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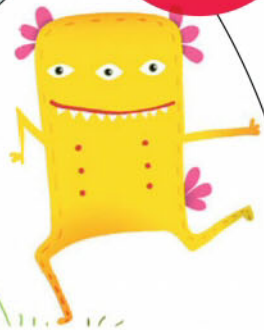


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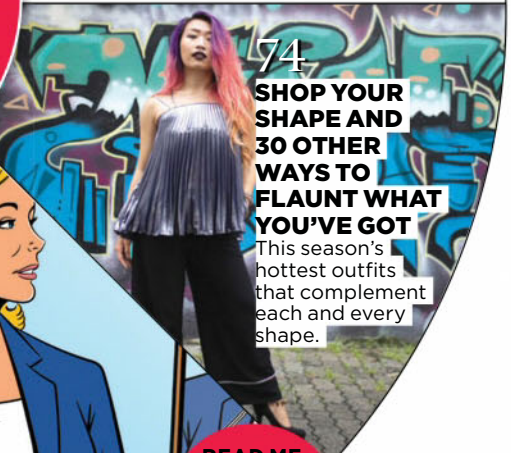
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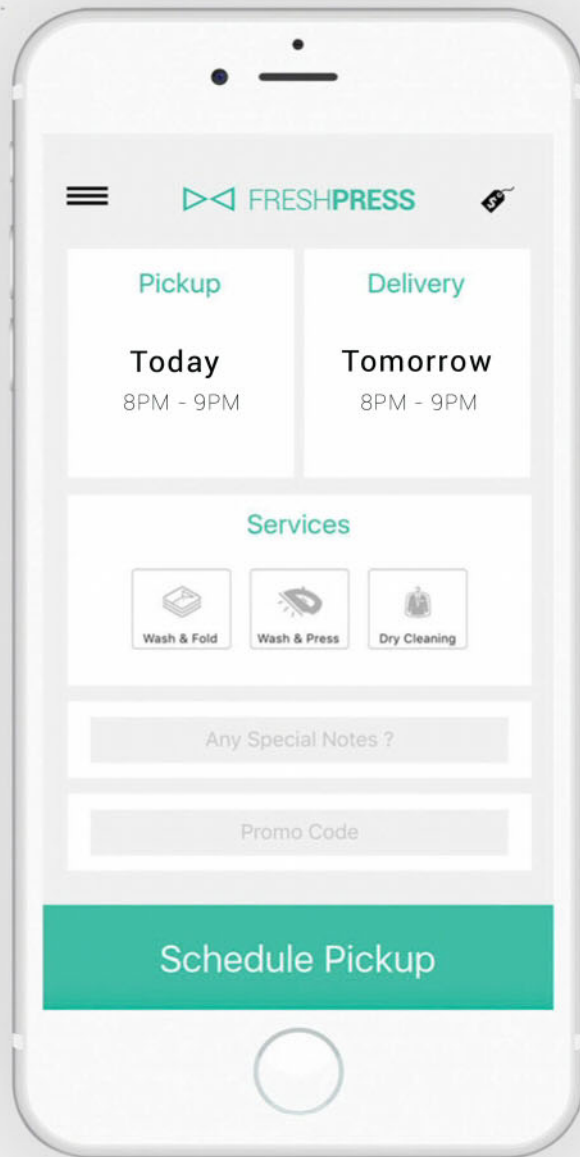
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FRESHPRESS

“Why Are You So Sensitive?”



This is one of the most annoying questions that anyone can ask me. It's probably because I *am* sensitive—and proud of it too—and I don't see the need to explain to anyone why I have so many feelings (see, I'm even sensitive about being sensitive). I admit it. I can get really emotional at times, but it's also this same visceral reaction that fuels my creativity, passion and career. Some of my proudest moments are the product of how I've channelled all my emotions, especially hurt, into more pleasant outcomes. As the late Carrie Fisher once said, “Take your broken heart and make it into art!” I will Carrie, I will!

With that very same thought in mind, our cover girl Kaley Cuoco turned her life around in **‘Hot Yoga, Hot Bod’** (page 33). Instead of letting her divorce from tennis pro Ryan Sweeting get the better of her, she used her heartbreak as a driving force to attend yoga and Soul Cycling lessons, where she confessed that she's cried during particularly gruelling sessions. It was these

defining moments of pushing herself to the limit in cycling classes and the calmness of yoga that eventually healed her. Today, she's celebrating a hot new bod, beau and confidence. What doesn't break you will make you stronger, indeed.

While on the topic of love, how many of us are guilty of showing our affection and dissatisfaction on social media? In a society where we are constantly seeking validation, looking for it in the wrong places can be a romance deal-breaker. We are so obsessed with other people's opinions we forget that we have our own. **‘What Would You Do?’** (page 62) taps into your inner Dr Phil. Instead of reaching out to Facebook for advice, it teaches you to tackle your relationship issues like a WOMAN!

I must admit we are amazing, and in **‘Women Who Wow’** (page 69), we share the voices of some extraordinary ladies who are all making their mark on society. I hope their life stories will inspire you to live yours to the fullest.

Happy International Women's Day! There's definitely much to celebrate.

SUEANN CHONG
Editor



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HERE ARE
SOME OTHER
GEMS IN THIS
MONTH'S
ISSUE THAT
YOU MIGHT
WANT TO
READ FIRST
ABOUT
YOUR...

Skin:

The only time I want to discuss being sensitive is when it's about my skin and how I can fix it. In **‘Don't Be So Sensitive’** (page 27), those who have skin that flares up easily might find their answer and remedy here.

Friendship:

Having a strong inner circle is really important, and as we get older, it becomes harder to make organic friendships. **‘Group On’** (page 52) is a quick guide on how to find your tribe no matter how shy you are.

Hormones:

Some really strong characters reside in our bodies. In **‘Hormones Gone Wild’** (page 60), we introduce you to the crazy hormones and tell you how to tame them and use them to your benefit.

Safety:

We've rounded up some of the most useful apps and tools that you should equip yourself with, as well as a few easy-to-remember safety tips from an expert. All that in **‘On Guard’** (page 68).

CHOLESTEROL Countdown

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Fresh All Day, Every Day

The benefits of using INTIMATE Pantyliner

For the women-on-the-go, it's important to feel clean and dry down there. One of the few tricks that busy women swear by is pantyliners. Not only do they keep your lady bits feeling fresh despite being out and about the whole day, they also manage discharge and stop you from staining your delicates when Aunt Flow visits unexpectedly.

For The Active Lady...

For women who love sports, panty liners come in handy especially if you're worried that your sweat will add to the moisture build up and create unsightly

wet patches around your nether region. They also don't restrict your movement and help you avoid "accidents" as you exercise. Some female runners even wear them at marathons, long treks and hikes.

If You're an Avid Traveller...

It's nice to be in a pair of clean undies during long hours of commute, but the last thing you want to do is lug around your dirty underwear after you've changed them. The next time you're on a long-haul flight or in a car for hours, bring along some panty liners and feel the difference it makes to your journey.

When it's Better To Be Safe Than Sorry...

Carrying a panty liner in your everyday bag saves you the stress of getting your period unexpectedly. You can also replace your pads with panty liners on the last day of your period when you're flow isn't heavy.



INTIMATE Pantyliner checks all the above, and they even come in 3 types of daily liners for every need and occasion: **Slim Pantyliner** (155mm), **Regular Pantyliner** (155mm) and **Long Pantyliner** (180mm). With a soft cottony wave top sheet, they are breathable, better absorbent and the longer liners are designed for longer and wider protection.

Tips Our Experts Give—and Follow



Dr Christina Pillai

The professional relationship counsellor runs a specialist clinic for couples going through a rough patch. We asked her for some tips on the simplest ways to create a stronger bond with your partner.

1 FIND THAT LOVE/WORK BALANCE
It can be lonely when your partner's devotion to work takes precedence. **Before making any major decisions, try talking to him and don't interpret his actions. Find ways to be supportive without sacrificing your relationship such as focusing on the positives and make time for grievances.** It could also be a good moment to take some time for yourself to find the hidden beauty of being able to rely on yourself to find fulfilment until a longer-term solution can be found.

2 REMEMBER... YOU'RE A TEAM
Resentment can build if one partner experiences less professional success than the other and specifically has made substantial sacrifices for the sake of his/her partner. **Communicating your priorities is key in a relationship. Competing against each other will cause more hurt and resentment.** The better your partner does, the better your team does and vice versa.

3 GET OUT OF THE RUT
Surprises and excitement can take a backseat when we're in a relationship for a long time, as we tend to take things for granted. Unless you truly understand the reasons behind why there isn't any excitement in the relationship, you won't be able to enjoy a happy relationship without a bit of drama and boredom now and then. **Plan something new together, or even try talking about what attracted you to each other to rekindle that flame.**

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For more information on Dr Christina Pillai
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Do You Need Help in Your Relationship?

Specialist in couple, marriage and family therapy, Dr Christina Pillai explains what you can expect from couple, marriage and family therapy and how you can benefit from it.

Recognised as one of the best relationship counsellors in the country, Dr Christina Pillai is known for her intimate approach at handling patients with psychiatric and emotional related dilemmas. Dr Pillai graduated with a Psy.D (Doctor of Psychology) in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) from Alliant International University, USA. She offers her advice on how couples can improve their relationship with one another from these therapy sessions.

1 What are couple, marriage and family therapists?

Couple, marriage and family therapists (CMFT) are relationship specialists who treat individuals, couples and families. CMFT focuses on repairing, rebuilding and restoring relationships. They take a holistic approach to healthcare and treat from the perspective that "relationship matters."

CMFT prioritises on how individuals in our society choose partners, establish households and form family groups. They are concerned with the overall, long-term wellbeing of individuals, couples and families. CMFTs assess, diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders, and other health and behavioural issues to achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships, marriages and social adjustments.

2 Why use a couple, marriage and family therapist specifically?

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of couple, marriage and family therapy in treating a full range of psychological and emotional disorders and health problems. Adolescent drug abuse, depression, alcoholism, obesity and dementia in the elderly, as well as marital distress and conflicts are just some of the conditions CMFT effectively treat.

They are often able to treat a patient's condition quickly to resolve problems or reduce symptoms in the shortest time possible—a prime reason so many physicians refer patients to a CMFT. However, some patients require more intensive, long-term treatment to relieve various psychological and emotional conditions.

Patients who are treated by CMFT are more productive at work, have better co-worker, family, marital and partner

relationships; improved emotional and overall health, and social life and community involvement.

Those who have received this therapy have better socially acceptable behaviour, increased self-esteem, better tolerance for society in general, and increase capacity for intimacy, work, maturity and responsible functioning. This ultimately results in less unnecessary utilisation of medical services as well.

3 When should a couple or family seek couple, marriage or family counselling?

Couples therapy is recommended as soon as discontentment develops in the relationship. Couples usually wait until the situation becomes dire before seeking help. According to studies, the average couple wait for six years of unhappiness before seeking help. Couple's therapy should not be taken as a "last resort" to save your marriage or relationship; go seek help as soon as you can.

Many couples seek therapy to enhance their relationship by keeping it healthy or learn to navigate through relationship and marital terrains. These couples develop the skills that free them to thrive in the future and help create goals to improve their relationship. However, if a couple has decided to separate, they can still pursue couple therapy to end the relationship amicably and respectfully.

If you have an unsettled family argument or you need someone to mediate among family members, family counselling may be beneficial. Since family dynamics can vary, each situation may be different. Counselling can include couples therapy, parent and child therapy, individualised therapy or alternating therapy sessions between different family members.



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The Hottest Topics

A summary of some of the hottest happenings that keep us busy and inspired as posted on WH digital.

By Amylia Hilda



Turn to page 40 to see what we got up to during our Johor #MWHNightRun with #AIAVitalityMY.



Watch the WH team's acting debut on www.womenshealth.com.my where we parody the four types of *kuaci* eaters.



Need a little getaway? Add five of the best hiking spots in Southeast Asia to your bucket list. Head to our website and look under 'Fitness.'



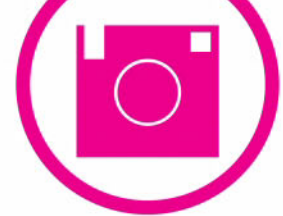
We had great fun doing yoga alongside some of Malaysia's finest fitness people. Thanks to Lululemon Malaysia and Ninie Ahmad for the yoga lessons.



Check out WH's healthy *yee sang* picks on www.womenshealth.com.my and get inspired to turn this festive dish into a healthy feast.



We had fun at Davina Goh's vegan cooking class with Spoon Health at BIG Supermarket. Read about her vegan journey on our website under 'Nutrition.'



Instagrams We ♥ Power women

International Women's Day falls on March 8. Follow these influential personalities on Instagram for instant motivation...



@ttaootd

Her Highness Tunku Tun Aminah is the Princess of Johor and also the President of Johor Darul Ta'zim FC. She sure knows how to put together a perfect #OOTD too.



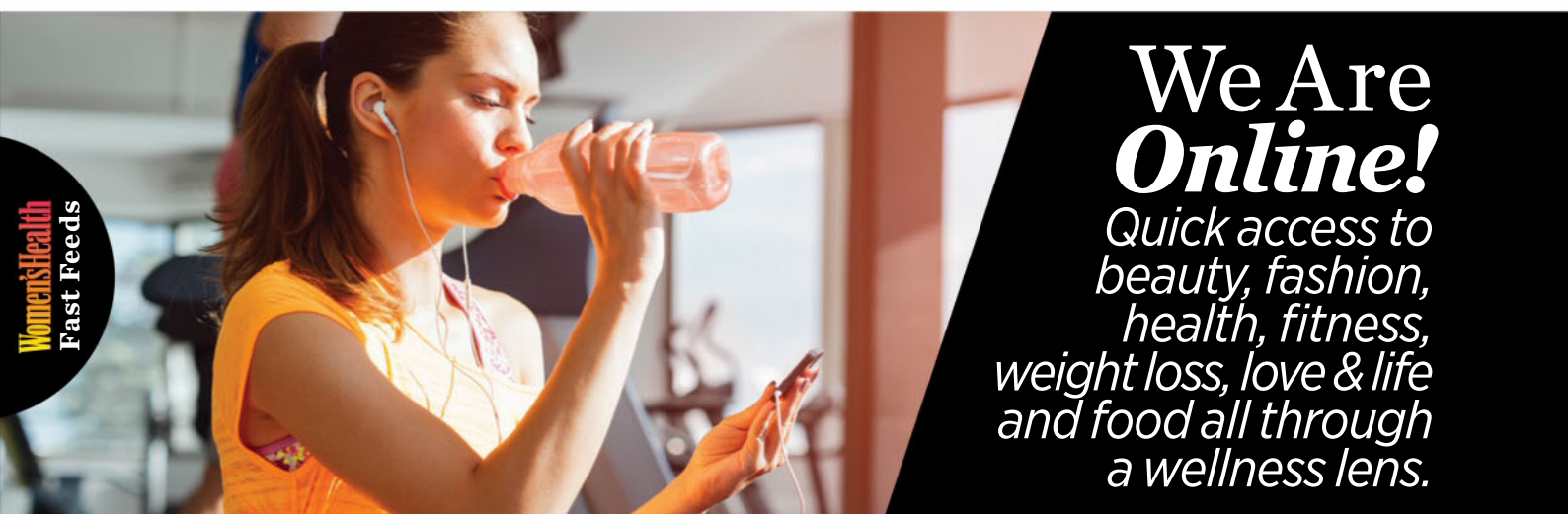
@annosman

Just looking at MMA fighter Ann 'Athena' Osman's feed will make you want to get into Muay Thai. How does she make it look so easy?



@xandriaooi

Follow host and writer Xandria Ooi's feed for fun travel adventures and inspiring quotes on life.



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HEALTH

When I wake up much earlier than usual, I feel nauseous. Why?

—Eloise

A Our stomachs make quite a bit of acid at night. By morning the acid empties into the intestines and is neutralised there. But if you wake up earlier than usual, all the acid may not have flushed out yet, which can make you feel queasy. Another thing to consider: Our typical routine is to wake up and eat or drink something soon after, which also neutralises the acid. When you rise, try eating a light breakfast or sipping a cup of herbal tea to alleviate the nausea. (Ginger is known for its stomach-soothing effects.) Conditions that can make these symptoms worse are gastroparesis (delayed stomach emptying) or ulcers. So if you still have symptoms when you wake up at your normal time, it's a clue that something else—an ulcer, gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) or gastritis (an inflamed stomach lining)—is going on. You'll need to visit a doctor to treat any of these.



NOT
JUST
A CAT
NAP.



HITTING A
WALL ON MY
WALL SIT...

FITNESS

How long should I hold a body-weight position (like a wall sit) once I'm shaking and burning? Is this really when "change" happens?

—Ameera

Change actually happens *after* your workout, when your body repairs the muscle it just broke down. The shake and burn means you're hitting your max, which will help boost results. Save these types of exercises for the end of your workout, holding for as long as you can maintain proper form (the length of time will vary by move). And avoid taxing the same muscle group more than twice a week so your body can recover—and create those changes.

Got a question? > Email us at editor@womens-health.com.my with the subject title "Ask Women's Health".

CAREER

How do I appear friendly in a profesh work email without using a crap-ton of exclamation points?!!!!

—Karena

If you want to look more professional, I caution against excessive punctuation, emoticons, cute abbreviations or profanity. Limit work emails to one "unprofessional" element (and don't do it every time). Remember, friendliness comes from the meaning behind your words. Start emails with a compliment, like "It was great to see you last week." No forced punctuation necessary there.

ASK THE GIRL & GUY NEXT DOOR

SHE SAYS VS **HE SAYS**



Anna-Rina handles Brand and Community for Lululemon Malaysia, shoots weddings and portraits on the side, and spends her free time embracing #thesweatlife by either working out at the gym or hiking the great outdoors.



Eric Koh runs Tuckerico Fitness and Strength—a personal training and fitness coaching business, where he not only provides physical training to his clients, but also offers one-on-one guidance and group talks on nutrition.

1 *How do you encourage a partner who isn't progressing as much as you are in training?*

—Yoke Lin

ANNA: Remind your partner that everyone has a different and unique set of genetics. What works for one person might take another a bit longer. Focus on your partner's strengths and remind him of that when he mulls over what he is unhappy about.

ERIC: There's more than one way to skin a cat. Hitting a plateau is part of the journey so don't give up if your progress is slow. Find and learn new ways to get around it. It's about trial and error as well. Mistakes are your best friend; you'll learn better from them.

2 *My boyfriend and I love to train together and we have started having more dates at the gym than anywhere else. Any idea what we can do to keep the sparks flying during our gym dates?*

—Jaslinder

ANNA: You may have different programming to follow, as you may have different goals, but make it a point to spend some time doing partner workouts. It could be during the warm-up session or when you need to stretch.

ERIC: In my opinion, what matters most is that both of you are putting in your best effort and time to see each other whenever possible—wherever doesn't really matter. Anna and I, our work schedule is pretty erratic but we try to meet whenever we can, even if it's a quick gym session. Set your priorities right.

3 *What do men and women who strength-train or lift weights hate to hear?*

—Yatie

ANNA: For ladies, a big no-no is when so-called well-meaning friends tell them to stop lifting heavy lest they start looking like a man. Unless you're on drugs, female hormones won't allow you to look like a man however much you lift weights.

ERIC: You look skinnier now. I like it.

DON'T LET
HATERS
WEIGH
YOU DOWN.



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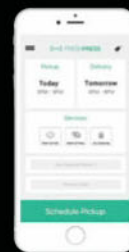


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- Carpet Cleaning: RM3.50 per sq ft

For now, Fresh Press operates only in Kuala Lumpur but they are working on expanding to other areas.

For more information, head to www.freshpress.my



NO MORE WASHDAY BLUES

Dread doing laundry? Now, thanks to app Fresh Press, you don't have to! You can arrange for your dirty clothes to be picked up, cleaned and returned to you in as little as 24 hours. There is also the option of making a booking through their website, or by calling or WhatsApping/texting them. Services provided are washing, folding, ironing and dry cleaning—even for bulky household items like curtains, bed sheets and carpets. The best part? Pickup and delivery are free!

ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

KEEP SPOTS AT BAY

As we age, the process of natural colourisation in the skin is disrupted by overexposure to UV rays, while the melanocytes in our dermis go into overdrive, producing the melanin that causes the appearance of dark spots.

*PSST...

HOW GROSS IS MY LOOFAH?

If you're like the 60 percent of readers who said they don't toss theirs until it's falling apart—very. That's why a cleanser-infused sponge, is smart. The soap runs out after 30 uses, reminding you it's time for a fresh one. Still ride-or-die for your classic loofah? Consider its stages of stankiness:

AFTER ONE MONTH

With every use, you've transferred bacteria from your skin to the loofah, where it gets trapped in the nooks and crannies, says dermatologist Dr Dendy Engelman. By now, you're just sudsing up with bugs, which could cause folliculitis, an infection of the hair follicles on the skin.

AFTER 3 MONTHS

There isn't just bacteria in there, but likely allergy-provoking mould as well, fostered by the humid environment in your shower.

BEYOND 4 MONTHS

For the love of God, lady, get rid of it! If the reasons above aren't enough to motivate you to get a new loofah, maybe the smell—which could rival a pro football locker room—will. Not even a fragrant shower gel can mask this odour.



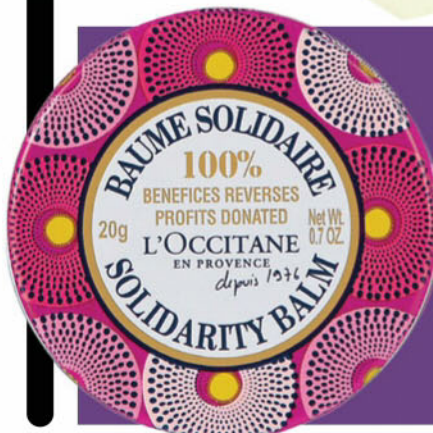
No one likes uneven and spotty skin, so with the help of Melvita's latest range of skincare, we really won't have to worry anymore. The Nectar Blanc Brightening Range combines vitamin C and lily oil with white star lily—also known as the queen of white flowers—to correct blotchiness and help your complexion regain its natural luminosity.

The range consists of the **2-in-1 Brightening Cleansing Foam** (RM128), **Brightening Duo** (RM150), **Brightening Concentrate** (RM260) and **Brightening Cream** (RM245). It is available at all Melvita Malaysia stores and online.



Colour Me Pretty

Sing, shout, clap your hands! Marc Jacobs Beauty has 17 brand spanking new shades of **Highliner Matte Gel Eye Crayons** (RM110) and **Omega Lash Volumising Mascaras**. That's not all. Pair these bold colours with six versatile shades of **Le Marc Liquid Lip Crème** (RM110). Alternatively, opt for a **New Nudes Sheer Gel Lipstick** (RM125), available in four different shades. You'll know where to find us once these hit all Sephora stores nationwide.



One For The (S)heroes

International Women's Day happens this month and L'Occitane is here to stand with us, by releasing a limited edition **Shea Violet Solidarity Balm** (20g, RM25) to raise funds for gender equality.

The multipurpose balm contains 98 percent shea butter and has a lovely violet scent. Its tin is 'dressed' in African wax prints that mirror those on the celebratory clothes of the Burkinabe women who produce the shea butter.

All proceeds from the fair trade balm will be donated to the UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality in support of women's leadership programmes.

AC-CORD-ING TO PLAN



There's something incredibly joyous about slipping on a pair of Keen's Uneek sandals. Your feet feel so secure, you won't think twice about hitting a forest trail, yet they're also light and airy enough to be worn on a day-to-day basis for running errands and the like.

This is due to the fact that Keen ditched traditional machinery and conventional materials to create sandals that consist of two cords and a

sole. Simple yet brilliant. The free-moving structure means they can be adjusted to fit any shape and size, while the polyurethane midsole provides long-lasting support.

The Keen Uneek Monochrome Collection (RM449) is the perfect hybrid footwear that's up for any adventure. From beaches to trails and city hopping, this is one tour guide that you can rely on. Available at all World of Sports Stores and Urban Adventure at Mid Valley.

Pushing Boundaries

We're all about raiding our boyfriend's closet, and what better way to start than with H&M's Spring Icons Select by The Weeknd?

The pieces are casual, comfortable and mix the worlds of streetwear and tailored fashion to create a sharp blend of urban-fresh effortlessness.

The Spring Icons Select range is available at all H&M stores nationwide.



MONKI-ING AROUND

Funky, flirty, playful and all round fun, Monki's spring/summer collection—which drops this month—is defined by their ever-popular prints and oversized silhouettes. This season, stripes are definitely in, as is the beautiful, soft, pastel pink hue that's been blowing up everywhere. There's something for everyone and we'll be the first ones in line!



SLEEK & CHIC

We've been in love with all things Hana Tajima x Uniqlo from the get-go, but she's truly outdone herself this time. The Spring/Summer 2017 collection is elegant and stays true to the Japanese brand's effortless chic feel.



HANA TAJIMA FOR UNIQLO is a collection that is versatile and inclusive," says Hana Tajima. "We are introducing new lightweight fabrics and cutting details that enhance the natural movement of the body. There are soft, draped elements in dresses, tunics and full-length pants alongside more sculptural shapes and silhouettes. These changes are all aimed at giving the wearer complete comfort and an understated elegance.

FITNESS SCOOP!

HIIT N ME

Several dating apps aimed at fit folks have launched (Snap Together, Sweatt), but plenty of women still get hit on the old-fashioned way—at the gym. Whether the flirting is welcome or not, it makes for a story! Take it away, readers.



"I was lifting weights in the weight room when a guy came over and asked pretty loudly, 'Do you box? Because you definitely have the back for it.' It's one thing to say I look good, but ew, please don't stare and comment on one part of my body. Especially so loud that other people hear you and check out my back too."

—Rachel, 26



"This flirty dude offered to help me with my squat form. I wasn't interested, so when he asked for my number, I gave him the wrong one. But then he called me right on the spot—and knew I'd lied because my phone didn't ring. Awkward!"

—Sarah, 28



"I always wear my hair in a ponytail, but I forgot an elastic one day. This guy with a man bun noticed—he told me my hair looked nice down and proceeded to hand me one of his own hair ties in case I wanted it. Then he was like, deadpan, 'If you ever need anything else—water, a tampon maybe—come find me.' If I weren't married, I'd definitely have gone out with him! Humor always wins."

—Benai, 31

IS IT HOT
IN HERE
OR...
OH, YOU
KNOW.

KOA FITNESS— NEW WOMEN'S ONLY GYM

Redefining the landscape of women's only gyms in Malaysia, Mont Kiara's KOA Fitness is set to be an all-rounded one stop shop primed to improve almost all aspects of women's fitness. Kitted out with the latest gym equipment, it also houses sports-luxe retail fashion zones, spacious changing facilities stocked with quality grooming and skincare products and an in-house juice bar.

If you're looking to work out in a space where you can really focus on your goals without distractions or feeling self-conscious, KOA may be it. After all, the name 'KOA' is actually a Hawaiian word meaning 'warrior' or 'brave', which helps to set the tone for women from all walks of life who just want to be better versions of themselves through fitness.

These are the range of programmes that they offer:

> Mommy-To-Be:

For women who want to be fit and healthy during their pregnancy

> Hot Momma:

For new mums wanting to get back into shape and optimise energy levels

> Bride-To-Be:

For ladies wanting to look radiant, strong and healthy in time for their big day

> SHH (Stronger, Healthier, Happier):

A holistic combination of workouts & practices

> Australian Strength Performance Training:

A proprietary programme by Australian Strength Performance (ASP)

> Rehabilitation:

For women who are coming back from injury and have recovery goals

KOA FITNESS IS LOCATED AT:
B-G-07 Gateway Kiaras Corporate Suites,
No.1 Jalan Desa Kiara,
Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.
(+603 6211 0677)

WH Fitness Gadget of the Month:

Sony Wireless Sports Bluetooth Headphones

Avid runners and sports enthusiasts can now rejoice at the new range of Sony wireless headphones that will make your workout experience even better.

The **XB50BS Extra Bass Sports Bluetooth in-Ear Headphones** are made especially for those with an active lifestyle. They are great for both indoor and outdoor workouts—with a special IPX4 splash-proof feature that allows you to run even in light rain, and a special arc design that keeps the earphones in place no matter how intense your routine is. With 8.5 hours of battery life (which is enough power for a week's worth of workouts), you don't have to worry about being without your entertainment device and concentrate on your performance instead.

The XB50BS Extra Bass Sports Bluetooth in-Ear Headphones come in three funky colours (black, red and blue) to match your activewear. Pretty darn neat!



NOT THE SPIRIT

Gulp! More than half of women say they skip meals to save calories for alcohol—not sometimes, not on special occasions, but “all the time.” **Health hazards aside, it's not even smart for weight loss, since missing just one meal slows your metabolism. Bonus bummer:**

You're more likely to store any bar food you eat as fat since your bod is working to burn off the booze first. So eat normally on happy-hour days and opt for a lower-cal drink (like half wine, half seltzer), or order your favourite cocktail and sip it nice and slowly.

Source: Dr Caroline Cederquist, weight management expert and cofounder of bistroMD

A LOVE LETTER TO

THE LOSE IT! APP

You changed my life. Twice! First, back in 2012 when I used you, dear mobile food-tracking app, to drop the 5kg I gained while freelancing (aka sitting on my tuchus). Once I hit my goal, I deleted you. Foolish. Last summer, up one size too many, I came crawling back. And my, how you've grown! You now offer seamless bar-code scanning for packaged goods to instantly upload calcs and fat, and a genius “snap it” feature where I can take a pic of my plate and you spit out the dish and its deets. (Because who wants to enter every element of a meal? Especially a salad with a bajillion ingredients?) Just six weeks in, I'm down 6kg. Lose you, Lose It!? Never.



FRONT AND CENTRE

A little off the middle, please: In a *Women's Health* survey, women worldwide revealed that, of all their body parts, they're most insecure about their midsection. Thing is, healthy bellies come in all shapes and sizes. So we talked to Dr Travis Stork, author of *The Lose Your Belly Diet*, and snagged his best tips to keep your tum in great shape.

Why is belly fat bad news?

We all know that fat that lies deep within your abdomen (the kind you can't pinch between your fingers) is the worst kind, since it promotes inflammation and can be hard on your heart. But a shocking number of women still have it—even the seemingly fit. Good news is, you don't need a six-pack to be healthy! Simple changes can target this freaky fat.

Don't tell me to give up carbs...

I would never, but I will tell you to add fibre. Yes, it keeps you full, but it also promotes good gut bacteria, which has been linked to a healthy weight. Almonds are a satisfying,

fibre-rich choice, and a recent study showed that people who ate them daily lost more abdominal fat than those who didn't.

And what about workouts?

Resistance training at least three days a week can help you burn more fat, including in your belly, since muscle revs your metabolism. But don't knock moderate exercise either. Sticking to a routine is most important for weight management overall, so pick something you enjoy—jogging, brisk walking, whatever—and make it a habit.



THE
CHANGE
OF LIFE
IS
THORNY.

FADING FLOW

Perimenopause—the four- to 10-year transition phase before menopause—can start as early as (oof) 30. Many younger women don't know it's a possibility, and docs don't always recognise the symptoms in this group. Irregular periods aside, signs that Auntie F may be on her way out:

COULD BE PERIMENOPAUSE

Low Sex Drive

Your relationship is otherwise great. Hormonal shifts can decrease your desire.

Sweatiness

You have true hot flashes: Sudden, intense heat sensations along with sweating and a rapid heartbeat.

Insomnia

Your subpar sleep is unexplained and often accompanied by night sweats.

Weight Gain

You haven't changed food or fitness habits. Less oestrogen can cause an increase of body fat (up to 8kg over the entire peri period).

PROBABLY NOT

Low Sex Drive

You're having bond problems, such as resentment or taking certain drugs (blood pressure meds, antidepressants).

Sweatiness

Your episodes are subtle and occur around your period or you're on antidepressants.

Insomnia

You're under stress or your sleepless nights typically occur in the week before your period.

Weight Gain

You've been skipping the gym or you've started taking drugs like antihistamines and mood meds.

Source: Dr JoAnn Pinkerton, executive director, The North American Menopause Society

Old Timeliners

A study from the University of California at San Diego found that regular Facebookers have lower mortality rates than nonusers. But the fine print? The longevity link exists only if you interact with people you're close to IRL—like the 39 percent of you folks who communicate with their real-life pals on FB at least a few times a week. So chat up your fave cousin on your lunch break or post a fun college photo to your bud's wall. The more you nurture your relationships—online or off—the happier and healthier you'll be. We couldn't "like" that more.

1 MILLION LIKES

POP QUIZ!

A recent study found that 10% of young women have this pee issue:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A
LEAKAGE | B
BURNING |
| C
FREQUENT URINATION | D
CHRONIC UTIs |

ANSWER: A. Yep, 10.3 percent of women ages 19 to 30 experience urinary incontinence—aka unintentional leakage. (And 63 percent of Whisper respondents admit they occasionally pee a little in their pants.) "Stress incontinence"—whizzing from the pressure of laughing, sneezing or jogging—is the most common type in adults under 50, says gynaecologist Dr Ashlesha Patel; weak pelvic floor muscles are likely to blame. Strengthen them by doing Kegel exercises daily: Start with three sets of 10 reps, holding each for five seconds. Gradually increase each squeeze by one second per week until you're able to hold for 10 seconds.

MORE FIBRE → HEALTHIER GUMS → HEALTHIER LUNGS

Good habits can have a wellness domino effect, but the links aren't always obvious. The latest chain reaction:

MORE FIBRE → HEALTHIER GUMS

New data found that people who ate fewer than 12 grams of fibre per day were more likely to have gum disease than those who ate 24-plus grams daily. Whole-grain consumption (oats, quinoa) was particularly beneficial for gums—likely since the dietary darlings may curb chronic inflammation, a key factor in the development of periodontal disease.

HEALTHIER GUMS → HEALTHIER LUNGS

Survey says: People who skipped the dentist had an 86 percent higher risk for pneumonia than those who went twice a year. Turns out, you can accidentally inhale bacteria that are in your mouth, causing lung inflammation and good oral hygiene—including those twice-yearly checkups—can reduce the bad bugs.



In a recent study (okay, a staff meeting), a bunch of *WH*-ers admitted to forgetting their reusable grocery totes. All. The. Time. So now, we're publicly shaming ourselves to shine a light on this fact: "Most plastic bags end up in landfills or bodies of water for thousands of years, hurting the health of humans, animals and the planet," says Amit Goyal, PhD, director of the RENEW environmental research centre at the University of Buffalo. Plus, **the production of the estimated 1 trillion plastic bags used worldwide each year is responsible for roughly 5 to 10 percent of all fossil fuel use**, which increases those greenhouse gases you learned about in middle school. Help for forgetful broads: Snag a Standard Baggu nylon tote (baggu.com). They come in a tonne of cute colours and prints, and since they're super lightweight and fold to fit in their palm-size pouch, you can easily stash one in your purse or car.



*PSST...

Intimidated by fruit? Roughly 20 percent of readers admitted they always go for precut produce, despite the 50 percent-ish higher cost. And they're not just lazy: "How to cut a mango" is the top food-related "how to" Google search. Here, tips for slicing three seemingly fussy picks.

MANGO

Place on a cutting board, and trim off the stem end. Insert the tip of a knife into the top right lobe (that's what they call the flesh) and slice lengthwise, off-centre from the pit. Repeat with the opposite side, then put each skin side down. Slice vertically and horizontally (like a checkerboard) down to the skin (but don't cut it). With your thumbs, push outward on the skin side of the fruit to expose the cubes, then slice or pry them off with your fingers.

.....

BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER

Pull away any leaves from the stalk, then slice off the stem. Place the head on a cutting board (stalk facing you) and halve through the core. Then slice each of the halves to create four quarters. Using a small knife—or the Chef'n Stalkchop tool, which is easier to grip and angle (chefn.com)—slice through the remaining core on each section to produce florets.

.....

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Trim off half an inch from each end, and—using a Y-shaped peeler—remove all the skin. Cut the squash in half lengthwise, then use a spoon to scrape out the seeds in the bulb end. Dice the flesh into desired cube size.

Source: Margaret Galvin, chef and culinary arts instructor, University of Cincinnati

THE NEW SUPERFOODS IN TOWN

Move over kale! There are new superfoods in town and the healthy hipsters are rejoicing at this food list compiled by the Wall Street Journal. **Healthy foods making headlines in the upcoming year include moringa leaves—greens that are chockfull of vitamins and nutrients, while plant waters like aloe, maple, artichoke and cactus are quickly replacing sodas and other sweetened beverages.** Researchers have also revelled jackfruit as a great substitute for beef and pork, edging out tofu as a former favourite for meat replacements for its unique ability to mimic the taste and texture of meat better. Those with a sweet tooth need not feel left out; natural blue food colourings made from the blue-green algae spirulina are replacing artificial dyes in cereals and candies.

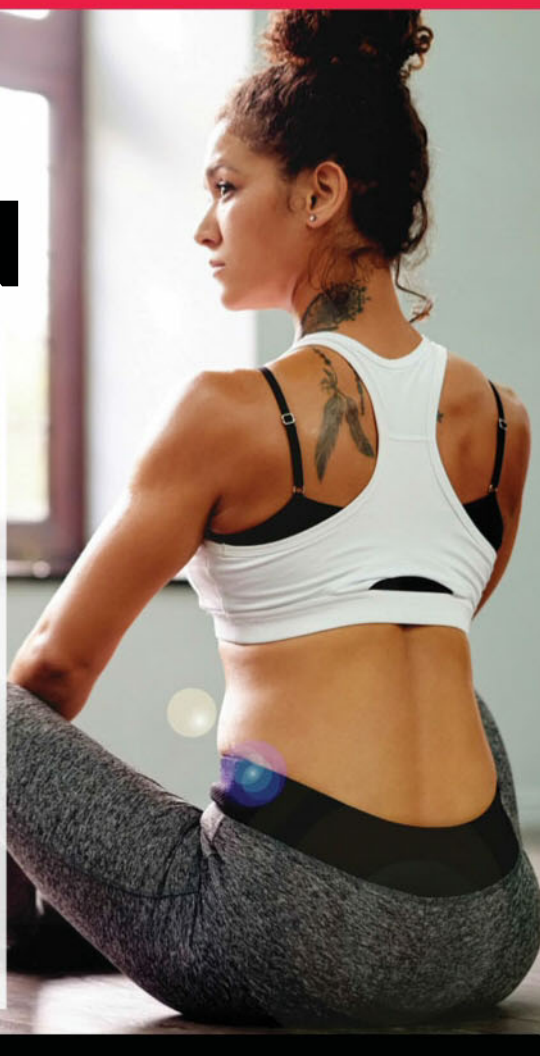


GOING GAGA OVER MORINGA.

UNDER MY SKIN

Getting a tattoo may evoke a powerful reaction—and not just pain. “Body art can serve as a coping tool for mental illness,” says psychologist Gabriel Crenshaw, PsyD, a neuroscience lecturer at the University of Southern California. **People all over the world are getting semi-colon tattoos to signify they haven’t given up after suicidal thoughts, addiction and other psychological struggles (learn more at projectsemicolon.com).**

And as one reader put it, “My Harry Potter tattoo is an homage to my lifelong battle against depression and anxiety. Brave like a Gryffindor.” Just don’t ink on impulse: A tat can help you tap your mental strength, but it won’t solve your problems.



!!!

Dying.

STUNNING!

TOO good.

Perfection!!

All those superlatives we use online? They may be messing with our heads—86 percent of readers feel disappointed when social media comments aren’t amplified. Pamela B. Rutledge, PhD, director of the Media Psychology Research Centre, elaborates.

Why the hyperbole?

Text has less information than face-to-face interaction, and since humans crave social connection, we’ll try to transmit as much context and emotion as we can to make that happen.

Any downsides?

The dramatic language can leave us questioning the value of “normal” feedback, so we may doubt ourselves when our latest picture gets a “cute” versus a “GORGEOUS!!”

So how to stop that?

The interpretation you make about others’ comments is in your head—not that of the commenter. When you let feedback affect your mood, you’re giving away your power. Realising that can snap you out of self-doubt.

No Hoots Given!

Tiffani Thiessen, Saved by the Bell alum and host of Dinner at Tiffani’s, spills the things she will so not be stressing about.

Reading Tabloids

“Like a little junk food, junky rags can be good for the soul.”

Not Answering Emails at Night

“If I fall asleep early instead, next to my daughter, I am more than okay with that.”

Ordering In

“Some nights, I just can’t [cook]—I’ve either cooked enough for my show, or I’m just too damn tired. Thanks, delivery guy!”

Measuring Up, Feeling Down

Why did 53 percent of readers say their satisfaction with their physical appearance “depends on the day”? Body-image expert Susan Albers, PsyD, sees comparison syndrome as a major driver. Here, her advice for preventing any me-versus-them scenario from making you feel less-than.

Use your words.

Comparative adjectives (*prettier, thinner*) trigger our feelings of inferiority. Swapping them for the word *different* (“my hair is *different* from hers”), which is a more neutral descriptor, can shift your perspective to the positive.

Practise compassion.

Alternatively, focusing on your similarities can also lift you up. For example, rather than envying another woman’s body, remember that you’re both female and both

likely to know how it feels to deal with insecurities. Try saying to yourself, “We both...” and fill in the blank with some kind of shared experience you might have with this person.

Benice.

Find something you appreciate about the other person’s personality. Maybe it’s her infectious laugh or her wicked wit that you love. Kindness can dissolve jealousy, and sending positive vibes to other people may help you to feel happier overall.



ALL IMAGES FROM ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

style + beauty

People with sensitive personalities are easily upset—and so are people with sensitive skin. Hey, patches of tiny red bumps or an itchy rash can make a girl cranky. The cause of an irritable complexion: “Women with sensitive skin have hyperactive immune systems that read certain products or weather conditions as enemies and fight them off as foreign objects,” says Dr Marianna Blyumin-Karasik, a dermatologist in Miami. “This reaction often leads to skin redness, itching, stinging, burning and peeling.”

NO MORE
ANGRY
SKIN!

Don't Be So **Sensitive!**

If you're one of the millions of women who suffer from chronic skin issues, that's easier said than done. Read on to find relief—and a smooth, calm complexion.

By Jill Percia

Blyumin-Karasik says that 30 percent of the women treated in her practice have sensitive skin. However, many more experience symptoms at some point in their lives due to hormonal fluctuations or because they've slathered on products that contain harsh ingredients. "Women are using more anti-ageing products than ever before, and the potent exfoliants in them can cause irritation," says Dr Francesca Fusco, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "So more women are experiencing the symptoms of sensitivity." Keep your skin happy by staying away from the following saboteurs.

THE IRRITANT: Fragrance

What delights your nose can aggravate your skin. "Fragrance is the number one allergen in cosmetics and skin care," says dermatologist Dr Audrey Kunin, founder of DermaDoctor. And you can credit citrus, floral and minty scents for making your skin go most berserk. So choose fragrance-free beauty and household cleaning products, and seek out those that have the words hypoallergenic and formaldehyde-free on their labels. "When scent is removed, even more irritating chemicals may be added to make the product smell less offensive," explains Blyumin-Karasik.

If you can't part with your favourite scent, follow the "lay, then spray" rule: "Place your clothing on your bed and lightly mist it with fragrance. Give the scent a few minutes to dry on the fabric before getting dressed. This prevents direct contact with the skin, so you avoid irritation," says Blyumin-Karasik.

THE IRRITANT: Chemicals

> In Soaps and Cleansers

They may leave you feeling squeaky clean, but cleansing agents known as surfactants play a dirty trick on sensitive

skin. Sodium lauryl sulfate is a harsh emulsifier that is found in body washes, facial cleansers and soap; it rids the skin of dirt and oil while breaking down precious lipids, the glue that binds skin cells together, keeping them resistant to dryness and damage.

Some soaps also contain drying antibacterial agents such as tetrasodium EDTA and triclosan. Because sensitive skin is almost always dry, soaping up with moisture-sucking products can lead to itching and peeling, says Blyumin-Karasik. Instead, wash with soaps specifically formulated for sensitive or dry skin; these products contain the relatively mild sodium laureth sulfate. Try **Eucerin Redness Relief Soothing Cleanser (1)**, (RM36.01, iherb.com). Read labels to make sure you're getting laureth and not the more common (and more irritating) lauryl.

> In Makeup

Ultramarine blue, a pigment commonly found in eye shadow, can be a bit of a bully to sensitive skin. If it's giving you the blues, find relief by using neutral eye shadow shades like beige or brown, which expose skin to fewer irritating chemical pigments. Also, "mica, a light-reflecting particle with chemical properties, is found in mineral makeup and bronzing powder, and it can be a big itch inducer," says Dr Zoe Draelos, a consulting professor of dermatology at Duke University School of Medicine.

Another culprit is bismuth oxychloride, a sheen enhancer that's known to cause stinging. "Unfortunately, these ingredients are found in products we aggressively rub

in with a brush, which exacerbates the irritation by pushing the product deep into the pores," she says. Choosing liquid blushes, bronzers and foundations (which aren't brushed on) will keep your skin placated. Try **Innisfree Eco Natural Green Tea BB Cream (2)**, (RM65, at Innisfree); it's free of bad guys like fragrance, mica and talc.

THE IRRITANT: The Environment

Sunny days aren't so glee-filled for the sensitive. "Even the tiniest amount of daylight exposes your skin to sensitising UV rays," explains Annet King, director of global education for Dermalogica and The International Dermal Institute. Ultraviolet light mutates proteins in the skin, which damages skin cells and causes a red, stinging reaction known as photosensitivity. To prevent it, King recommends wearing a physical block, rain or shine. Unlike potentially irritating chemical UV absorbers such as PABA, benzophenones and cinnamates, physical blocks contain zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which play nice with fragile skin. Try **Moogoo SPF 40 Natural Sunscreen (3)**, (RM89, moogoo.my).

Sadly, the dark days of winter don't offer much of a reprieve. Chilly dry air and gusty winds steal water from your skin, leaving it to dry out, crack and turn red. "Fall and winter wreak havoc on skin, thanks to lower humidity," explains Dr Ellen Marmur, a dermatologist in New York City. (If you live in a climate where damp air prevails, your skin is less likely to become dry and itchy.) Slathering on a moisture-rich humectant with glycerin will restore hydration and prevent moisture from further leaching out of your face and body. Try **Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream (4)**, (RM46.80, at Watsons). Apply the product right after you take a shower to maximise its absorption, and reapply throughout the day if needed. ■

How to Do a Patch Test

Place a few drops or smears of a product on an adhesive bandage and then stick it on your inner forearm. Leave it in place and keep it dry for 24 hours. Remove, then check for any redness, itching or blistering. If you do this for three days and your skin is unscathed, consider the product a go.



Just Brows-ing

We may not all be blessed with brows from the gods, but with a little product, some grooming and help from our fairy godmother, Mina Rosli, we'll take your eyebrows from bleak to fleek in no time at all!

By Zoé Ng



BEFORE

After a threading lady overplucked her eyebrows, YouTube star Mina Rosli vowed to get them back in shape on her own—because, sometimes, we all know that if you want something done right, you have to take matters into your own hands.

After months of letting them grow out completely, and then more months of self-grooming, Mina's eyebrows are just the way she likes them.

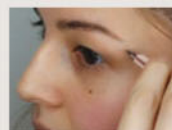
Well, obviously, we aren't all skilled enough to shape and groom our own eyebrows, but there are ways around it, like managing and tidying up in between threading or waxing sessions. For example, shaving to neaten your brows is always more forgiving than if you were to wax or pluck, and using a waterproof product to set the base of your brows always helps to keep them looking fresh throughout the day. But, whatever condition they are in—sparse, full, short, or even completely non-existent—Mina has some super-quick tips on how to get your brows into the condition that you've always wanted.



Follow Mina Rosli on Instagram: @minaros3

HOW TO GET:

Fuller Brows



Step 1: Tweeze any pesky strays to keep your brow line looking neat and clean.



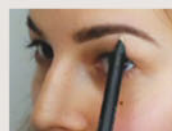
Step 2: Go in with a soft, clear brow gel to neaten the hairs and keep them in place so you know exactly what to fill in next.



Step 3: Take a brow pencil in a shade lighter or darker than your natural hair and use it to fill in any sparse areas by drawing in fine lines to mimic eyebrow hairs.



Step 4: Use a brow powder on areas that need more colour or depth.



Step 5: Finally, finish off with a brow highlight to make your brow bones pop, or to clean up any mistakes around your brow for a crisp, super-clean look. ■

Brow Tips For...



A HEART-SHAPED FACE

Heart shaped faces are tricky because emphasis is already on the forehead and brows, so opt for natural, low, straight-ish arches that hug your brow bones. The less weight you have on your brows, the better!



A LONG FACE

What's most important here aren't the arches of your brows. Focus on the length of your brows to play up your horizontal features. Also, remember that in the case of a long face, wispy brows are the way to go!



AN OVAL FACE

There are nearly no rules for an oval face shape so consider yourself blessed! Go dark, straight or arched, as long as you're not over plucking, or have tiny arches, you really can't go wrong with an oval shape.



A SQUARE FACE

Balance out a square jaw line with brows that are thicker and stronger in colour. So don't be afraid to go a shade darker than your natural hair tone. You can also opt for eyebrows that are more arched and angular than usual.



A ROUND FACE

High, sharp angles are best for your face because this can give you more bone definition and lift your face upwards instead of outwards.

Zoeva
Graphic
Eyes+
Box Vol. 2
(RM419)

ZOEVA GRAPHIC EYES+ BOX

FLAWLESS LINEWORK

Whether liquid or pencil, there's so much fun to be had with eyeliners. Liquid liners work well for sharp, graphic lines while pencil liners look great in the lower waterline.

MAC Zoom Lash
Mascara (price
unavailable)



Too Faced
Sketch
Marker Liquid
Liner (price
unavailable)

Rainbow Brights

Nothing like a pop of colour to inject some fun into your everyday look! Here's how to boost your mood and feel extra magical this year with serious unicorn vibes.

By Audra Roslani

Kenzo

Thom Brown

Urban Decay
Full Spectrum
Eyeshadow
Palette (RM265)



Zoeva Love is a Story
Palette (RM103)

CUT CREASE

When using rainbow hues on your eyelids, give your eyes extra dimension by filling in a cut crease; apply a taupe eyeshadow with a blending brush using a back and forth motion in your socket area. Darken as necessary.

Kat Von D MetalMatte
Eyeshadow Palette (RM289)





Bershka
Bath Salts
(RM29.90)



Etat Libre d'Orange
Encens et Bubblegum
(RM403.90,
etatlibredorange.com)



Sephora
Collection
14 Creamy
Body
Wash
Capsules
(RM65)

SCENT-SATIONAL

If rainbow had a scent, we reckon it would smell like bubblegum, vanilla and all things nice. Alternatively, keep your bathroom stocked with colourful bath capsules—impossible not to feel cheery just looking at them!

NAILED IT

With the amount of time spent typing on your keyboard, keep them looking pretty with bright and fun colours. Add some nail decorations and jewels for extra oomph!



Sephora Collection Mini
4-Step Buffer (RM16)

Make Up
Store Nail
Deco (RM47)



MSGM

Too Faced
Melted Matte
Liquified
Long Wear
Matte
Lipstick in
Unicorn
(RM90)

Make Up For Ever
Artist Rouge Creme
lipstick (RM100)

LIPS ON FLEEK

Unconventional lip colour is becoming the norm so if you've been meaning to try it, what are you waiting for? Keep your pout on point with daring shades of purple and blue. But if that's too out there, start off with dazzling corals and muted wisteria shades.

THINGS YOU'LL LOVE...



Topshop sequin
makeup bag (RM76)



H&M glittery choker (RM34.90)



Topshop Tommy slip-on
trainers (RM360)



Typo Unicorn DIY
Dream Catcher Charms (RM30)

LIFE-CHANGING TIPS FROM SUCCESSFUL CHICKS MALAYSIAN EDITION RM6.80

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Hot Yoga **Hot Bod**

Just when *The Big Bang Theory*'s Kaley Cuoco was ready to settle down into domestic bliss, her plans blew up in her face. Did she cry? Floods. Despair? A little. Give up? Not a chance. The queen of the small screen reveals her secrets for getting back on her feet—and sculpting abs like this.

By Lori Majewski

NORMA KAMALI TOP, POLO RALPH LAUREN SKIRT, KIM FRANCIS X ICONERY EARRINGS, ARIEL GORDON STAR NECKLACE, SYDNEY EVAN BABE NECKLACE, VITA FEDE SERPENT RING, JEN HENSEN SEVEN SHAPE RING, HEARTS ON FIRE STAR RING AND BANGLE



“I’M CELEBRATING! HAVE SOME WINE!”

Kaley Cuoco has arrived early for our dinner at the farm-to-table eatery Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica, California, and is already digging into a plate of burrata and a glass of rosé. And why not? She’s on a brief hiatus from *The Big Bang Theory*, CBS’s number one sitcom. As soon as we’re finished here, Kaley is heading to the airport for a short flight to San Diego to spend a romantic weekend with her boyfriend, competitive equestrian Karl Cook. “I basically work year-round—we do 24 shows a year,” she says, ordering ricotta dumplings as a main course, along with another glass of wine.

Kaley also works hard on her body—and it shows. SoCal-cute in boyfriend jeans and a white tank, with a large-brimmed hat pulled down to the top of her wide-set hazel eyes, she’s got triceps and deltoids that are way toned. The kind of toned that begs congratulations. So I do the honours, expecting that false-modesty, can’t-accept-a-compliment game that so many women play. “Thank you,” she says. “I worked my a** off for this.”

Boom. More refreshing than the rosé. Kaley, 31, credits her hot yoga and cycling routine, but in the same breath is just as honest about what else she’s done to her body. And by coy Hollywood standards, her revelations are almost shocking. “Years ago, I

had my nose done,” she says casually. “And my boobs—best thing I ever did. Recently I had a filler in a line in my neck I’ve had since I was 12. As much as you want to love your inner self... I’m sorry, you also want to look good. I don’t think you should do it for a man or anyone else, but if it makes you feel confident, that’s amazing.”

PICKING UP THE PIECES

No doubt, confidence courses through Kaley’s veins. But it’s the product of nursed wounds, as she’s toasting her recovery from what was by all measures a Very Bad Year. The week of our interview marks 15 months since she and her tennis-pro husband of less than two years, Ryan Sweeting, announced their split, leaving her devastated and reappraising her thoughts on love and marriage.

“I was like, ‘Everyone is going to see this, it’s going to be the cover of everything,’” Kaley says, eyes welling at the memory. “I felt like the biggest failure.” Since the pair had wed only six months after meeting, “Every article [was like], ‘Told you so, we knew it wouldn’t last.’” One particularly painful casualty of the breakup: Kaley’s imminent plans for parenthood. Of her inner circle, “I was the first who got married and [was] ready to have a family,” she says.

“I’VE CRIED
NUMEROUS TIMES IN
YOGA. THE BEST PART IS
I’M SWEATING SO BAD
NO ONE CAN TELL.”

HAIR: ADIR ABERGEL FOR LEONOR GREY/STARWORKS ARTISTS; MAKEUP: JAMIE GREENBERG/THE WALL GROUP; MANICURE: EMI KUDO FOR DIOR VERNIS/OPUS BEAUTY; PROP STYLING: ANDY HENBEST/ART DEPARTMENT; SEAFOLLY SPORTS BRA; CHELSEA AND WALKER SKIRT; PUMA SNEAKERS; HEARTS ON FIRE NECKLACE

"Then I get divorced and four of my best friends get pregnant—all four. I was like, 'Am I jealous? Why am I feeling this way?'"

No one would have blamed her had she found new BFFs in a Costco-size carton of ice cream, but Kaley refused to give in to the cliché. She threw on her

most inspirational tees (think "100 Percent Good Vibes" and "Be Kind Always") and sought comfort from her favourite group-fitness classes. Kaley swears by yoga—particularly the CorePower programme and its Yoga Sculpt class, a 60-minute sweat-a-thon that combines cardio, weight-training and flow (for her exact workout, see page 36). "I'm not as much into the meditating," she confesses of the traditional mat practice. "I'm not there to sit and have 'a moment.' When I found CorePower Yoga [in 2013], and it's a million degrees in there"—make that 31°C to 40°C—"in my head, I've lost 4.5kg after every class."

Indeed, fat grammes weren't the only things being shed. "I've cried numerous times in yoga. The best part is I'm sweating so bad no one can tell." Also on her five-day-a-week workout schedule: trips to SoulCycle, with its cathartic, push-you-to-the-limit rides and emo playlists. "It's so dark, you can cry in there too," she says of the candlelit studios. "Everyone's going through stuff in their lives, every single person."

A HEALING SPACE

On weekends she sought solitude at her ranch in Simi Valley, California, where she'd spend the day riding miles of trails on one of her seven horses. Not only was it good for maintaining her abs ("You're literally tightening them every second you're trying to stay in the saddle"), but it gave her the time and space to rebuild. "For

a month straight, I would talk to my horse and just bawl. Finally I went out and the crying didn't come. I was like, 'I think I actually got through this.'"

The divorce was finalised April last year, and while the worst of the pain had receded, Kaley was left with enough wariness and doubt to confess to friends, family and even the press that it made her wonder: *Will I ever marry again? Will I love again?* "Then I knocked into Karl—literally, we bumped arms at a horse show six months ago, and we each said, 'Oh, I'm sorry'—and everything changed. I looked at him, and he looked at me..."

The 26-year-old son of Scott Cook, founder of the tax software firm Intuit, was there as a participant, and they quickly discovered that they both have a lifelong love of riding (he makes a career of it, and she competes too—under an alias). They also share the same initials ("KC squared!") and—okay, kinda kismet—but they practically have the same surnames. "Cuoco means 'cook' in Italian," she explains. "Growing up, my family always used 'Cook' when we made reservations or anything, because no one could spell Cuoco. I even went by the name Kaley Cook sometimes." Hence her Instagram handle, @NormanCook, named after one of her dogs. "I had to explain that! Karl thought I was crazy. I was like, 'No, I've had that for years!'"

These days, the couple spends almost every weekend together, including the one that's 60 minutes away from starting. "I've spoken to him 47 times today: 'I'll see you in six hours!' 'I'll see you in five!'" Their plans? "Hiding out for the next four days, riding horses and cooking every night—that is, like, chills!"

MOVING ON, AND UP

If Kaley has her way, that scenario—the horses, the cooking—will eventually be her life 24/7. (Plus, parenthood: “I’m meant to be a mum,” she says.) With *The Big Bang Theory* in its 10th season, there’s speculation that this year could be its last. But the woman who plays Penny Hofstadter predicts (and hopes) there’ll be two more. Then, she says, “I can’t see myself doing television again,” though she hasn’t decided what, professionally, might take its place.

For Kaley, nothing can compare with working on *Big Bang* or the show that she says changed her life: ABC’s *8 Simple Rules*, which ran from 2002 to 2005. Kaley was 16 when she landed her breakout role, playing the daughter of the late John Ritter until his sudden death following a day on set in 2003. “I think about John every day,” she says. “He’s there through everything.”

So are her parents, who she credits with teaching her that the key to happiness is having many passions. “When I was younger, I had riding lessons, art class, auditions. Nothing was too disappointing. How do you make a kid understand losing an acting job at eight? It didn’t matter—I was having sleepovers with friends and tennis lessons and dogs and responsibilities. It’s the same for me today. I don’t put all my eggs in one basket.”

With her folks approaching their 38th wedding anniversary, Kaley says she’s coming around to believing in “the sanctity of marriage” again. She’s even thinking about retying the knot. “Absolutely!” she says—maybe even “by the time this [issue of *Women’s Health*] comes out. You never know!”

HOT TIPS FOR HOT YOGA

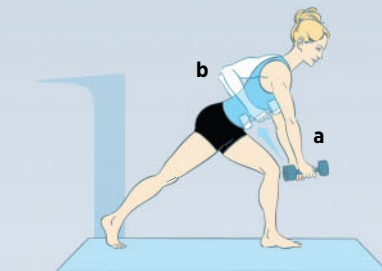
Ms. Cuoco learned these gems the hard way.

1. LOSE THE SHIRT. “Just wear shorts and a sports bra—you’re going to get drenched.”

2. DRINK LIKE A CAMEL. “You sweat out so much fluid during the class, you should bring two water bottles.”

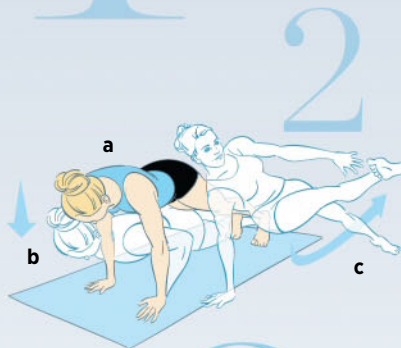
3. DON’T SKIMP ON TOWELS. “Use a cloth mat cover so you don’t slip, and bring two hand towels and a beach towel for class.”

NAMASTE LIKE KALEY Get toned with these moves—a flow that Kaley swears by—from Amy Opielowski, CorePower Yoga programme manager. Grab dumbbells and try it three times a week, completing the sequence once or more.



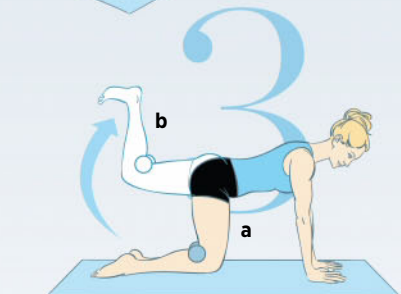
« CRESCENT LUNGE ROW

From downward dog, inhale as you lift your left leg high, then exhale as you step your left foot between your hands into a low lunge; grab weights from the top of your mat, arms extended (a). Keeping your left knee directly over your ankle, inhale and hinge your torso forward, then exhale as you pull the weights to both sides of your rib cage (b). Inhale and lower the weights until your arms are fully extended. That’s one rep; do 20, then reverse the movement to return to downward dog. Repeat with your other leg forward.



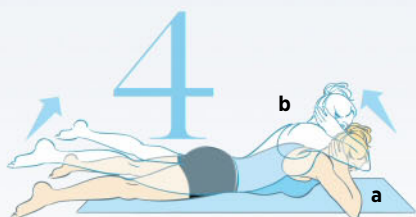
« PUSHUP FALLING TRIANGLE

From downward dog, shift forward to high plank pose, feet hip-width apart, and roll your weights off to the side of your mat (a). Inhale as you bend your elbows to 90 degrees and lower into a pushup (b), then exhale as you return to plank. Inhale, then exhale as you thread your right leg under your body and extend it out toward the left, tapping your left hand to your right toes (c). Reverse the movement to return to plank, and repeat on the other side. That’s one rep; continue alternating for four reps.



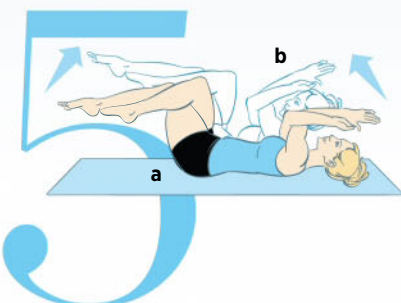
« WEIGHTED TABLETOP GLUTE PRESS

From high plank, with your hands under your shoulders, lower your knees to the floor under your hips (tabletop position). Place one weight behind your right knee (a). With your back flat and elbows softly bent, raise your right heel toward the ceiling, keeping your foot flexed and knee bent to hold the weight in place (b). Lower back to start; that’s one rep. Do 20, then switch sides and repeat. Complete two sets.



« LOCUST VARIATION

From tabletop position, lie facedown with your legs extended and bring your hands next to your ears, elbows bent and out to the sides (a). Keeping your neck long and shoulders relaxed, pull your shoulder blades together and squeeze your glutes as you lift your arms and legs off the floor (b). Pause, then lower to return to start. That’s one rep; do 15 to 20. Complete two sets.



« EAGLE CRUNCH

Take a seat on the mat, then lie down on your back. Bend your arms to 90 degrees and raise your left arm over your right in front of your body; bend your knees to 90 degrees and place your right leg over your left, tucking your right foot behind your left calf (a). As you exhale, lift your elbows and knees toward each other over your torso, keeping your lower back on the mat (b). Lower to return to start; that’s one rep. Do 20, then switch sides, raising your right arm over your left and your left leg over your right. Complete two sets. ■

RIP, Dreadmill

The treadmill is used to you walking all over it. And that's precisely the problem, humans! Make it your platform for intervals, circuits, and strength training, and suddenly, the conveyer belt to nowhere is taking you straight to Cal-Torchin' Town.

By Marissa Gainsburg

Bashing the treadmill for being boring has become so cliché, we're, well, bored. Then experts woke our tushes up: The problem isn't the machine, it's you. Or more pointedly, what you're doing on it. "Most of us perform the same thing over and over—a routine walk, jog or run—which will help maintain your fitness but not exactly transform it," says Alexia Clark, a personal trainer in Scottsdale, Arizona. "More important, you're missing the psychological stimulus too." The mentality and attitude you hold when you approach the 'mill has a direct correlation to your results on it: Go into your workout dreading it and you're probably going to plod along. On the other hand, there are plenty of people—real live people, we swear!—who embrace their time on the belt to up their speed, strength and overall fitness.

Research concurs, continuing to show that training on the treadmill can help increase your lower-body strength (props to the incline), improve your aerobic endurance, boost your balance, and, if you're a runner, produce a more consistent stride that's easier on your joints. These three fresh workouts, all clocking in under 30 minutes, will reshape your bod and ditch the lame-o nickname up top for good.

Melt Mega Calories

To make those three words happen, you need one thing: To get your heart rate up, up, up! But there's an art to doing so without over-exhausting yourself in the process. "The higher inclines in the beginning pump your heart rate so you start burning more calories quickly, but the moderate speed here prevents too much lactic acid buildup, which allows you to run longer," says Olympic runner John Henwood, a coach at New York City's Mile High Run Club. Then, bringing the incline back down for all-out sprints on the back half of this plan acts almost like a metabolic finisher: Since your body is warmed up and the flatter surface will feel "easier," you can pick up the pace to fully max your muscles and zap more cals long after you've stepped off the machine.

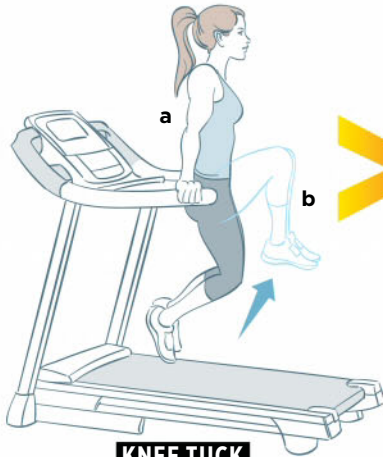
TIME	WORKOUT
0-5 min	Warm up (easy jog)
5:00-5:45	Acceleration (10km pace)
5:45-6:30	Recovery (easy jog)
6:30-7:15	Acceleration (5km pace)
7:15-8:00	Recovery (easy jog)
8:00-9:00	5% incline (6.5 out of 10 effort)
9:00-10:00	6% Incline (7.5 out of 10 effort)
10:00-11:00	1% Incline (8.5 out of 10 effort)
11:00-12:00	Recovery (walk or jog)
12:00-13:00	5% Incline (6.5 out of 10 effort)
13:00-14:00	6% Incline (7.5 out of 10 effort)
14:00-15:00	1% Incline (8.5 out of 10 effort)
15:00-17:00	Recovery (walk or jog)
17:00-18:00	Sprint (10 out of 10 effort)
18:00-19:00	Recovery (walk or jog)
19:00-20:00	Sprint (10 out of 10 effort)
20:00-21:00	Recovery (walk or jog)
21:00-22:00	Sprint (10 out of 10 effort)
22:00-24:00	Recovery (walk or jog)

ACE THE EFFORT SCALE

How do you know if you're hitting the right intensity in these intervals? In general, 6.5 to 7.5 should be a pace that takes focus to maintain but doesn't leave you breathless, while 8.5 should make it tough to talk. Ten is, no joke, everything you've got.

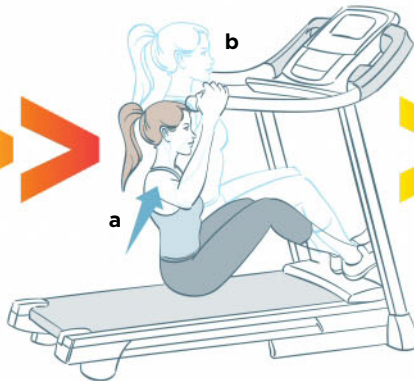
Sculpt Abs and Arms

Treadmill = a personal mini gym? Why, yes, this piece of cardio is pretty damn versatile. Take this clever treadmill-based strength circuit designed by Clark, which uses the side handles of the machine to target two areas your run workout doesn't—your upper body and abs. It's efficiency in its finest form: You get a two-for-one workout that will help raise your heart rate, improve your posture and build lean muscle from head to toe, all in one spot and without other equipment. Just do these three moves at the start and finish of your regularly scheduled trot. Complete as many reps of the first exercise as you can in 40 seconds, rest for 20 seconds, then move on to the next. Repeat for three total sets.



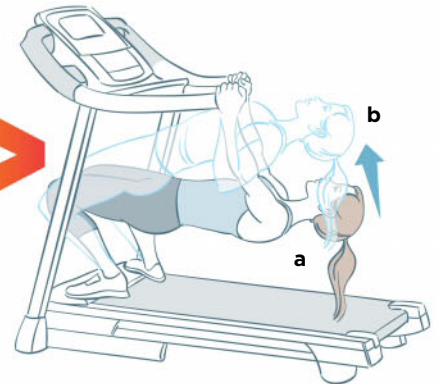
KNEE TUCK

Stand facing away from the treadmill dashboard, then grasp the handles to lift your feet off the belt (a). Keeping your arms straight, engage your core to pull your knees up to your chest (b). Reverse the movement to return to start. That's one rep.



LAT PULLUP

Start in a seated position on the belt, knees bent and grab the handles above you so your hands are in line with your shoulders (a). Engage your lats as you pull your body off the ground, keeping your chest tall (b). Reverse the movement to return to start. That's one rep.






INVERTED ROW

Lie down on the belt, knees bent and grab the handles to lift your torso into a hanging bridge position (a). Keep your hips up and core tight as you pull your chest up toward the handles, squeezing your shoulder blades (b). Reverse the movement to return to start. That's one rep.

Build Power

It's not just important in the weight room: The mash-up of speed + force (aka power) can help improve how you feel and perform in literally any workout. (And if you're a runner, here's a bonus: Studies show it can help you nab a new PR at your next race!) This circuit mixes up the monotony of traditional intervals by integrating lower-body strength moves like walking lunges and side shuffles—that can be done without hopping off the machine. "This combination forces your 'run muscles'—glutes, hamstrings, quads and hip flexors—to fight through a greater level of fatigue and work harder to maintain the same run pace from start to finish, which helps develop muscular power," says David Siik, national manager and creator of Precision Running at Equinox.

THE CIRCUIT		EACH ROUND	
 Run (2 minutes) 1 min: 5–7 mph (run) 1 min: 3–4 mph (recovery)	 Strength (90 seconds) Lateral Shuffle (both sides) or Walking Squat (both sides) or Walking Lunge (both sides) or High Knees (both sides)	 3–4 rounds	1) Add 1% to your incline 2) Perform a different strength exercise

NEED MORE PROOF?

Words of wisdom from **Alysia Montaño**—middle-distance runner, 2012 Olympian, Asics elite athlete, absolute lover of the treadmill

"When people look at the human hamster wheel, they think about seeing the same spot on the wall and the sterile surroundings as the minutes and miles tick by. But I love the treadmill. **I can set a pace—literally, I have to push the button!**—to help clear my mind and create a smooth tempo-based run, with **fewer distractions** than I inevitably hit outside. Once I set that pace, there's no slowing down—it automatically becomes a goal to stick with it or, even better, increase it. That, I believe, is the **key to improvement**, as a runner or just someone working on her fitness." ■



WH EVENTS



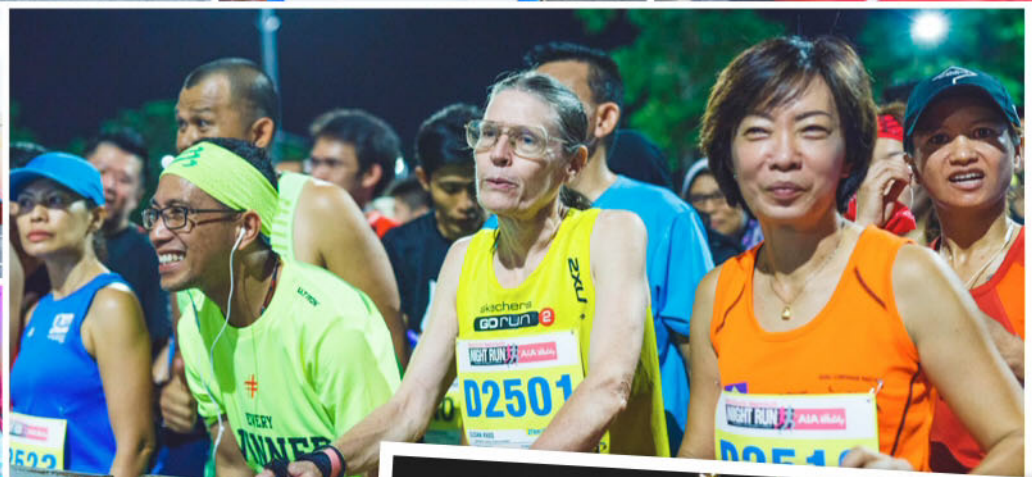
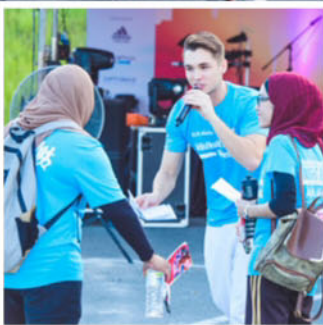
Men's Health Women's Health Night Run by AIA Vitality

Fresh off its successes in Penang and Putrajaya, the Men's Health Women's Health Night Run by AIA Vitality series (#MHWNightRun) ended on a high note at Puteri Harbour, Johor, on 7 January 2017. Aimed to help Malaysians lead healthier, longer and better lives, the third installment of #MHWNightRun saw a fantastic turnout of more than 5,000 runners eager to test their limits.

The event didn't just offer health enthusiasts an opportunity to participate the race's various categories—everyone also got to join in the Race Village's festivities with live music and food trucks.



7 JANUARY 2017 / PUTERI HARBOUR, JOHOR



WH EVENTS



7 JANUARY 2017 / PUTERI HARBOUR, JOHOR



In addition to AIA Vitality, #MWHNightRun was sponsored by Ultron, Petron, Fitness First, Adidas, Optimax, Philips, Appeton, Tender Soft, Lucozade, Clear, Grab, Puteri Harbour, Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour, UEM Sunrise and Karta.

Watch out for the Putrajaya leg of MWHNightRun in 2017! Stay tuned to www.womens-health.com.my and our social media platforms for more details.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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F
 Fitness First

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SUPPORTED BY

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Puteri Harbour **UEM Sunrise**

WH EVENTS



Looking Back at the #MHWNightRun 2016/17

What a year it's been! The Men's Health Women's Health Night Run by AIA Vitality saw more than 26,000 participants in Penang, Putrajaya and Johor. We saw runners from all walks of life and from all ages take part in the largest night run series in Malaysia. Whether they came to break their Personal Best records in the 5km, 12km or 21km events, or to have fun in our Race Village, the smiles on everybody's faces told stories and created memories we at Men's Health will always hold dear in our hearts.

We'd like to especially thank AIA Vitality for working with us to inspire Malaysians to live fit, active and healthy lifestyles.





And our sincerest gratitude to all of our sponsors and partners: Ultron, Petron, Adidas, GoPro, Optimax, Fitness First, Appeton, Philips, Tendersoft, Clear, Lucozade, Traders Hotel, Hotel Jen Penang, Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour, Grab, BSEEP, Halex Group, Otterbox, UNDP, Tropicana City Mall, Men's Biore, GEF, Bros, Life Juice, Asian Tigers, Puteri Harbour, UEM Sunrise, Queensbay Mall and Timeout KL.

See you under the stars soon!

THREE QUICK QUESTIONS WITH EDAN SYAH, MALAYSIA'S FASTEST MARATHON RUNNER

HOW DO YOU ADAPT YOUR RACE-DAY PREPARATIONS TO BE READY FOR AN 8PM FLAG-OFF?

I adapt quite well to night races as I'm a "citizen runner" – because I have a day job, my training usually starts after 8pm till late. For the Johor event, I had a good nap and an early dinner before getting ready for flag-off.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF RUNNING AT NIGHT?

There are pros and cons. Some don't do too well for night races because of the day stress that hits them in the evening. If a runner doesn't acclimatise to night-running, it will be tough for the body to adapt immediately. Nights are usually more humid than mornings. But the advantage of night runs is that there is no sunshine and it gets cooler into the night.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST ADVICE TO BEGINNERS?

Night runs are great options for citizen runners. Prepare well for each race by signing up early, marking your calendar, and following a structured training program towards the event day. Also, I recommend a measuring tool for your body – such as a heart rate monitor – to train smartly and safely.

What's Your Body's True Age?

If you treat yourself right, you can trick your physique into acting 10 years younger than it is. But first, see how you stack up.

By Jane Di Leo

Most people have two ages: A birth age and a body age. In other words, your body can look and function like that of a significantly younger or older person, depending on how hard you've been living. "Ideally, your body age should be the same as—or less than—your chronological age," says Dr Sharonne N Hayes, director of the Women's Heart Clinic at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

We teamed up with Polar, the company that pioneered body-age testing, to create the following quiz. Use this at-home audit (which should be performed quarterly) to calculate your body's true age, then follow our strategies for turning back your physical clock.

Your Body-Age Calculator

PART 1

Answer each line sequentially, adding or subtracting from your age based on your results. Then proceed to Part 2.

1. Write in your current age.

Your age: _____

2. Divide your hip measurement (in inches) by your waist measurement (in centimetres).

- ☐ Less than .2cm _____ +4 years
☐ .2cm or higher _____ Do nothing

New age: _____



3. Place the first two fingers of your right hand on the inside of your left wrist just below your thumb. Count the number of beats for 10 seconds, then multiply that number by 6.

- ☐ 54 to 59 _____ -4 years
☐ 60 to 64 _____ -2 years
☐ 65 to 72 _____ -1 year
☐ 73 to 76 _____ +2 years
☐ 77 to 82+ _____ +4 years

New age: _____

4. Sit on the floor with your back straight, legs together and arms out in front of you at shoulder level. Mark on the floor (beside your legs) the point directly below your fingertips, then slowly reach forward, keeping your legs straight. Mark where your fingertips reach, then measure the distance between the two marks (in centimetres).

- ☐ 0 to 25 _____ +3 years
☐ 25.1 to 38 _____ +2 years
☐ 38.1 to 40 _____ -2 years
☐ 41 to 48 _____ -3 years

New age: _____

5. Do as many modified pushups (on your knees) as you can without stopping, keeping your body in a straight line and lowering your chest within 10cm of the floor.

- ☐ 0 to 4 reps _____ +2 years
☐ 5 to 24 reps _____ +1 year
☐ 25 to 39 reps _____ -1 year
☐ 40+ reps _____ -2 years

New age: _____

6. Lean against a wall with your heels about 60cm away from it, feet shoulder-width apart, arms extended in front of you at shoulder level. Slide down until your thighs are parallel to the ground, keeping your heels on the floor, and hold for as long as possible. Time yourself (in seconds).

- ☐ 0 to 30 _____ +2 years
☐ 31 to 60 _____ +1 year
☐ 61 to 90 _____ -1 year
☐ 91+ _____ -2 years

New age: _____

Adjusted Age (Part 1): _____

PART 2

Fill in your answers, then add up the points and see your results.

A. I typically eat _____ times a day (including snacks):

- ☐ Two = 1 ☐ Four = 3
☐ Three = 2 ☐ Five = 4



B. I eat high-fat or fried snacks ____:

- ☐ Regularly (7 or more times a week) = 1
☐ Sometimes (4 to 6 times a week) = 2
☐ Rarely (0 to 3 times a week) = 3
☐ Never = 4



C. I eat meals or snacks that include fruits or vegetables ____:

- ☐ Never = 1
☐ Rarely (1 to 5 times a week) = 2
☐ Sometimes (6 to 9 times a week) = 3
☐ Regularly (10 or more times a week) = 4



D. I ____ avoid processed foods that contain trans fat, saturated fat, and large amounts of sodium, nitrates and sugar:

- ☐ Never = 1
☐ Rarely (it doesn't alter my buying or eating habits) = 2
☐ Sometimes (I try to buy and eat the right things, but sometimes I slip) = 3
☐ Almost always (I purposely avoid buying or eating foods that contain these things) = 4

Results:

0 to 9 points = +3 years
 10 to 12 points = +2 years
 13 to 15 points = -2 years
 16 to 17 points = -3 years

Final Age (add/subtract results to your age from Part 1): _____

PART 3: The Results

→ I'm older than my actual age...

The silver lining: Small tweaks will make a big difference.

Move your butt! Inactivity can raise your resting heart rate over time, putting you at greater risk for heart disease. The right exercise plan can decrease it. "The main thing is to get your body moving for longer periods of time," says Kadi Stine, head personal trainer at Eden Prairie Life Time Athletic Club in Minneapolis, "even if that means just walking at a brisk pace." Add 30 to 45 minutes of any type of cardio to your routine at least three times a week.

Stretch often. In addition to increasing your range of motion and reducing muscle tension, limbering up can boost circulation and improve blood vessel function. Evidence suggests that stretching may help the inner linings of your blood vessels to produce nitric oxide, which causes the vessels to relax, increasing blood flow and reducing risk of blood clots, says Cedric Bryant, PhD, chief science officer at the American Council on Exercise. This triggers a series of rejuvenating events, helping your muscles and organs operate with less stress on your body (read: It slows premature ageing). Start your morning with three to five simple stretches—such as side stretches and toe touches—holding each for 30 seconds followed by 30 seconds of rest.

Around age 25, muscle cells begin to decrease steadily in number and size.



→ I'm the same as my actual age...

Peel off a few years by adopting these changes.

Maintain muscle. "Around age 25, muscle cells begin to decrease steadily in number and size," says Sandra L. Reynolds, PhD, an associate professor at the University of South Florida School of Aging Studies. Women tend to lose more type-II (strength oriented) muscle fibres than type-I (endurance oriented), so resistance training is key for maintaining and restoring muscle mass. Up to three days a week, do a strength workout (two or three sets of at least six moves), paying attention to your lower half: Muscle atrophy is more significant there than in your upper body.

Fight ageing with food. "Antioxidants slow the decay of your body's DNA end caps, called telomeres, which has been linked with a reduction in physiological aging," says Ken Kambis, PhD, president of the Foundation for Ageing Studies and Exercise Science Research. Foods such as berries, nuts and brewed coffee are packed with them, but a study found that ground cloves are the winner: Just half a teaspoon has more antioxidants than half a cup of blueberries or cranberries. Sprinkle ground cloves into applesauce or your morning cup of coffee.

→ I'm younger than my actual age...

Kudos. Stay on track with these tips.

Push your heart harder. High-intensity intervals decrease your resting heart rate and improve how your body burns calories, says Stine. Three times a week, follow this interval workout, using the cardio of your choice (eg, running, swimming or cycling): After a five-minute warm-up, speed up for 30 seconds (an effort of eight on a scale of one to 10), then recover for two minutes (five out of 10) for two minutes. Continue repeating this pattern, working your way up to a 30-minute session.

Watch your waist. "When adults gain weight, the biggest concern isn't the number of kilos but where those kilos go," says Reynolds. Adding weight to your waistline increases your risk of diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, certain types of cancer and premature death. Cut your risk by swapping refined carbs (which trigger a series of responses that can cause fat to settle in your middle more easily) for whole-grain options. A study in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that adding whole grains helped trim extra fat from the waistlines of obese subjects. ■

15

MINUTE WORKOUT

EXERCISE YOUR POWER

Work twice the muscles in half the time with a single weight-training tweak.

Are you hitting your recommended allowance of fibre... at the gym? Strength training activates the largest muscle fibres in your body, but *power* training “triggers your smaller, fast-twitch (or type II) muscle fibres,” says certified strength and conditioning specialist Wil Fleming, owner of Force Fitness and Performance in Bloomington, Indiana. The latter helps get you in peak shape by burning the maximum cals for each move.

The one and *only* way to turn these suckers on? By adding explosive movements (say, a jump) to some of your go-to toning exercises. Power training will also help you move and pivot more efficiently, “whether it’s the final kick in your weekend 5km or jumping to grab the monkey bars at the playground with your kids,” says Fleming.

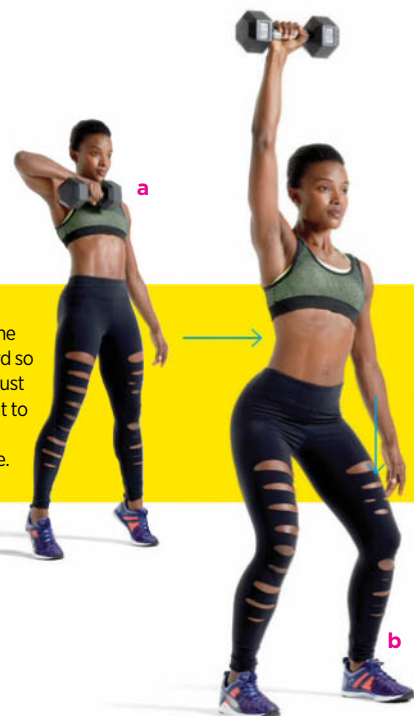
Newbie bonus: This routine won’t up your injury risk like, say, a massive box jump would. Twice a week, complete the following circuit. Starting with the first two exercises, perform each as instructed, resting 40 seconds in between. Repeat two or three times; then rest up to two minutes; continue to the final two moves and repeat the pattern.

—Marissa Gainsburg

1

Dumbbell Single-Arm Hang Snatch

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, a dumbbell in one hand. With a flat back and slightly bent knees, hinge forward so the weight is between your knees. Extend your legs and thrust your hips forward as you bend your elbow to pull the weight to your shoulder (a), then punch it overhead (b). Lower the weight to return to start. That’s one rep; do five on each side.



2

Dumbbell Split Jump

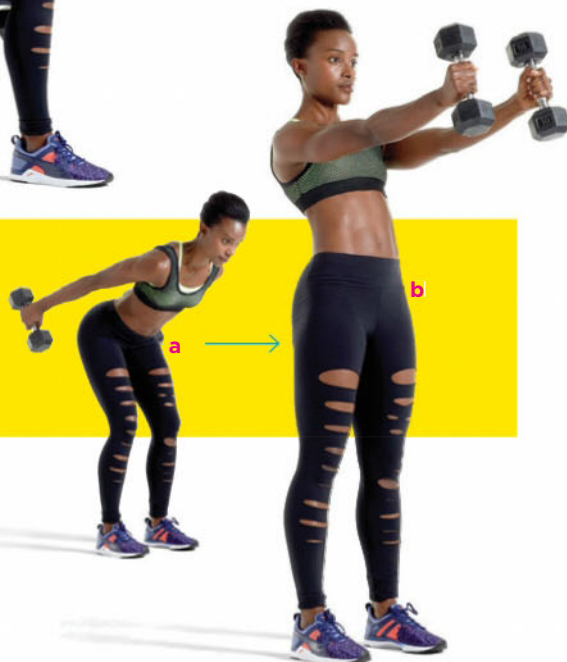


Holding a pair of dumbbells, step your left foot two to three feet forward and bend both knees to lower into a lunge, chest tall and core engaged (a). In one motion, extend both legs to jump into the air, switching legs (b) to land with your right foot forward and lowering immediately into a lunge (c). That’s one rep; do 16.

3

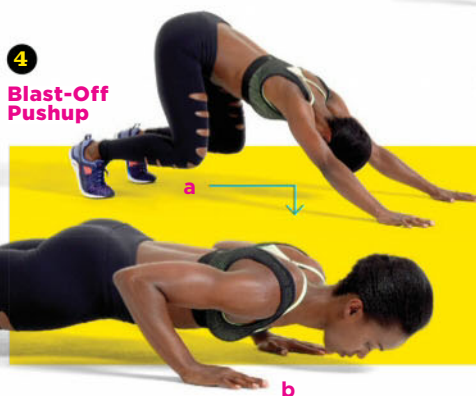
Dumbbell Skier Swing

Stand holding dumbbells, your feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent. Hinge forward to bring the weights behind you (a). Thrust your hips forward and squeeze your glutes, swinging the weights to chest height (b). Reverse the swing to return to start. That’s one rep; do 10.



4

Blast-Off Pushup



Start in a pushup position, then bend your knees and raise your hips behind you, keeping your arms straight and back flat (a). Quickly push through your toes to move your body forward, bending your elbows to lower into a pushup (b). Reverse the movement to return to start. That’s one rep; do 10.



WORKOUT TRYOUT:

The Boys Are *En Pointe*

Okay, not literally, but a few of the fittest guys in Malaysia did find out what it takes to venture into the deceptively difficult world of ballet.

By June See

For this issue's Workout Tryout, we decided to get the strongest dudes that we know to... do a little dance, to put it very lightly. Cassandra Ong, resident ballet expert at Fitmosphere Asia put them to the test, with *balancés* and ballet walks and turns to *La La Land*'s catchy soundtrack. Here's how it went.



AIDI AMIN,
Head Coach at District 13

EXPECTATIONS: "I'm going to try and see whether I can perform gracefully. Ballet involves different

biomechanics to Crossfit because of the movements involved. In Crossfit, we work with weights, but I think ballet is more about trying to hold certain positions so it uses more core strength. Being out of your comfort zone is always fun—it keeps you on your toes."

CONCERNS: "Breaking some nails and toes (laughs). Of course, I'm expecting it to be hard, because I'm going in without any idea of what is expected of me. Also, my body will have to adjust to new movement standards, and I don't know whether I can perform as to how the trainer wants me to perform."

POST-BALLET THOUGHTS: "It was intense, it was fun, but most importantly, we learned the fundamentals of movement for ballet."

THE HARDEST PART: "Trying to appreciate a different discipline of moving and learning the choreography at the same time."

LESSONS: "Dancing is tough (laughs). Trying to look graceful and maintaining poise is tough. It's like playing poker and trying to hold back a case of diarrhoea. It doesn't look very dynamic, especially with the first few movements, but when you piece it together, the flow is beautiful. It's like weightlifting—the more you make it seem effortless, the more it means you have the right technique. Today made me realise that ballet is all about technique."



Following Cassandra's lead.



Striking a pose.



AARON CHAN,
Avid Cyclist and Mountain Biker

EXPECTATIONS: “I expect a lot of pain in my calves—because we’re going to be on our toes, I guess? I think it’s crazily different to what I usually do, and I’m expecting it to really work things like my small muscle groups and balance. I’m going to

jump into it with an open mind—you need to experience different forms of fitness properly to become a full athlete.”

CONCERNS: “I know I’m probably going to look really funny, but I’m looking forward to seeing how it goes.”

POST-BALLET THOUGHTS: “It was quite tough, because I found out that my coordination isn’t that great (laughs). It was pretty fun though.”

THE HARDEST PART: “The coordination with the music—making sure that you’re on the correct foot to the correct beat. It was difficult, because my body’s not used to holding those poses for so long, and especially because your hips are externally rotated. You need a huge amount of flexibility for ballet. With cycling and mountain biking, everything is very physical and ‘GO, GO, GO!’ With ballet, you have to be very aware of your entire body and be in control of that, which was a new sensation for me.”

LESSONS: “I didn’t realise how much core strength you need, especially when it comes to balance. If you’re on a bicycle, you don’t pedal with two feet at the same time—same with ballet—it’s always about weight transfers, which I think is interesting. I also don’t think ballet is ‘girly’ anymore. It involves a lot of technical ability, which many people don’t realise.

They see fitness as a very physical

sort of thing, but they forget that you really need to be in control of your entire body. It’s these small movements that help you become a fitter human being. This really opened my eyes to how aware we need to be about our body.”



Walking like ballerinas.



JONATHAN WONG,
Co-Owner and Head Coach of Revelation Republic

EXPECTATIONS: “It’s going to be really difficult. It’s going to highlight all the tight places that we have and our lack of flexibility and mobility.”

CONCERNS: “Coordination in general. It’ll be a completely new experience for me—this is very far out of my comfort zone and I would never even have thought about doing ballet if it weren’t for this!”

POST-BALLET THOUGHTS: “It was difficult! It’s hard to learn something and be poised at the same time.” Cassandra makes it look easy, when it’s not—and that’s mastery. I’ve always admired ballet dancers because they have such great strength and mastery of their body weight, which takes years to perfect. So, for us to try and learn it in an hour is impossible. I now have even more respect for what they do.”

THE HARDEST PART: “It’s not like lifting weights where it’s just one motion—going up and down. This requires you to move laterally, to put your body in one position while moving everything else. Rewiring the brain is very difficult.”

LESSONS: “I liked the squatting part [during the warm-up] because it showed us that there isn’t one ‘real’ way to squat. Ballet also showed me that there’s more than one way to get fit and it’s important to find something that you really enjoy and stick to it.”



MATT CHONG,
Head Coach at District 13

EXPECTATIONS: “I’m expecting a lot of squat and hip work with some leg extensions. I’m sure it’s

still going to be highly intensive, but in a different way. It’ll probably work more of my stabilisers. I think it’s going to be fun.”

CONCERNS: “Just that I might break my toes or crack my toenails (laughs). I also have concerns about my flexibility.”

POST-BALLET THOUGHTS:

“It was harder than I expected, because of the coordination and switching between legs—obviously, my rhythm’s a bit off! Doing ballet today forced me to unlearn certain things and learn new patterns of movement.”

THE HARDEST PART: “Memorising the steps, and then trying to do those steps to rhythm. It’s bringing everything together that’s toughest.”

LESSONS: “I should probably do more movement-based exercises that force me to learn other types of movement patterns. It’s a very different kind of moving to what I’m used to—you’re using the entire room as opposed to staying in one spot and doing one exercise—and I don’t normally have to worry about tempo or rhythm.” ■




Point those toes!

Group On!

One is more than the loneliest number—it's potentially the unhealthiest. Time to embrace a pack mentality.

By Jamie Hergenrader



Remember day care? Okay, probably not. How about science fairs? Carpools? Your grade-school soccer team? Chances are, most kid activities you can recall have one thing in common—groups. For good reason: “We are a social species,” says psychologist Tristen Inagaki, PhD, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh. “We have evolved to rely on, to need, other people.”

And not just for basic survival. Romantic relationships aside, having a few supportive pals boosts happiness, and new research in the field of emotional synchrony (aka our social and emotional ties to each other) shows hanging in larger packs—whether it's a 20-person cycling class or a thousands-strong concert—is clutch to mental and physical wellness. We're talking slashed risks for anxiety, heart disease, even cancer. Group hugs, coming right up.

C'mon, Get Happy

Now, let's be clear: Standing in a bathroom line in a stadium during a football match ain't going to score you anything beyond annoyance. "The real benefits happen when people feel a sense of connectedness to, or support from, others," says Laura Richman, PhD, an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University. The perks are even bigger when a crowd—be it 1,000, or 10,000 people—is pulled together by a common purpose (beyond, you know, having to pee).

Just the act of sharing an experience lights up a so-called mirroring system in the brain that fosters feelings of empathy. Those then signal your mind that you're with others who "get you," and *voilà*: Stress levels can fall while "happy hormones" such as dopamine may rise. The process works with friends *and* strangers; hitting a busy movie theatre

solo, for example, still yields a boost. As the room LOLs together, each person's joy can be amplified by that mirroring effect (this, by the way, is why some TV sitcoms have laugh tracks—learn something new every day, don't ya?).

Even sombre gatherings can deliver health boons. One new study of ovarian cancer patients found that those who joined support groups lived nearly a year and a half longer than those who didn't. Spending time together lowered the women's stress levels and calmed their sympathetic nervous systems, which, in turn, slowed tumour growth. (In otherwise healthy people, having less long-term stress cuts risks for a slew of health conditions, including diabetes, depression, cancer and obesity.)

Find Your Tribe

In theory, getting with the gang is easy. In practice, you could face subconscious social roadblocks. "We have built a

culture that says we must stand on our own two feet," says Dr Amy Banks, a psychiatrist at the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Personal goals and success reign, and more people are spending more time alone; about one in four now live on their own, per the US Census Bureau.

But being in a group doesn't mean you have to give up your sense of self. Simply find one to suit your mentality and motivation level. Fearless extroverts can throw themselves into any en masse activity (see "Hive Minds," at right). Horde-averse introverts may be more comfortable grabbing a friend and signing up for a smaller, low-key club (think: A dozen-member cooking class). Still too much? Head online. As long as you're engaged in a virtual community—you post frequently, reply to others, and are respectful—you'll put yourself in a position to reap the benefits of social interaction, says psychologist Karen North, PhD, a professor at the University of Southern California.

In all cases, show up as often as possible. One-off crowds like plays and festivals can momentarily slay stress. But committing to a group venture once a month—or, even better, once a week—might give your well-being and your happiness a permanent lift. As they always say: Strength in numbers. ■

HIVE MINDS

No need to get all BFF—or even talk to a soul—to score group rewards.



SPORTS FANS

First off, studies show they're less likely to suffer from depression. And those who cheer at live games (or from a sports bar stool) thrive on a tight feeling of community.



BELIEVERS

Research shows frequenting religious services or ceremonies can augment your immune system and increase your feeling of social support.



VOLUNTEERS

As few as 100 volunteer hours a year can lead to better health, per research. Giving to others activates the brain's pleasure centre and quashes stress levels.



STUDENTS

Taking a class, whether yoga or pottery, connects you to people learning the same skill. Social support means lower stress.

GOOD ADVICE FOR BAD HANGS

Packed subways. Teeming airports. Public swimming pools. We wouldn't wish 'em on anyone. If you find yourself stuck in one, use these tips to keep your cool.

THIRD-EYE UNWIND

The spot between your brows is a stress-zapping acupressure point. Press it gently for 10 seconds.

SEE AND SAY

Mentally describe a nearby object (eg, a sign) in detail to distract your mind from the mayhem.

AIR GRIEVANCES

Inhale through your nose for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four. Nerves, soothed.



Natrah Amalluddin: "I want to be stronger mentally and physically."

By Amylia Hilda



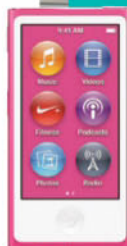
In Natrah's gym kit



"I use this to keep my hair in place under my scarf. I also wear a super-lightweight scarf during my workouts."

Mini headbands, RM29.25, Under Armour

"I always have fruit in my gym bag in case I need a quick sugar fix."



"I make sure that I prepare an hour-long playlist and put it on when changing into my gym clothes to get myself going."

iPod Nano 16GB, RM589, apple.com.my



Natrah Amalluddin's weight-loss journey started on a sad note when her sister passed away from complications due to diabetes. Natrah knew that she had to do something about her own health problems because her life depended on it. However, the 30-year-old's knee and heel pain had a major impact on her confidence levels because it seemed like an insurmountable obstacle to her desire to get fit. "I felt inferior and had no confidence in my ability to make decisions," she says. "I also felt despised for being fat." But Natrah also refused to feel sorry for herself and decided to take matters into her own hands.

The Change

Natrah admits that one of the biggest hurdles that she faced was the negativity from the people around her. "It almost weakened my resolve, but I'm grateful that I am strong mentally, and I think it's important when you want to go through something like this," she adds.

In January 2015, Natrah took her first step by signing up for a slimming programme that she had heard so much about. "I joined *Jom Kurus* with Kevin Zahri," she says. "I saw that many participants had managed to lose weight on the programme, and I learned the basics of planning a balanced diet and an effective exercise routine. We were taught the importance of having the right knowledge to distinguish between good and bad in fitness. The science of dieting is a major pillar

that got me to my ideal weight today." Almost two years have passed since then and Natrah has lost a whopping 63kg.

The Lifestyle

But what makes Natrah's journey special? "I want to be stronger mentally and physically. I was very cynical about getting slim at first," she admits. "People said that I was overly ambitious and, at 120kg, I would never be skinny. But all that negativity just made me want to prove them wrong!"

Natrah now exercises four times a week and rests on the remaining days. She often invites friends to join her, as she feels exercise is more effective when it is enjoyable, especially when it comes to Zumba and hiking. "If you want to lose weight, the most important thing is consistency and discipline," she comments. Food-wise, Natrah keeps it simple by cutting out fast food and snacks, and reducing her intake of sugary and salty food.

The Reward

These days, Natrah's knee and heel pain is a thing of the past. "I feel comfortable and more confident," she says. Her friends ask her for fitness advice now, and that has really boosted her confidence. "I'm an inspiration to all my friends," she adds. "They began by asking for tips on how to slim down, and even for lessons on proper nutrition and exercise. I'm so proud of my achievements!" ■

Find out more about Kevin Zahri's *Jom Kurus* programme by visiting kevinzahri.com.

Ciao Time!

When in Rome... people don't gain weight eating pasta. Now research shows why: Because they make it the Mediterranean way. Three simple ideas to best use your noodle.

By Jill Waldbieser

Recipes by The Rodale Test Kitchen

1/ ADD BEANS

Pasta and legumes are like Dolce & Gabbana, De Niro and Pesci: Better together. In this dish, the beans add protein, fibre and silky-smooth texture to a classic primavera. Their mild flavour pairs nicely with bitter greens.

This pasta with white beans, broccolini and lemon comes together in 15 minutes, tops. Recipe, page 58

Mussels Puttanesca

Recipe, page 58

2 / TOSS IN SOME SEAFOOD

It's not called "Mediterranean" cuisine just 'cause: Fresh seafood is as key to Italian pasta dishes as olives and garlic. Besides netting you some lean protein and essential omega-3s, shellfish are sustainable and super easy to make into a meal—one pan and you're done.

PASTA LA VISTA, BABY

And by “baby,” we mean blood-sugar spikes. Though pasta gets lumped in with all other refined carbs, its impact on your blood sugar is only around half that of white bread. Reduce it even further by buying varieties whose labels list semolina first in the ingredients; it’s a less processed flour than durum. Then cook it *al dente*. The firmer the noodle, the longer the digestion time, so your blood sugar stays steady. Final result: No hunger-inducing glucose roller coaster.

Cacio e Pepe Inverno

Recipe, page 58

3 / LIGHTEN UP YOUR WHITE SAUCE

Fettucine Alfredo isn’t an Italian tradition—it’s considered an American one. Instead of using cream, Italian cooks combine a small amount of strongly flavoured cheese like Pecorino Romano with a bit of starchy pasta water. Fill out the dish with whatever fibre-rich veggies you find in your crisper drawer.

SO SAUCY!

You say tomato—we say butternut squash, spinach and garbanzo beans. These tasty alterna-sauces add a slew of produce and other nutrients to your bowl.*



A SPINACH PESTO
In a food processor, pulse together 225g spinach; 1 Tbsp each olive oil, lemon juice, grated Parmesan and walnuts; and 1 clove garlic until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. **Toss with angel hair or rotini.**

B GARBANZO SAUCE
Cook 1 can chickpeas with 500ml low-sodium broth and 1 bay leaf for 15 minutes. Discard bay leaf and mash beans smooth. Drizzle with 2 Tbsp olive oil, 2 Tbsp lemon juice and 5g chopped parsley. **Toss with mafalda or farfalle.**

C SALSA CRUDA
Chop 3 ripe medium tomatoes, 1 small onion, 1 clove garlic and 55g chopped basil. Season with salt and pepper. Heat 60ml olive oil until sizzling and pour over tomato mixture. **Toss with cavatappi or penne.**

D BUTTERNUT SQUASH "CREAM" SAUCE
Puree 25kg roasted butternut squash with 120ml pasta water. Sprinkle with Pecorino Romano and thin with more pasta water, if needed. **Toss with rigatoni or orecchiette.**

*Sauce recipes make 4 servings each.

RECIPES

Pasta with White Beans, Broccolini and Lemon

Shown on page 55

- 450 g dry whole-wheat chiocciole
- 2 bunches broccolini, chopped
- 1 can white beans (450ml), rinsed and drained
- 60 ml olive oil
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1 tsp red chilli flakes

1 / Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions. Add broccolini during the last 2 minutes; drain pasta and broccolini together.

2 / Toss with white beans, olive oil and lemon juice and zest. Sprinkle with red pepper flakes and salt to taste.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS
Per serving: 457cal, 11g fat (1.5g sat), 74g carbs, 5g sugar, 196mg sodium, 11g fibre, 16g protein

Mussels Puttanesca

Shown on page 56

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 can unsalted diced tomatoes with juices (800ml)
- 75 g green olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 120 ml white wine or water
- 250 g fresh tagliatelle
- 450 g mussels, cleaned

1 / In a deep skillet with a lid, warm olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and shallot and cook until softened, 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, olives and fennel seeds and cook until bubbly, 5 minutes.

2 / Pour in wine and add pasta, stirring to coat with the sauce. Then add mussels, and cover and cook until mussels open, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
Per serving: 340cal, 8g fat (1g sat), 46g carbs, 7g sugar, 390mg sodium, 5g fibre, 15g protein

Cacio e Pepe Inverno

Shown on page 57

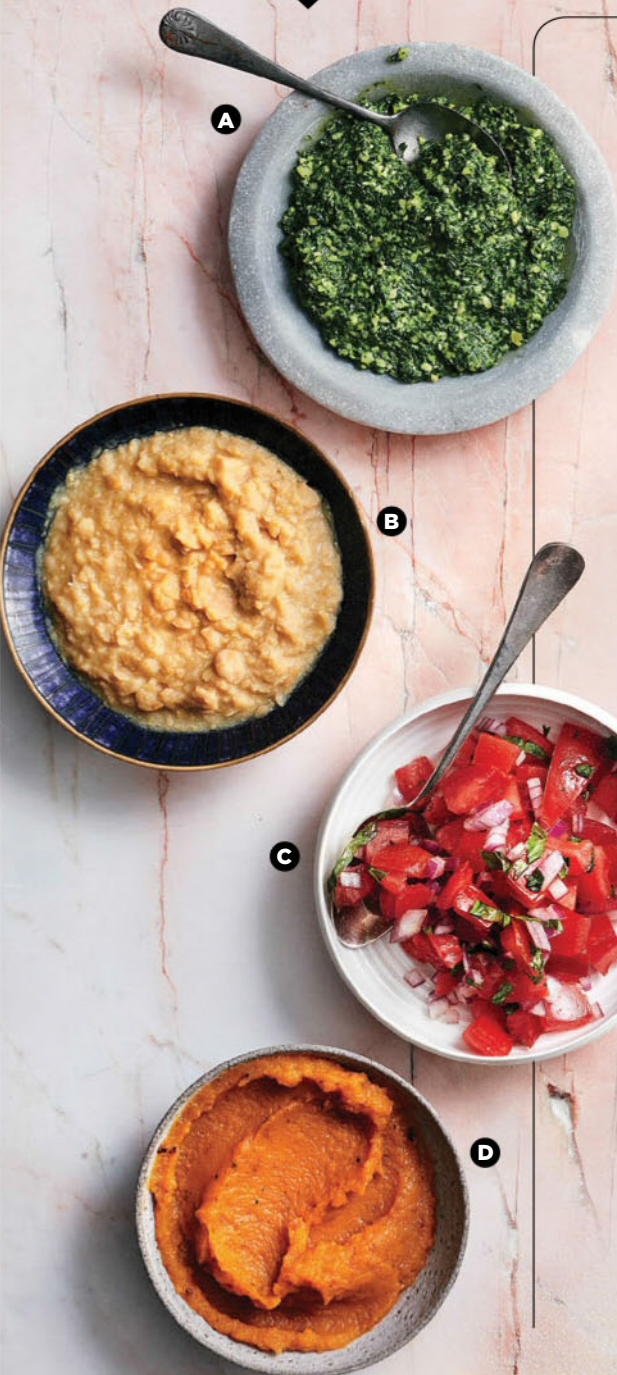
- 230 g dry spaghetti
- 50 g freshly grated Pecorino Romano, divided
- 1½ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 400 g chopped roasted vegetables (carrots, brussels sprouts, leeks), warmed
- 15 g finely chopped parsley

1 / Cook spaghetti according to package directions until *al dente*. Drain, reserving 240ml of the pasta cooking water.

2 / Remove drained pasta from heat and sprinkle with half the cheese and all the black pepper. Pour in 60ml of reserved pasta water and toss.

3 / Add vegetables, half the remaining cheese, and enough reserved pasta water to make a smooth sauce. To serve, divide among 4 bowls and sprinkle with more black pepper and remaining cheese.

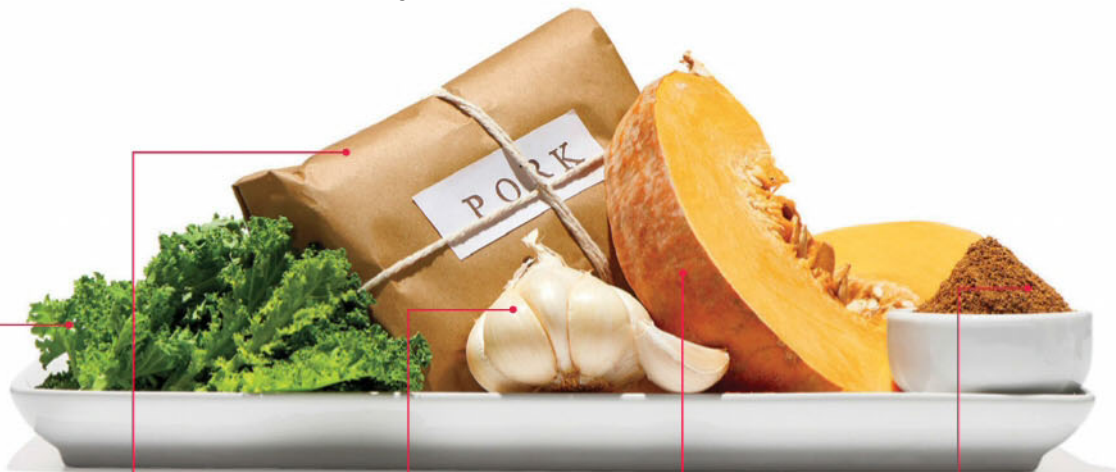
MAKES 4 SERVINGS
Per serving: 316cal, 6g fat (2g sat), 52g carbs, 4g sugar, 650mg sodium, 5g fibre, 13g protein ■



Buy 5, Drop 5

Put these power foods on your plate and eat your way to a smaller size.

By Keri Glassman, RD



Kale

There are plenty of reasons this crucifer was dubbed king of the supergreens, including a scant eight calories per 150g and lots of fibre.

Lean Ground Pork

Researchers found that women who dined on pork as part of a high-protein diet had fewer cravings than those who downed less protein in their meals.

Garlic

Science shows that a clove may stimulate the nervous system to release adrenaline, kick-starting your metabolism to burn extra calories.

Pumpkin

Carve out a rock-hard body! The pulp *and* seeds of this squash have been shown to improve insulin's impact on blood sugar, preventing your body from storing fat.

Garam Masala

This heat-seeking Indian spice blend (cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, bay leaf and cumin are common components) adds cal-free flavour to dishes.



BREAKFAST

Pumpkin Pork Hash

In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook 110g pork for 3 minutes. Add 200g torn kale, 170g grated pumpkin, 2 Tbsp finely chopped onion, 2 minced cloves garlic and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook until kale is tender, 2 minutes.



LUNCH

Kale Quesadillas

In a nonstick skillet, cook 225g diced pumpkin, 3 Tbsp minced onion and 2 minced cloves garlic in 1 tsp olive oil for 8 minutes. Layer 1 kale leaf, 55g mozzarella, and ½ pumpkin mix and top with another kale leaf. Cook until cheese melts. Repeat. Serve with pico de gallo.



SNACK

Pumpkin-Seed Bites

In a bowl, combine 100g shelled pumpkin seeds, 30g dried cranberries, 2 tsp maple syrup, ½ tsp garam masala and a pinch of salt. Dollop 8 spoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet; bake at 150°C until seeds are golden, 20 minutes. Cool before serving.

Makes 4 servings (2 clusters each)



DINNER

Kale Pesto Pasta with Meatballs

Roll 110g ground pork, 1 Tbsp chopped onion, 1 minced clove garlic and ¼ tsp each salt and pepper into 6 meatballs and roast on a greased baking sheet at 218°C for 15 minutes. In a food processor, pulse together 50g packed torn kale leaves; 1 Tbsp each olive oil, raw almonds and lemon juice; and 1 clove garlic until smooth. Toss with 400g cooked whole-wheat rotini and serve with meatballs.

Makes 2 servings



DESSERT

Pumpkin Pie Parfait

In a food processor, combine 110g silken tofu; 65g steamed, mashed and cooled pumpkin; 1 Tbsp maple syrup; ¼ tsp garam masala; and a pinch of salt until smooth. Layer in a glass with 1 crumbled graham cracker. ■

HAVE ON HAND

- ✓ Onions
- ✓ Shredded part-skim mozzarella
- ✓ Store-bought pico de gallo
- ✓ Dried cranberries
- ✓ Maple syrup
- ✓ Raw almonds
- ✓ Fresh lemon juice
- ✓ Whole-wheat rotini
- ✓ Silken tofu
- ✓ Graham crackers

EXTRA PUMPKIN PUREE? SWAP IT FOR UP TO HALF THE OIL IN BAKED GOODS TO CUT CALORIES AND ADD FIBRE.

Hormones Gone Wild

These little devils can be a dieter's worst enemy—or her best friend. Learn to tame the beasts (and drop the weight) with our handy field guide.

By Rachel Melzer Warren, RD



Nearly half of Americans blame hormones for their weight problems, and rightly so. The rising and falling levels of these chemical messengers control your appetite, cravings, where your body stores fat and more—rendering them critical players in diet success (and failure). As scientists make cutting-edge discoveries (is spexin the new leptin?!), we're learning more every day about how these gremlins operate. And once you understand their natural behaviours, you can make them your allies.

Cortisol

aka Ms. Hangry

NATIVE HABITAT: The adrenal glands, located on top of your kidneys.

BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILD: Can go feral in the presence of stress or when you feel threatened—even if only because a jerk cut you off in traffic—providing a burst of energy so you can react. Once the danger has passed, this baddie jacks up your appetite so you can replenish the energy you just expended (even if you didn't expend much at all). Net result? Weight gain, especially around your middle.

TAME IT: First, cut off her main energy supply: Caffeine. As anyone who's ever had a triple-shot *anything* knows, the stimulant can increase cortisol secretion. Then whip her butt with a Funny Or Die video. Laughter—or even just the anticipation of a giggle—can decrease cortisol levels by 39 percent, according to a study from Loma Linda University.

The Chemical Connection

Remember when we all went BPA-free? Studies had identified bisphenol A, a compound used in plastics, as an endocrine disrupter that mimics the effects of oestrogen. It can throw your entire system out of whack, with weight gain as one noted side effect. Well, now it looks like alternatives may not be any better. The chemicals bisphenol F and S (BPF and BPS, respectively), which frequently replace BPA in plastic products, show hormonal effects similar to those caused by BPA, according to a recent study in *Fertility and Sterility*. Bottom line: If you want to be on the safe side, avoid food containers and water bottles made of any type of plastic and don't microwave in it.

Ghrelin

aka Mr. Munchies

NATIVE HABITAT: The gut
BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILD:

Working in tandem with leptin, this hungry fellow regulates appetite. When your stomach nears empty, he bellows to your brain that it's time to chow, stat. After you've munched your lunch, he chills for about three hours. But when you lose weight, your body thinks it's starving and tries to reinstate its "set point" (hey, it doesn't know you're doing this on purpose). So it ramps up ghrelin production, increasing hunger to make you plump back up. One study found overweight adults who lost an average of 30 pounds had 20 percent higher levels of ghrelin than they did prior to slimming.

TAME IT: A full stomach will send ghrelin packing, so load up on bulky but low-calorie foods like produce, popcorn and broth-based soups. And while you're at it, try tucking yourself in a little earlier. Even low levels of sleep deprivation can increase your ghrelin levels and lead to more body-fat storage.



ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (ILLUSTRATIONS)

Testosterone

aka Mr. Mojo

NATIVE HABITAT: The ovaries and adrenal glands

BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILD: This dude is best known for his tendency to help pump up your muscles, your energy, and—rawr!—your sex drive. So when he's AWOL, your muscles (along with your libido) may atrophy, leading to a sluggish metabolism and, bingo, weight gain. He starts to fade beginning in your twenties or when you take certain forms of birth control.

TAME IT: Coax him back to his previous glory with resistance training, such as a barre class or other weight-bearing exercise (aim for a minimum of 30 minutes, three times a week), which revs up your testosterone production. Cutting back on sugar may also help him thrive—research has found eating too much of the sweet stuff can turn off the gene that regulates the amount of active testosterone in your body.

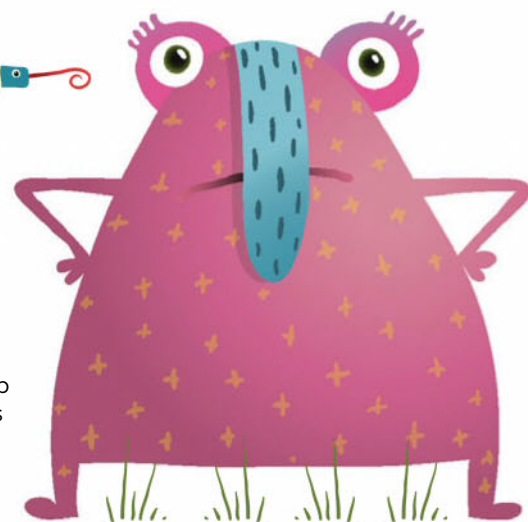
Leptin

aka Ms. Couldn't Eat Another Bite

NATIVE HABITAT: Adipose tissue (fat cells)

BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILD: She normally has your back, regulating appetite by signalling when you're full and should stop eating. But if the fat cells where she hangs out start disappearing—that is, if you successfully lose some weight—she makes herself scarce as well. And when leptin dwindles, you don't get the "Okay you're done now" message, so you keep eating, making this gal one of the main drivers of yo-yo dieting. Lugging around extra kilos for too long can also wear her out and cause her to quit working, a condition known as leptin resistance.

TAME IT: Avoid fad diets that encourage quick weight loss—and the inevitable regain that leads to leptin resistance—and instead take a steady approach to cutting calories. Also, make sure you're getting plenty of zinc; low levels have been linked with decreased leptin output in healthy people, say researchers. Load up on zinc-rich foods such as beans, beef and cashews to keep this heroine hormone happy, and don't rush through meals: Slowing down gives leptin more of a chance to do her thing.



Oestrogen

aka Ms. Temptation

NATIVE HABITAT: The ovaries

BEHAVIOR IN THE WILD: Like her sister sex hormone progesterone, this seductress is responsible for the roller coaster of cravings that accompanies your menstrual cycle. She's a complicated creature: When she's the least active, just before your period starts, you're most susceptible to binge eating. And when she rises to the height of her power, right before ovulation, appetite is suppressed. But paradoxically, if this little lady gets *too* strong she can overpower her sister progesterone, and the resulting condition, called oestrogen dominance, can make weight loss extremely challenging, if not impossible.

TAME IT: To keep her in proper balance, make sure you're getting enough fibre, which binds to oestrogen and moves it out through your bowels so it doesn't go back into circulation. Aim for a kilo of vegetables per day—it sounds like a lot, but a green smoothie, salad and a broccoli-and-pepper stir-fry will ensure you hit your target. ■



This seductress is responsible for the **roller coaster** of cravings that accompanies your **menstrual** cycle.

New Species Discovered! Meet Spexin.

Hundreds of hormones are thought to affect body weight in a minor way, but scientists have recently been zeroing in on spexin as perhaps a bigger player. Low levels of the hormone have been linked to obesity in adults, and it may be key earlier in life as well: Teens who produced the least were over five times more likely to be obese as those who produced the most, suggesting spexin may play a role in who becomes overweight in the first place. Research is ongoing; expect to hear more about this newly identified species soon.

love + life



OH, BONO!
WHATEVER SHALL I DO?!



What Would *You* Do?

When you're faced with a drama-rama decision, don't hit your feeds. It's time to stop outsourcing advice and start tapping the most important counsellor in your life: You.

By Paula Derrow



What do Beyoncé, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and Barb from *Stranger Things* have in common? They've all been summoned on coffee mugs, T-shirts, Pinterest boards and European pillow shams to help guide the masses through nail-biting decisions.

Look, we get it. On the surface, “What would [insert name here] do?” is an amusing cultural trope, the stuff of memes. And yet it reflects a troubling real-life trend: Our tendency to minimise our own instincts and hard-won experience in favour of what the peanut gallery thinks.

Beyond channelling cultural icons, our compulsion to check in with everyone is fuelled by—what else?—social media, experts say. When you can easily crowdsource 878 Facebook pals, what's the harm? But on a physiological level, being hyperconnected to our digital circles has tamped down our decision-making powers. It short-circuits our intuition, which plays a major role in our ability to move conclusively without debating a litany of what-ifs. That sets off a chain reaction: You rely on others more, which saps your confidence, leading to weaker life choices.

Sheesh, right? So we got experts and real women to show you how to harness your internal brain trust and instincts to help you through problems big and small. Barb and Co would be so proud!

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

People were using the phrase “trust your gut” long before research revealed the stunning fact that your gastrointestinal system literally does have a “mind” of its own. It's home to hundreds of millions of nerve cells that send and receive impulses, record encounters and

respond to emotions. When neurotransmitters deliver these impulses and messages to your brain, you experience physiological reactions, like goose bumps or a heavy feeling in the pit of your stomach—aka gut feelings. Scientists have a name for these sensations—somatic markers—and they appear when we face uncertainty.

For instance, say you walk out of an interview telling yourself, “That's the perfect job for me!” But at the same time, your stomach feels knotted. Your gut-brain may be telling you that something about the job is “off,” even while your rational brain is reminding you how good everything looks on paper. Andie Diemer, 28, a freelance photo editor and producer in New York City, faced such a moment when the magazine she was working for laid off her and 50 others in a reorganisation. “My brain was telling me to do the safe thing—to find another full-time job. But something in me was saying to continue with the one freelance client I had scored and see if I could build my own business.”

Whenever she thought about looking for a new job, her heart rate would soar, her stomach would twist, and her

thoughts would swirl and race with anxiety. “Sometimes those kinds of symptoms make me insecure and unproductive, but when I went ahead and committed to freelancing, the feelings faded and I felt confident. I ended up with an amazing career.”

Lots of these gut signals don't even reach conscious thought—but they influence you nonetheless. Reams of studies have documented how subconscious signals help us make better decisions. Take the sign of sweaty palms. In one study, participants in a card game chose from two different decks. It took them about 50 cards to say that one deck was more likely to lead to success than the other, but their palms were sweating in favour of the “good” deck after about 10 cards.

Sweaty palms, of course, can also be a sign of fear or anxiety. Many markers have a dual personality—butterflies can signal a crush on someone or a terror of public speaking; a prickly feeling at the back of the neck can denote excitement or be a marker of danger. Say you're walking in a park at dusk; if you get a “raised hackles” sensation, listen to it, says David Myers, PhD, a professor of social psychology at Hope College. “There's biological wisdom to this,” he explains. “As we evolved, those who could read a person quickly and accurately were more likely to survive and leave descendants.” The body, it knows.

TAP INTO EXPERIENCE

Intuition is powerful—but even more so when it incorporates what you've

learned about the world (and yourself). “There's a huge store of information in the brain that we're not always aware of that's based on our life experiences,” says Joel Pearson, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. Often, what we think of as a gut feeling is actually intuition interacting with expertise—the latter of which we take for granted. “Experience is what allows everyone, from top surgeons to master chess players to mechanics, to have vital hunches and to trust them,” says Myers.

That mash-up is what's at work when you're facing a far-reaching decision, like whether to buy a particular apartment, take a job or end a relationship. You're not making your choice in a vacuum. For instance, imagine walking into an apartment you're thinking of renting and immediately getting goose bumps (the bay windows! The light! I'd be so happy here!). The downsides: It's on a noisy street and the rent is a bit more than you can afford. You want it, but you also sense a creeping anxiety—because deep down, you know you're a light sleeper, not to mention your boss just said they're not doling out raises this year. Your mind's database and your gut are joining forces to give you the full picture.

Elisa Fernández-Arias followed both when, at 26, she left her first full-time job, as well as family and friends, to move to Paris. “I had studied abroad there when I was 20 and always imagined I'd move back someday. Meanwhile, I was waking up in the morning

Turns out, I can live
without you, Bono.



feeling like a big part of me was barely alive," she recalls. She took a spring break trip to Paris, ended up interviewing for and getting a low-wage job that would pay the bills, and went home to pack up. "Most of my friends thought I was crazy. My parents were angry. It was a tough transition, but in the end I found what I was looking for: Myself."

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Getting in touch with—and trusting—your own perceptions is challenging since, as a culture, we lean toward the rational instead of the intuitive. But you can build that intuition muscle.

To give it a workout, first unplug from all devices and sit quietly, as if meditating. Breathe deeply and ask yourself the question you're facing. "You want to get into a neutral place emotionally and let the information come," says Dr Judith Orloff, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and

author of *The Empath's Survival Guide*, coming out in April. Say you're wondering whether the guy you've started seeing is really a match. "Notice how your energy feels when you picture him. Does it go up or down? If down, ask yourself why. Does he drain your energy in some way?" says Orloff. "Or do you feel excited and positive? That's a good sign to have that person in your life." Don't let small flaws throw you (nobody's perfect) or conscious rationales intrude (*My friends love him! He's such a nice guy... even though he's not that exciting. I don't think my parents like him*).

Or try the post-mortem approach and pretend you've already made the decision. How does it feel? Does cutting ties with a needy friend give you a sense of relief? Are you filled with regret now that you gave your two-weeks' notice? Listen to your body as you imagine the scenario. Do your hands start sweating? Does your head ache a bit?

Another strategy, experts say: Sleep on it. Research has shown that Zs let your brain marinate, and you'll make a smarter decision than if you used only conscious thought. And—new-agey trigger warning—don't underestimate the power of the outdoors. "There's a technique called earthing, in which you go barefoot—you're actually sharing the earth's electromagnetic signals," says Orloff. Anything that connects you with nature—trees, grass, a river—helps align you with your intuitive self.

Once you've thoroughly explored your own reactions, it's fine to check in with a close friend or two, or to use your rational mind to make a pros-and-cons list or cast back to similar scenarios. But you'll do so from a better place than if you had rushed out to take an instant poll. After all, why should anyone else's advice be better than your own? Bye, Queen Bey. Hello, Queen Me. ■

BLOCK THAT INSTINCT!

When not to go with your gut

It's the first day of a new job, and you keep feeling queasy. *Oh no!* you think. *I made the wrong decision—I should have stayed where I was!* But certain situations, namely those imbued with fear or anxiety, can throw off your spidey senses. Instead of assuming these are true intuitions, bring rationality to bear: If you've made a job change—or gotten engaged, or moved to another city—go over the reasons you made the decision and give your gut time to settle. Other times science has repeatedly shown that intuition isn't accurate, according to David Myers, PhD:



Buying a lottery ticket



Picking stocks



Discerning whether someone is lying



Predicting job success from an interview



Feeling that the plane you're on will crash

AND JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT...

We imagined how cultural icons (real and fictional) would answer one pertinent Q: What should my motivation this year?



Dr Ravinash Ratnam

25, physician, 2016 *Men's Health* Cover Guy winner

By Amylia Hilda

"The doctor will see you now" isn't really a line that anyone looks forward to hearing, but perhaps not when you have an appointment with Dr Ravinash Ratnam, a physician at Hospital Raja Permaisuri in Ipoh, who greets his patients with a warm smile—and boyish good looks. The 25-year-old is also the winner of 2016's *Men's Health* Cover Guy Search.

So, how has winning the competition changed his life? "The only thing that has changed is that I can reach out to the public even more, in terms of inspiring them," he replies. "There were a lot of messages from the public asking me for fitness tips and I use my Instagram to answer these questions. The most common question that I get is: 'How do you lose weight?' But besides that, I'm still that guy who goes to work at the hospital at 5am and ends the day with a good workout."

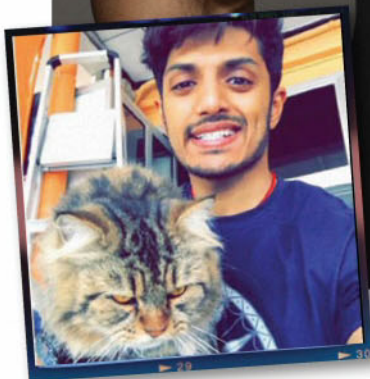
“I decided to make a change, a change where I wanted to be a doctor who practises what he preaches.”

Dr Ravi, who's currently working his way towards becoming a specialist in internal medicine, started getting serious about fitness when he was in his second year at medical school.

“I decided to make a change, a change where I wanted to be a doctor who practises what he preaches,” he recalls. “I started in a small gym in my condominium. I was just an average guy, weighing about 50kg, who was all about the books. The rest, as they say, is history.”

He continues: “The biggest change for me was gaining self-confidence. I also learned to handle life issues better. Working out allows me to release stress. It has given me a more positive outlook on life.”

Needless to say, Dr Ravi hasn't looked back since. His workouts these days are determined by multiple



factors, such as how his body is feeling, stress levels, or even what he's eaten that day—all of which are probably key to getting effective results. There are, however, two major factors that motivate him, which is the drive to get better and the adversities that he faces. “Instead of reacting negatively, I use it as fuel. Pain is fuel,” he asserts.

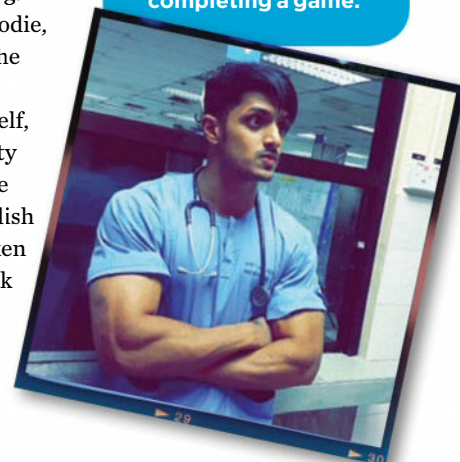
Do doctors practise cheat days too? “That's my ultimate guilty pleasure. I love burgers and pizzas. I love exploring the

city for new gourmet burger joints. I will try my best to sneak in one cheat day a week, just for burgers!” he confesses. “My favourite so far is Fatboy's The Burger Bar. I love big portions and, my god, their portions are big!”

Spoken like a true foodie, but is Dr Ravi handy in the kitchen too? “Not really. I do make meals for myself, but I'm not sure how tasty others will find them,” he demurs. “My signature dish would probably be chicken *varuval*. One day, I'll cook for you guys.” Sounds good, doc! ■

Five fun facts about Dr Ravi

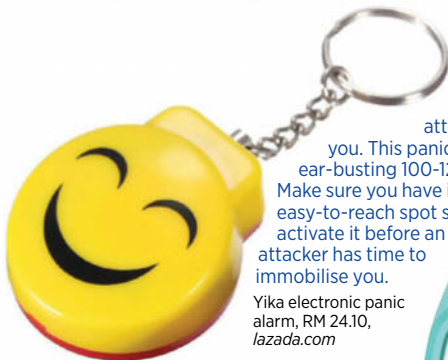
- > Cat lover. “I find them totally adorable.”
- > Diehard Manchester United fan.
- > Massive John Mayer fan. “My favourites are ‘Neon’ and ‘Stop This Train.’”
- > Sucker for romantic comedies. “*Love Actually* is my all-time favourite.”
- > An avid gamer. “The best computer game I've played so far is probably the *Crysis* series. I once spent 18 hours completing a game.”



On Guard

You don't need a black belt to defend yourself when there's danger lurking around the corner. These handy tools and tips will keep you safe when you're on the go.

By Amylia Hilda



PANIC ALARM

Loud noises can help to deter an attacker and attract attention to you. This panic alarm emits an ear-busting 100-120 decibel noise. Make sure you have it in an easy-to-reach spot so you can activate it before an attacker has time to immobilise you. Yika electronic panic alarm, RM 24.10, lazada.com



GPS TRACKING

This nifty gadget can be clipped on to your clothes and works in sync with the Revolar app that alerts your emergency contacts that you might be in danger with a click of a button. It also includes live GPS updates to notify people of your whereabouts. Revolar, RM443.81, amazon.com



ANTI-THEFT BACKPACK

Keep your possessions safe with this anti-theft two-in-one backpack that's slash resistant and has a lock hook. It also comes with a removable anti-theft cross-body pouch.

Pascafe Slingsafe LX350 anti-theft compact backpack, RM499, oribags.com

TACTICAL PEN

A tactical pen can double up as a handy self-defence tool in a hostile environment. This one comes with an LED light for when you're walking alone in poorly lit areas. However, most tactical pens are not TSA approved, so always refer to the airport security breach checklist before packing yours.

LAIX tactical pen with LED light, RM68.80, amazon.com



THINK QUICK, ACT FAST

Self-defence tips from Lilica Vargas, Managing Director and instructor at Brasil Fitness.

1 "Stay alert in places where you know that you might be attacked. Never use your mobile while walking on the street, stick to the inner pavement, and place your purse in front of you at all times."

2 "Any tool that's used without proper training can't be used well, and it might allow the aggressor to use it against you. It depends on the situation—if you are confronted and have no proper training, don't try to be a hero! Your best option is to run away in search of help if possible."

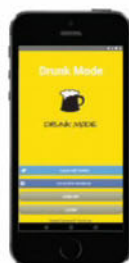
3 "If you need to fend off an attacker, try hitting the eye or throat area, because if you aren't trained, punches to other parts of the body will not be effective at all." ■

Personal Safety Apps



SEND HELP

With a simple interface, this free app allows you to call for help by sending texts to your emergency contacts as well as posting your current location on Facebook.



DRUNK MODE

Party responsibly with this multi-tasking app. There's a friend finder function in case you become separated from your pals. It also helps you get a safe ride home and blocks certain contacts from your phone for a few hours so you don't drunk-call your ex.



RUNGO

Navigate your route as well as get visual and GPS voice navigation. You can also share your planned run with friends so they can keep track of your whereabouts.

Women who WOW

*We celebrate some of the **strongest female voices** in science, arts, culture and sports so women everywhere can stand up and be proud of who we are.*

By Amylia Hilda



PHOTOGRAPH OF CHOO MEI SZE: ANDY KHO

Choo Mei Sze

The Youth Ambassador for the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) was diagnosed with rectal cancer at the age of 27. She now strives to help others embrace life with a motivating web series.

“The thing that fuels me the most is the people who write to me asking for help, or who tell me their stories.

Through my appointment as the Youth Ambassador of NCSM, I’ve started a youth support group (the first in Malaysia) to help young cancer patients and survivors. Speaking to them made me realise that many Malaysians still do not know anything about cancer.”

“I’d like to get more people to speak up and participate in the cancer youth support group. Many young people are afraid or even embarrassed that they have cancer. Also, I hope to host the second season of *An Awakening* web series (that successfully raised RM52,000 in donations for the NCSM) which highlights the amazing stories of cancer patients, survivors and caretakers. My other goal is to grow as a speaker and to write a book.”

“My next ambassadorship, which relates to social media, is *It’s My Life, Why Take a Chance?* with MSD. I hope that it will go viral and raise tons of awareness about early detection, the importance of getting checked and what cancer is.”



Davina Goh

The writer, performer and emcee overcame huge physical and mental obstacles when she participated in an open-sea swimming attempt. Last year, she turned vegan, a decision that has completely changed her outlook on health and wellbeing.

On challenging herself “My participation in the Raleigh Round Island Challenge was an eye-opener because it taught me things that I didn’t expect to learn. It was an 18km swim and kayak around Perhentian Island. My team of four was one of the very few who completed it, and we did it in 12 hours. The can-do attitude of my teammates made it half as difficult as I thought it was going to be. To me, it proved the ability of having positive-minded people around you. I am grateful that I raised over RM23,000 from the challenge to fund NGOs working on marine conservation in the region.”

On turning vegan “My biggest challenge was convincing myself that I could pursue a plant-based lifestyle. For 12 years, my interest in vegetarianism caused a lot of conflict with my parents who believe in eating meat to stay healthy. It took a long journey of self-education and self-confidence to make the decision, and to stick by it. I briefly moved out of the family home in 2010 to prove, not just to my mother, but also to myself that I was serious about becoming a vegetarian. A few months in, my mother made me my first meatless meal at home. It was one of the best days of my life.”

Sport’s Kick A** Stars

Siti Fatimah Husna



The superbike rider is used to winning from a grid of all-male riders and isn’t about to let the haters rain on her parade.

“I don’t think my hijab gets in the way of my racing at all. I know there’s been talk about the way I dress or how my religion gets in

the way of the sport. Those comments are just words that I ignore because, at the end of the day, those people don’t go through what I go through. I wear 6kg to 7kg of protective padding under my overalls and people think it looks obscene. Sometimes, you have to know when to listen and when to turn a deaf ear.”

Syakilla Salni Krishnan



The 25-year-old made history by becoming the first Malaysian to hold the title of world No. 1 in the World Karate Federation (WKF) Karate 1 Premier League Series for the Women’s Kumite below 55kg category. We ask what empowers her to push her limits.

“Karate makes me feel empowered and strong. It’s also a great way to learn self-defence. I love defying the expectations of others who assume that girls can’t

kick butt. Training can be almost unbearable at times—I get sores and bruises, and even bleed sometimes. But the feeling when I’m on the podium leaves me gobsmacked. It makes me realise how strong I can be. I’ve always believed in the saying, ‘If you dare to win, you dare to lose.’ To me, karate is all about going beyond your boundaries and what you think you’re capable of.”

Azuwa Abdullah

Azuwa is the CEO of PRIDE Foundation Malaysia, an NGO that creates awareness on breast cancer and offers support to patients and survivors. She tells us why this cause is so important to her.



"PRIDE focuses on increasing breast cancer awareness and giving support. We want to help as many people as possible. We **empower women** to build their self-esteem and self-confidence. We want to stress that support is crucial. All breast cancer survivors are **fighters**, but the journey will be much more comforting with a family's support, and that's where PRIDE comes in. We **celebrate life** as something to be cherished."

The Public Relations Expert

Ying Nie Ooi

Former journalist Ooi is the Founding Managing Director of PR company, *Commas & Industry*, an agency completely run by women.

The best advice that I've been given

"Mark Vernon, a Church of England priest and writer, wrote: 'Life is not perfected through love, as the romantic fantasy implies, but through love you can find more of life...' It has guided me through my singlehood, and now marriage. It means so much to me that I have it tattooed on my forearm."

On overcoming anxiety "My biggest challenge is anxiety, and because of that, I plan everything to the nth degree. I do everything furiously. I work furiously, I live furiously, and I relax furiously. Sometimes, it works in my favour, but often, all that does is create more reasons to be anxious. It's a relentless and vicious cycle."

Ooi's five golden rules to live by:

- Find a job that you love and you will never work a day in your life.
- Learn to love solace and solitude.
- It's never too late to make new friends.
- Keep those dear to you near to you.
- And, in the words of RuPaul, "If you don't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?"



Dr Mazlan Othman



An astrophysicist and one of the pioneers of Malaysia's space age, Dr Mazlan was the founding director-general of the National Space Agency (ANGKASA). In

1999, she became UN's Officer for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA). Today, she combines her love for science and the arts by organising activities for young artists to merge both disciplines.

On science "Initially, I thought I would enter the arts stream, but my teachers felt that I had other skills that would benefit me in the long run. Of course, I haven't regretted listening to them because I think getting involved in science makes me better able to return to the arts. Science has helped me in that rigour of thinking, and it's ingrained in me. Whether you're looking for a partner in life or a book to read, or when it comes to raising children, all of that comes into force, which is good because it's not just about career, but also everything else in life."

On sticking with what you love "Physics was my first love. Two or three years into my degree, I discovered astrophysics, and suddenly, everything sort of clicked because astrophysics is very philosophical and aesthetical. When you look at any astronomy book, it's all about the beauty and mysteries out there. It was all connected to everything that I wanted to be when I was young."

On failure "In the beginning, I couldn't accept failure, and for the longest time, I would deny that things were going badly. The fear of failure will make you do the wrong things. Now I can tell people that it's okay to fail and admit failure, and move on from that."

On women's rights "You can never really plan, but you can make a choice with your eyes wide open. I feel that women now are more privileged because most institutions are more aware of our needs. Women are at a disadvantage during their reproductive cycle and what institutions should realise is that we have to step back during this time in our lives, and they should do something so that a woman is not at a disadvantage if she decides to have a family. One is to have really good healthcare for the children—from breastfeeding to flexible hours. Those are the things that you need to give women. I always tell women not to fight for the promotion, but to fight for their work-life balance."

Women in the Arts

Women Who Draw

We speak to illustrators Wendy MacNaughton and Julia Rothman of Women Who Draw—a directory for women illustrators of all backgrounds to showcase their portfolios for potential employers—on how they empower women in the creative industry.

Where did the inspiration to launch WWD come from? We noticed that a prominent US magazine only hired four female illustrators out of the 55 illustrated covers they commissioned in 2015. So we created the directory to provide an easy way to find talented professional female illustrators and promote the work of women, women of colour, LBTQ+ women and other minority groups of women illustrators. This way there would be no way any publication could ever say they'd hire more artists in these groups "if only they could find them." The directory format is clean and simple. All you need to do is click on their illustration and you are directed to their portfolio of work.

What are your goals for WWD? We hope Women Who Draw will connect women illustrators with the people who want to hire them. We hope it will help us see more artwork by women on the covers of magazines, in newspapers, on billboards, winning awards, and informing culture and society. We also hope that WWD fosters a sense of community within the illustration world. There are so many women doing great work, and we want to help them and their work get the visibility that they deserve.

What has the feedback been like so far? In the first 24 hours of launching the site, we got over 1,200 submissions. The site crashed and we had to rebuild the whole back end to meet the

demand. Now, we have over 2,000 illustrators on the site, with another 1,000 or so waiting for review. We've heard from many WWD members that they've found jobs through the site, and that many art directors and designers are using it to identify new talent. So it seems to be working.

Why does art mean so much to you? Visuals are powerful. They create empathy, tell stories, and provoke thoughts, feelings and actions. Illustration is experiencing a renaissance right now because of the power of the visual in our media-saturated environment. The content of the visuals matter, who creates the visuals matter. That is why we think it's so important to have a strong representation of all kinds of female voices in illustration. We need to be more visible than ever, especially in the current political climate.

What motivates you? To see a response to your previous questions and getting more kinds of people make artwork for publication. It matters who is making the images. Always ask who is behind the pen. It's incredible to hear that WWD helped someone get their dream gig with a prominent newspaper, or that work they got through WWD helped them quit their job to draw full time.



Wendy
Julia



Sharon Chin

You've probably seen her artwork gracing the walls of the National Art Gallery and Galeri PETRONAS, and even the sidewalks of Kuala Lumpur. Chin is a unique and talented voice who shares her own take on the world through her art.

"Growing up, it was always nature and books. I lost and found myself in those kingdoms, one in the real world and the other in the imagination. In recent years, it's been all the women in my life who inspire me. I see how women work and find even the most mundane aspects of how they go about their lives quite amazing. I'm interested in women in their totality, beyond what's sold to us in our culture, especially women outside gender norms or women who are flawed, broken, complex, aggressive, sometimes cruel, and even vengeful."

The dancer and choreographer is one of the driving forces in the local arts/theatre scene. Despite being diagnosed with scoliosis when she was 12, Suhaili's proven that there's no stopping passion.

"I speak for most artists when it comes to lamenting the inconsistency of support from the government. I also believe that good education and exposing parents to the performing arts will make all the difference to fostering a stronger scene that, in turn, can play an important role in developing the country's economy."

"Always believe in yourself and all that you do."



Poesy Liang



The 41-year-old Taiwanese-Malaysian is an artist, writer, poet, composer, jeweller, humanitarian and cancer survivor.

On her art "At first glance, a large body of my work is whimsical, humorous and, at times, joyful, but twists to each plot tell complex stories in three simplified points—compassion, kindness and empathy—to illustrate that the most beautiful and successful life is one filled with simple acts of kindness. A lot of my stories have poignant points to illustrate that it's not going to be easy to choose kindness. Popular culture is not always kind, and it has blinded the world from connecting with empathy. I want to highlight that these qualities come from a place of power, and not a doormat of weakness upon which people rub their shoes."

"This oil painting named *The Sweetheart* (2014-2015) started as an experiment to work paint with a comb. It took months to dry and I just stared at it every day not sure if I liked it or not. When viewing *The Sweetheart* at certain angles under different lighting, a pair of wings emerges. Somehow, this painting wormed its way into my heart through the dialogues that it brought about from people who saw it for the first time."

"One day, I woke up from a nap in my gallery and found that my cat, Harry Putter, had been playing a wild game of hide and seek around the painting. Somehow, he'd caused the easel to collapse and pierce the centre of the canvas. I discovered the punctured *Sweetheart* at the same time that I read the tragic news of the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting in Paris. I was heartbroken, and that was when I connected strongly with this painting. I had it repaired. If you look closely, you can see the broken lines that were mended, and now carry 'scars'. The painting represents the heart of my home. A heart is beautiful not because it is unbroken, but because it has been broken and mended many times."



The Sweetheart (2014-2015) by Poesy Liang



Nini Marini

Nini is a talent to watch in the local arts scene with her colourful artworks that reveal a unique and contemporary side to Malaysian culture.

"The creation of nature is my biggest inspiration. Every time I look at a tree or an unassuming leaf, I marvel over the details, symmetry and effortless way that it exists."

"Find your glow." A wonderful woman said this to me very randomly a good 10 years ago. It prompted me to figure it out for myself. She didn't give me directions or anything like that. What she told me translates to doing more things that I love. Happiness ultimately makes you shine. It's so simple really, but the journey to these kinds of pureness is not without its challenges. The key is to really dig deep, get in touch with your core self and bring that out. So, for me, my glow is my art; hence, #artforlife.

The Eco Purveyor

Yasmin Rasyid

Yasmin is the founder of Eco Knights, an environmental organisation that promotes a sustainable way of life. She is all about nurturing a greener mindset for the betterment of the world.



*"I do what I do because I really want to give back by **building a nation** that's resilient and more sustainably managed. My long-term goal is to make a **bigger impact** on the environmental movement. I spend a lot of time **moulding young minds** into future leaders in this field. I find it really inspiring and energising. They're more creative than I ever was when I was their age. So, I look forward to convincing more **young ones** to embark on this journey with me."*

Yang Sze Choo



Her debut novel The Ghost Bride was a major bestseller, but the Harvard University graduate worked various corporate jobs before finding her true calling.

What motivates you to write? "If you like to write, you'll probably find a way to do it, regardless of whether it gets published or is purely for private amusement. I wrote lots of (rather bad) stories when I was young, and continued writing when I was grown up and had a regular job. Most of it got stuffed in a drawer, but it was a sort of private life. I like to read a lot, and that's a similar sensation in terms of immersing yourself in another world. We live so many different lives through books, and the wonderful thing is that you can share this experience with someone who's read the same book. The same goes for movies. I suppose the root of it all is storytelling—the sharing and repeating of an experience that later becomes a part of your mind's life."

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how did you overcome it? "I had to stop work for a while and go on disability because of hand and neck pain. At the time, I was working a regular corporate job, which meant lots of financial spreadsheets and computer work. I'd noticed some pain, but I stupidly ignored it until it got so bad that I had difficulty turning doorknobs, using chopsticks and so on. It turned out that I'd herniated a disk in my neck. It's a chronic condition that I've had to learn to deal with. If I stretch and exercise enough, it's manageable, but occasionally, there are flare-ups and times when I can't use the computer at all, or chop ingredients etc., which is rather demoralising."

What lessons has your condition taught you? "I've had to accept my humanity and brokenness. It's humbling and makes you realise that you can't simply force your physical self to do everything that you want it to, and that the body will decline with age. I have a deeper appreciation and gratitude for being physically around, to spend time with family and friends, because you never really know what will happen." ■



Street Smart

This jumpsuit cinches the waist to accentuate the smallest part of your body, and flares out beneath the bum to give the illusion of a bigger tush.

Pestle & Mortar Clothing jumpsuit (RM180).

Figure It Out

Simple styling tips for all body types so you can wow them every time.

Photographs by *Bryan Ong*

Art direction by *Shirley Chia*

Text & styling by *Zoé Ng*

HAIR AND MAKEUP: JOEY YAP AND SHALLEE LEE



Feminine Fox

If you're looking for something comfortable to wear when running errands, a billowy, oversized top paired with loose paperbag shorts will get the job done.

H&M earrings (price unavailable) and dress (RM79.90); Dorothy Perkins shorts (RM139).



Miss Selfridge paper bag shorts, RM166

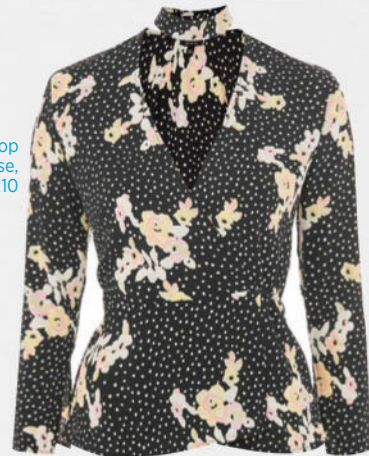


Zara blouse, RM169.90



Zara multi-hoop earrings details, RM89.90

Topshop wrap blouse, RM210



Pull & Bear Shiny fabric long evening jumpsuit, RM249



I don't have an hourglass figure so I try to find clothes that **accentuate my waist** to give the illusion of **curves**.

Hanie Hidayah, 30, blogger

Girly Grunge

Hanie loves her sneakers, so we put her in a girly wrap dress together with her newest kicks. A leather choker and some braids give a grungy vibe.

Warehouse dress (RM349).



I'm slightly **wide on my hips**, so wearing A-line skirts and palazzos really accentuates my waist and **elongates my legs**.



Zara navy pants, RM199.90



Zara skirt, RM129.90

Shimmer & Shine

Flared pants play down wider-set hips and also give the illusion of longer legs. Match with an eye-catching silver top to draw attention to your other assets (wink!).

Warehouse cami (RM329); Monki trousers (RM150).



Street Chic

Go for casual and pair your favourite denim skirt with a nude bodysuit that hugs your curves. This green coach's jacket pulls the whole look together.

Pestle & Mortar Clothing jacket (RM250) and denim mini (RM150); H&M bodysuit (RM49.90).




Topshop embroidered kimono PJ shirt, RM295

Monki dungaree dress, price unavailable



Zara three-pack chokers, RM99.90



I think it's more important to feel **happy** with yourself than to dress according to trends. **Body confidence** is the only accessory a woman should wear.

Nicole Chen, 24, Social Media and Digital Marketer



Funky Fresh

The pyjama top trend is perfect for comfort on the go. The playful print has colours that match Chen's vibrant personality and hair. The black A-line dress helps keep the look together and ends a good 10cm above the knee, which elongates her legs.

Monki blouse (RM120) and denim dress (RM100).



Think Pink

High-waisted mini-skirts can elongate your legs and lengthen your body. Here, a long shirt-dress tones down the femininity of the look and is more suited to Fatin's tastes and style.

Pestle & Mortar Clothing dress (RM200); Monki top (RM50); Motel Rocks skirt (RM72, available at Major Drop); Nerd Unit bangle (RM109, available at Major Drop).

One Classy Chick

Fatin loves burnished orange hues, so the embroidery on this skirt is perfect for her. Keep your silhouette balanced: if you're planning to wear something heavy on the bottom, opt for a fitted top and vice versa.

Warehouse skirt (RM399); H&M top (price unavailable).



Topshop ribbed crop jumper, RM155

Monki jacket, RM160



Nerdunit gold bangle, RM109



Follow Fatin on Instagram: @fatinchocolatecats



Monki top, RM60



Chi Chi London navy midi skirt, RM309, at Dorothy Perkins



Mod Bod

Avoid anything oversized as this will overwhelm your body and 'shrink' you down. Go for horizontal, wide stripes and keep your silhouette straight and clean to give your body more shape.

Publish beanie (RM47.60, available at Major Drop); Warehouse top (RM199); Topshop pinafore (price unavailable).



"I usually gravitate towards **clean lines** and **tailored** pieces. I'm currently into the whole '**modern gentlewoman**' vibe."

Fatin Feisal, 37, Lawyer and blogger

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1. List down 3 benefits of Kinohimitsu Superfood Lady?
2. What are some of the main ingredients in Kinohimitsu Superfood Lady?

PRIZE: 54 winners will receive Kinohimitsu Superfood Lady worth RM119.80 each .

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FASHION

Asics, Lot 5.01.08, Level 5, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 8838 (www.asics.com)

August Store, Lot S7 & S8, Level 2, Bangsar Shopping Centre, 285 Jalan Maarof, Bukit Bandaraya, 59000 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2011 5216 (www.facebook.com/auguststoremalaysia)

Bershka, G-067 Ground Floor., Mid Valley Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, Mid Valley City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 2282 3957 (www.berushka.com/my)

Calvin Klein Performance, Lot 5.51, Level 5, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. (www.calvinklein.com)

Dorothy Perkins, Lot F308, First Floor, One Utama Shopping Centre, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 7726 6645 (my.dorothyperkins.com)

Fossil, 223B, Level 2, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2163 6818 (www.fossil-asia.com)

Fresh Press Laundry, Bangsar South City, Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: +60 17-241 1802 (www.freshpress.my)

H&M, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, 50 Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50250 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2146 0360 (www.hm.com/my)

Kate Spade, G-203b, Ground Floor, The Gardens, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2284 1468 (www.katespade.com)

Keen (World of Sports), 2F-07, Paradigm Mall, No. 1, Jalan SS7/26A, Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, 47301, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 7886 9628 (www.KEENfootwear.com)

Lorna Jane, 1F-1C, Level 1, Bangsar Village 2, No.2, Jalan Telawi 2, Bangsar Baru, 59100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2714 5998 (www.believeactive.com)

Lululemon, No. 20, Jalan Telawi 3, 59100 Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2280 0332 (www.facebook.com/lululemonKualaLumpur)

Major Drop, F1.84, Sunway Pyramid Shopping Centre, 3, Jalan PJS 11/15, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 5612 8830 (www.majordrop.com)

Mango, C46-C47, Concourse Level, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2163 3198 (shop.mango.com/MY/women)

Mido, AWG Fine Watches, Lot G-017, Ground Floor, Mid Valley City Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2284 4228 (www.facebook.com/MidoSwissWatches)

Monki, GF 29/42, Ground Floor, Nu Sentral, No. 201 Jalan Tun Sambanthan, 50470 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2276 5282 (www.monki.com)

Nerdunit (Major Drop), F1.84, Sunway Pyramid Shopping Centre, 3, Jalan PJS 11/15, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 5612 8830 (www.nerdunit.us)

Pestle & Mortar Clothing, 11, Jalan Telawi 5, Bangsar Baru, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 2201 5585 (www.pestlemortarclothing.com)

Publish (Major Drop), F1.84, Sunway Pyramid Shopping Centre, 3, Jalan PJS 11/15, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 5612 8830 (www.publishbrand.com)

Pull & Bear, 4.13.00, Level 4, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2142 4484 (www.pullandbear.com/my)

Puma, Lot UGF-17, Upper Ground Floor, Bangsar Village 2, No. 2 Jalan Telawi 1, 59100 Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2287 1508 (us.puma.com)

Sports Direct, 8, Jalan SS 13/5, Subang Jaya Industrial Estate, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 5566 8700 (sportsdirect.com.my)

Topshop, C52/53 & C54, Concourse Floor, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2382 4056 (my.topshop.com)

Typo, Lot 4.01.03, Pavilion, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 2110 1423 (www.cottonon.com/MY/shop-by-brand/typo/)

Under Armour, 5.02.00 & 5.03.00, Level 5, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2181 673 (www.underarmour.com.my)

Uniqlo, Lot G1.01.00, Ground Floor, Fahrenheit 88, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 03 - 2145 8852 (www.uniqlo.com/my)

Zara, Lot G319, Ground Floor, One Utama Shopping Centre, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 7724 1028 (www.zara.com/my)

BEAUTY

Belif, G-001A, Ground Floor, Mid Valley City Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2201 0915 (www.belif.com.my)

Benefit Cosmetics, 2nd Floor, 181, Jalan Bukit Bintang., 55100, Starhill

Gallery Terrace, KUALA LUMPUR. Tel: 03 - 2148 5592 (www.benefitcosmetics.com)

Bioderma (Robinsons), Ground Floor, The Gardens, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2089 1111 (www.bioderma.com.my)

Clarins, Lot 401C, Level 4, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2382 6800 (www.clarins.com.my)

Clinique, Level 2, Parkson, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2161 0234 (www.clinique.com.my)

Davidoff, 2.33.02, Level 2, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 1466 (www.facebook.com/Davidoff-Malaysia)

Etat Libre d'Orange (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.etatlibredorange.com)

GHD (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.facebook.com/ghdMalaysia)

Innisfree, Lot UG-11, Paradigm Mall, No.1, Jalan SS7/26A, Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03-7887 9821 (my.innisfree.com)

IT Cosmetics (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.itcosmetics.com)

Kat Von D Beauty (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.katvondbeauty.com)

L'Occitane, Lot No. 4.45, Fourth Floor, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, 168, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 8606 (my.loccitane.com)

M.A.C, Lot G-092, Mid Valley City Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2284 6490 (www.maccosmetics.com.my)

Make Up For Ever, Sephora Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.facebook.com/Makeupforevermy)

Make Up Store (Sephora), Sephora Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.makeupstorecosmetics.com)

Marc Jacobs Beauty (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.marcjacobsbeauty.com)

Melvita, Lot F-058, Mid Valley City Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2282 2166 (my.melvita.com)

Moogoo, Tel: 03 - 7727 7999 (www.moogoo.my)

Neuzell (Watsons), Lot F223, First Floor, One Utama Shopping Centre, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 7722 5059 (www.watsons.com.my)

Nourish (Robinsons), Lot G-211, The Gardens, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2089 1188 (nourishskinrange.com)

Omorose (M+ Pharmacy), Lot LG-11A, Lower Ground Floor, Bangsar Village, No. 2 Jalan Telawi 1, 59100 Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2202 0108 (www.mplus.my)

OPI, Colour Couture, Lot 1F-11, First Floor, Bangsar Village 2, No. 2 Jalan Telawi 1, 59100 Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2287 2129/5129 (www.opi.com.my)

Origins, F-225, 1st Floor, The Gardens, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2287 4662 (www.origins.my)

Optimax Eye Specialist Centre, Taman Tun Dr Ismail (HQ), Unit 2-2-1, Bangunan AHP, Jalan Tun Mohd Fuad 3, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 7722 3177/ 03 - 7728 3177 (www.optimax2u.com)

Percy & Reed, Sephora Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.percyandreed.com)

Philips (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.philips.com.my)

Sasa, Lot G-034A, Mid Valley City Megamall, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2283 6639 (www.sasamy.com.my)

Schwarzkopf (Watsons), Lot F223, First Floor, One Utama Shopping Centre, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 7722 5059 (www.watsons.com.my)

Sephora, Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.sephora.my)

Sigma Beauty (Sephora), Sephora Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.sigmabeauty.com)

SKII (Metrojaya), Lot G107, Ground Floor, The Curve, No 6, Jalan PJU 7/3, Mutiara Damansara, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 012 - 670 2653 (www.sk-ii.com.my)

Stila (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.stilacosmetics.com)

Tarte (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.tartecosmetics.com)

Tweezerman (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.tartecosmetics.com)

The Body Shop, Mid Valley Megamall, Lot 93, Ground Floor, Lingkaran Syed Putra, Mid Valley City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2283 2836 (www.thebodyshop.com.my)

The Face Inc, 26A & 70A Desa Sri Hartamas B-03-03 Galeria Hartamas Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

The Olive Tree, Lot FK5, First Floor, One Utama Shopping Centre, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 03 - 7627 4117 (theolivetree-organic.com)

This Works (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.thisworks.com)

Too Faced (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.toofaced.com)

Urban Decay, C27, Concourse Level, Suria KLCC, Jalan Ampang, 50088 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2165 1188 (www.facebook.com/urbandecayMY)

Zoeva Cosmetics (Sephora), Starhill Gallery, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03 - 2141 6688 (www.zoevacosmetics.com)

MAKE ME STRONGER

Malaysian singer and entrepreneur Jessie Chung dishes on the personal message behind her new album *Be Strong*.

By Amylia Hilda

> **The inspiration behind my latest album** is inner strength.

To me, people who I consider strong are those who have faced failure in life. I want to encourage everyone not to give up so easily.

> **The personal message** behind my album is the discrimination that I experienced on my journey to becoming the person that I am today. Ten years ago, I made this decision to change. I tried to 'correct' the way that I am, but in the end, even the doctors told me that it is irreversible. I'm just born this way, and I accept it. I have no regrets.

> **I receive a lot of support** from my family, friends and fans—they're all very loyal. That's why I can still carry on with my music career. If nobody bought my albums or attended my concerts, how would I be able to continue? I'm glad that my fans have stuck with me on my journey, which, in turn, has helped me to become positive about myself again.

> **I stay energised** through prayer. I exercise every day and practise martial arts and lift weights as well. I make sure that I eat healthy. I also think it's important to be positive and joyful. It's no fun being too serious.

> **To me, success is very personal**, but above all, we

should be content. As long as we're happy, healthy and have sufficient means to live, to me, that is success. Without health, you are useless no matter your wealth.

> **I wouldn't really say that I expected to see myself as how I am today** when I was growing up. When I was young, I wasn't that confident and needed a lot of encouragement. I think many people would consider what I have now success, but I just trust God and leave everything in his hands.

> **Always look to your strengths and address your weaknesses.** Also, don't give up so easily because you never know what's around the corner. No matter what, it's very important to do everything with love and for the right reasons.

> **I overcome the haters by thanking them**, because their hateful words make me a stronger person. I've decided to love them too because it's convinced many to change their attitudes. I've even apologised to them and said: "Please forgive me if I've done anything to make you feel uncomfortable." Some wrote back to say sorry and that made me very happy. ■



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