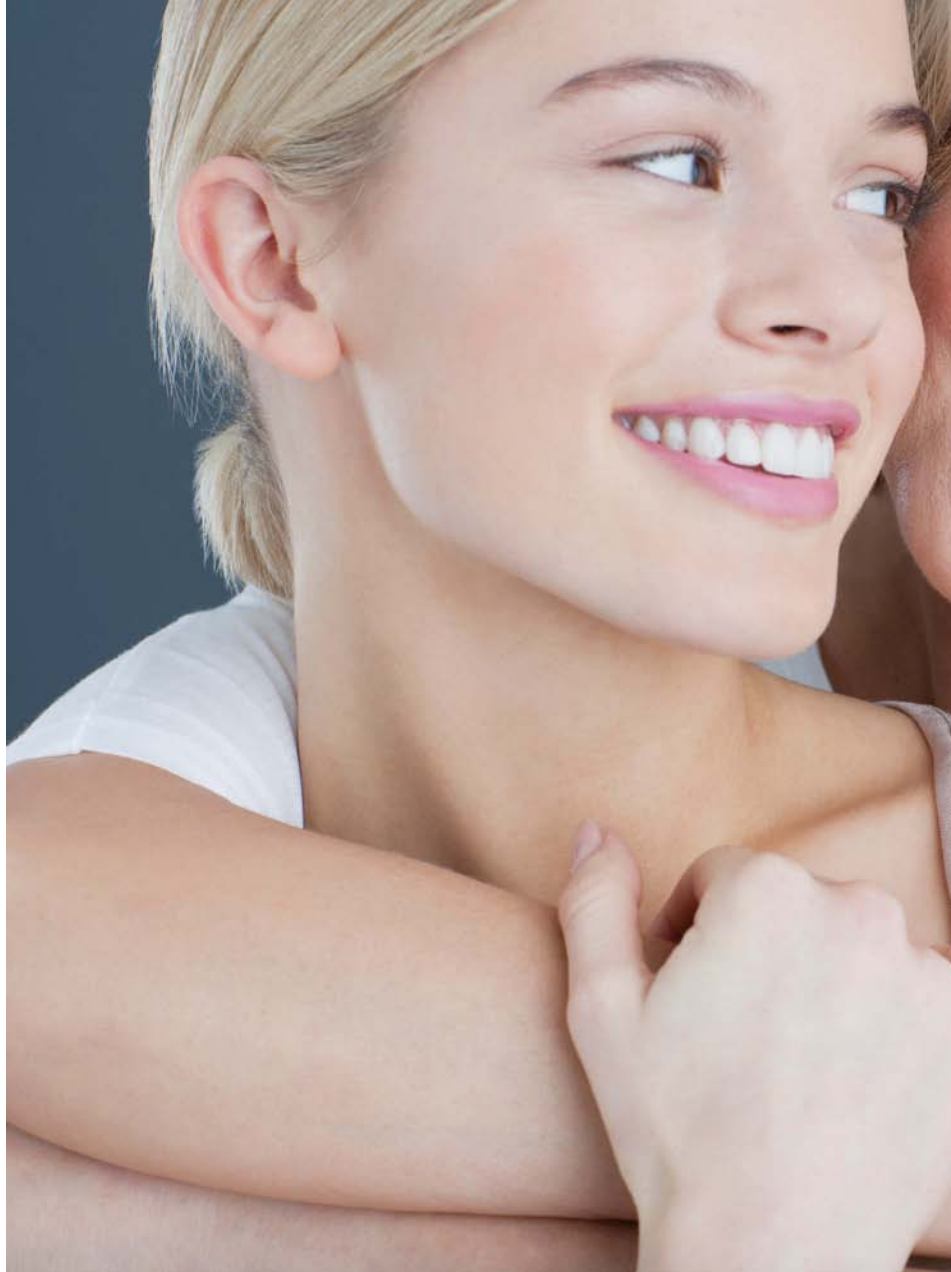


Her new goat-to

This two-in-one wonderfully hydrating product will instantly help mum look and feel beautiful. **Hope's Relief Goat's Milk Body Wash** also doubles up as a nourishing bubble bath. Containing fresh goat's milk, mum can emulate Cleopatra who supposedly bathed in milk and you can finally treat her like the queen she is! **£11.40**, **hopes-relief.com**

Something for all

Give the gift of pure organic skincare this Mother's Day! With luxurious and deliciously naturally scented products for the skin, body and hair, there is a gift for all mums in the **Saaf Pure Organic Skincare** range. Highly effective, utterly ethical and passionately organic, Saaf is cruelty-free and Soil Association approved. Prices start from **£14.99**, **saafskincare.com**



Apple of her eye

There'll be no doubt that you're mum's favourite person if you present her with **SKN-RG Eye Elixir**. It effortlessly melts away the signs of ageing using clinically proven stem cell technology which repairs skin at a deep cellular level. Not only will it help prevent the signs of ageing, it will actively undo the existing signs of deterioration. Pick one up for yourself too! **£65**, **skn-rg.com**

Naturally nurturing

Treat your mother to **Skin Elixir's** subtly yet exquisitely perfumed and luxurious organic moisturiser for a present she'll never forget. Beautifully gift-boxed and comprised of a blend of frankincense, may chang, shea butter, sweet almond and black seed oils, it regenerates the skin and the senses. **£22**, **skinelixir.co.uk**





Health focus

If breast health is important to your mum, why not gift her with **Rhythm Of Beauty Guardian Breast Oil**? It's a unique and heavenly oil that is easily absorbed into the delicate tissue of the breasts. Including high vibrational oil of violet which works with the lymphatic system to remove toxins and improve the flow of chi to the breasts, the oils also contain organic frankincense and sandalwood to boost the immunity of health and regenerate skin cells. **£50, rhythmofbeauty.co.uk**

Fresh faced

BareFace Minerals' limited-edition Simply Beautiful 12-piece gift set is all mum needs to enhance and perfect her beautiful features. The set includes the company's renowned all-natural mineral foundation, soft translucent finishing powder, perfecting concealer, blush, bronzer, corrector and four beautifully hand-crafted super-soft brushes. **£64.90, barefaceminerals.co.uk**



Five star pampering

Bring the luxury of a spa into mum's home with the **TOSé Apothecary's Spa Indulgence Set**. Promising to leave skin energised and rejuvenated, the body scrub gently detoxifies skin with a refreshing blend of lemongrass and lime, while the body oil deeply nourishes with a therapeutic mix of ylang ylang, lavender and bergamot. Bliss! **£42, toseapothecary.co.uk**

Everything you need

This set contains everything mum will need for beautifully soft and supple skin. The **Wow, You're Gorgeous! Soothe-Me Skincare** gift box includes a luxurious moisturiser which combines rosehip and avocado base oils with rose and frankincense essential oils to rejuvenate the face. Plus a sensitive hand cream and Pure Rose Hydrosol Mini Mist to keep her hands and face in-check on the go. **£35, soothe-me.com**



Handbag essential

Once your mum discovers **Zuzka's Timeless Beauty Hand Lotion** she'll never leave the house without it. It helps the appearance of ageing hands and absorbs easily into the skin to hydrate and nourish. Plus it contains SPF30 to protect against sun damage! **£22.99, zuzkanaturalbeauty.co.uk**



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This month WE'VE BEEN...

PRACTISING YOGA

Whether you've been doing yoga for two years or two months, there's always room in your practice for a pair of blocks. They can be used to up the intensity of your favourite asanas, allowing you to go deeper into every stretch, or to reduce the ouch factor of poses that you're not quite able to get into yet (not the easy way out – you end up staying in position for much longer!). So this month, with the intention of perfecting my monkey pose (or splits), I put a pair of Manuka Life Foam Blocks to the test. The lightweight blocks were sturdy enough to hold onto even when I was putting my entire weight into my hands and they stood their ground when placed underfoot for oversplit stretches. You can use them flat or on their sides to create different height levels – great for increasing difficulty. In just four weeks, I managed to get all the way down into the monkey pose. **Tested by Jody-Ann Miller, £12, manukalife.com**



SPENDING THE WEEKEND AT THE SPA

Lifeshouse Hotel and Spa is tucked away in the sleepy Essex village of Thorpe-le-Soken. Set way back from the main road, there's a long journey down a sprawling driveway and then you arrive in heaven. Guests head here for a myriad of reasons – there are hardcore detox programmes and juice fasts if that's your thing, but there's also a restaurant offering wine and steak (and no judgement!) if it's an indulgent break you're after. The spa does take wellbeing seriously though, with 40 therapists who have been trained by the NHS Christie Trust to adapt the treatments on offer for anyone who has cancer, or is stressed or bereaved. You might want to book

a few different therapies during your stay to make the most of it as there's everything from detoxing mud wraps, mind therapies and reiki. After an amazing massage, we headed to the swimming area. There's a pool, jacuzzi, sauna, salt inhalation room and steam room, plus the coldest plunge pool I've ever experienced! Our ground floor room looked out over the surrounding countryside and the hotel grounds really are something you should experience. There are beautiful gardens and five lakes, all of which were frozen solid on the sub-zero winter's weekend of our visit, which was just spectacular. **Reviewed by Allison Jacobs, lifeshouse.co.uk**

USING A MENSTRUAL CUP

The popularity of the menstrual cup – a reusable alternative to tampons and sanitary towels – continues to rise, so I decided to see what all the fuss is about.

I have to admit that the process of inserting it wasn't always easy, and I wouldn't recommend it for squeamish women. But, practice makes perfect, and once it was in I couldn't feel anything. I had no leaks and managed a gym session without any problems, and removing it was simple and painless. Economical, pH friendly and better for the environment, this product is definitely something I'll be using again.

Tested by Emily McMullin, £17.99, feminesse.co.uk

GETTING GLAMMED UP

One of the most important things for me when it comes to choosing make-up is that it can hide uneven skin tone, blemishes, spots and dark circles under my eyes while retaining a natural look. Thankfully, my prayers were answered with PHB's beautiful skin natural cosmetics set.

Featuring a foundation, blusher, finishing powder and cream concealer stick and available in four different shades, it's got everything you need to achieve flawless skin. PHB products also boast all of the credentials you'd expect from a natural skincare and beauty brand – vegan, 100 percent natural and even Halal certified, to name but a few. **Tested by Emily McMullin, £49.95, phbethicalbeauty.co.uk**

Stars

*Find out what March
has in store for you with
Marjorie Orr*

PISCES

Feb 20 – Mar 20

You'll be bouncing with confidence and sprucing up your appearance will go hand in hand with other good resolutions. You won't put up with delays calmly and will express your opinions loudly. Later in the month you'll be in the mood for pampering, knowing that luck is on your side.

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 20

A sudden stroke of good luck provided by your closest partner will jolt you into gear. You'll mainly be working behind the scenes until the 20th so you'll have time to relax. Your personal finances will improve after the 10th and you'll be raring to go towards the end of the month.

TAURUS Apr 21 - May 20

You'll take setbacks in your stride because you know your instincts are right. You won't always be tactful but you will awaken everyone around you. Later on you'll give yourself a break and will use down time to plot, plan and prepare.

GEMINI May 21 - Jun 21

You'll be working hard and your efforts will be rewarded with appreciation. Be bold and show off your talents – you'll get a positive response to your ideas. A close partner will be loyal and friends will be offering encouragement.

CANCER Jun 22 - Jul 23

There'll be adventures on offer and your social life will be sparkling with invites to the best places. One partnership will feel closer and more secure. The right people will be keen to hear your views so don't hold back.

LEO Jul 24 - Aug 23

You'll be fortunate with new doors opening and fun people around. Take time out to deal with personal, financial and emotional matters. It'll be slow going but your efforts will pay off. Sweep others up in your enthusiasm instead of being forceful – a positive approach will work best.

VIRGO Aug 24 - Sep 23

You'll be tying up the loose ends of confidential agreements that have slowed you down in recent weeks, but by the 9th you'll be ready to focus on more entertaining activities. Emotionally you'll be secretive with your feelings. Try not to overreact about things.

LIBRA Sep 24 - Oct 22

If you can find the energy and motivation you'll sort out a good few practical issues by the 20th. Later in the month you'll have close partners on hand when you want encouragement. You'll also get cracking with home improvements.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 22

You'll be surrounded by affection and showered with party invitations and compliments. Loved ones will be proactive from the 9th onwards so you'll be running to keep up and acting as the peacemaker at times.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23 - Dec 22

You'll stay close to home and will have a firmer grip on your finances. You won't always feel appreciated for your efforts but you'll be pleased with yourself. Your sense of humour will keep you buoyant and fun friends won't allow you to sit in a corner.

CAPRICORN Dec 23 - Jan 20

A busy and varied schedule will keep you on your toes. Your energy and passion will soar and you'll be throwing yourself into having a good time. Later on you'll be pleased with a minor triumph at work or in the community.

AQUARIUS Jan 21 - Feb 19

You'll be tempted by treats and won't always hold back from spending. Your efforts to reorganise at home won't always be met with approval but you'll be able to turn on the charm to calm people down. A packed diary will keep boredom at bay.

Marjorie Orr

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



**For a personal
consultation with Marjorie visit
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Cuticle Moon Hand and Nail Butter - 50ml £6.95
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Gluten-Free Small Pasta Shells RRP £2.93 - Available on NHS or www.generaldiary.co.uk



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NATURAL LIFESTYLE



Replenishing Face Cream 50ml £12.50

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A best seller of Handmade Naturals since they started nearly 10 years ago is their Balancing Face Cream. A lovely blend of natural ingredients to their own unique formulations, including organic chamomile and organic shea butter, resulting in a cream which is easily absorbed and particularly suitable for normal and combination skin types. And it's a Green Parent Natural Beauty Awards winner!



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Dance

JANE ALEXANDER

Our holistic hero on the miracle of qoya

The woman in front of me is dancing her pain, her grief, her anguish. She is so brave, so beautiful in her vulnerability that I have tears flooding down my face. Then it's my turn and I feel a thick ball in my throat; my body pulls in on itself. My dance is ugly, sharp, spiky, uncoordinated, and disjointed but it's mine and I own it.

I'm at my first qoya class at Blush Love in Portugal (blushloveretreat.com). Part free dance, part yoga, part therapy, part sacred ceremony, part sensuality workout – you just can't put qoya in a box. It was developed by American dancer, yoga teacher and shaman, Rochelle Schieck (qoya.love) who was looking for a way to help women get out of their heads and into their bodies. "It's about teaching women how to feel again," she says. "It's about remembering yourself in the deepest, most sacred way – wild, wise and free."

Kate Taylor (upcoaching.co.uk), one of four teachers in the UK, is adamant that this is not about looking good but about feeling good. "There's absolutely no wrong way to do qoya," she says. This is dance for every woman who has ever felt she 'can't dance'. It's yoga for every woman who has ever felt intimidated by the cult of skinny and superbendy. It's therapy for those who wouldn't know what to say to a therapist. "Using the body as an emotional guidance tool is incredibly powerful," says Kate. "Through each dance we enquire into a different layer of ourselves, or part of our psyche – using movement and the unconscious to answer any questions we may

have that the conscious mind can't always answer."

Qoya means 'goddess' in Quechuan, and Kate spends time before each class creating sacred space so women can come into a place that feels safe for them to express all their emotions.

The movement starts slowly. First we're invited to connect with our breathing and set an intention for the class. Kate then guides us through circling through each part of our body to release tension, before inviting us to open our hearts, and also our hips. "Slow down and tune into sensual movement," she says. "We release shame and shyness and tune into how good it feels." I relish the ease that comes into my body, as we sink into a series of simple sun salutes.

Next up comes shadow dance. "Dance what is holding you back," says Kate. "Dance how you feel when you can't release." It's the most challenging part of the class and, during my week at Blush Love, I danced out everything from anger, grief, shame and guilt. "We honour the challenges in our lives and dance with them, rather than pretending they are not there," says Kate.

Then we shake it all, releasing what no longer serves us. I dance for myself, feeling wide open, vulnerable yet free. And yes, I really do feel like a goddess. Then I turn back to my fellow dancers, my tribe, and am welcomed with broad smiles, gentle touches, eyes shining. It's blissful; it's beautiful.

A standard qoya class costs around £15-25 and lasts for up to two hours.

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



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