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WELCOME

MARCH / APRIL 2021

‘We’ve faced so much uncertainty and so much has been thrust upon us. Now we need to bring our focus back to what we can do something about, and what we need in our everyday life to help us function well.’

I love these words from chartered psychologist Suzy Reading, who brings her down-to-earth advice to our big feature this issue, *‘How to have a healthy refresh’*, from page 16. While this is definitely a time to be kind to ourselves, it’s also true that the future has *never* been certain. Over eight pages, we share expert insight on a new way of thinking about self care, how to recharge your ‘energy bank basics’ and, crucially, how to be guided by our values and strengths so that ultimately we feel like we’re living with meaning. Hopefully you’ll find much to help you, both now and in calmer times to come.

Elsewhere, we continue to lead the way with science-led articles underpinned by our clean beauty philosophy. Don’t miss our feature on the connection between the state of your skin and the state of your mind, page 100, and our can’t-go-wrong guide to beauty

actives, page 94 – showcasing brilliant products that are made with integrity.

As always, our mission is to bring you a mix of advice and inspiration. We explore the buzz topic of the moment, CBD, page 50; advise on how to avoid injury if you’re WOFH (working out from home), page 60; and look at how to get your va-va vroom back if being locked up together is not adding to the excitement, page 114. We also have a host of seasonal recipes to tempt you into the kitchen, and nourish yourself and your loved ones. Hope you enjoy.

Ellie

Editorial Director @elliehughesUK



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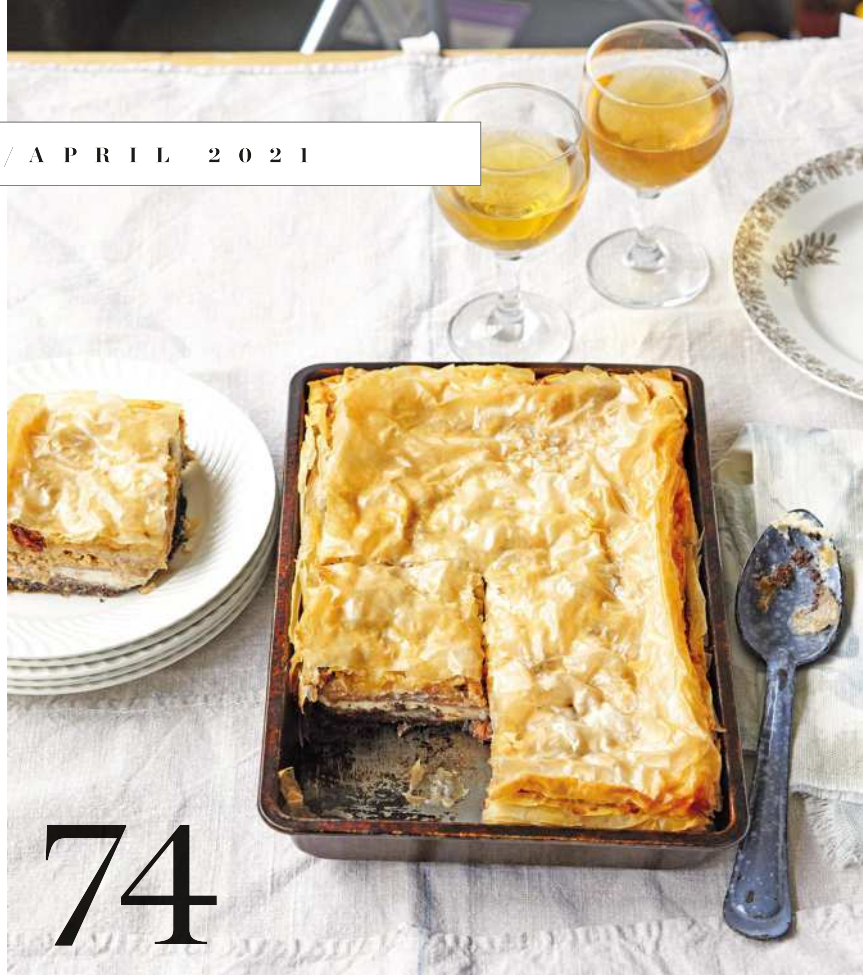
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119 News and offers including your chance to win prizes including a **sleep upgrade worth £2000** – but only for members of Holland & Barrett's Rewards for Life loyalty scheme. Not a member yet? See page 126 for how to sign up – and get 15% off purchases with the Holland & Barrett app, too!



ON THE COVER



Photograph
Stocks

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FINDING HOPE

I am sole carer for my partner and have a neuromuscular disease called myasthenia gravis myself. We have both sheltered for a long period, to be sensible and help others to keep safe. One of my new pleasures in life is looking forward to your enchanting magazine. It gives me something to look forward to at the end of the day to relax, unwind

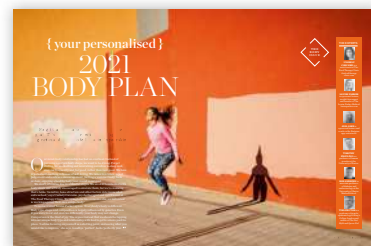
and slowly absorb the helpful and encouraging articles. I truly value the entire team that puts this magazine together, not only in a professional capacity but as caring human beings who give us readers a better quality of life and the tools to cope – you give us hope.

Patricia, Lancashire

Healthy resolutions

Thank you for your brilliant February issue. I was especially drawn to 'Your personalised 2021 body plan'. I intend to leave all the excuses I made last year at the door and work on getting into the best health and shape of my life in 2021. And all the invaluable information and help from experts included in the magazine is going to help me achieve that. All the advice – like getting to know my body type, learning to identify when I'm actually hungry, and protein pacing – felt do-able if I'm willing to put the work in. It would be awesome to hit the beach feeling energetic and confident in my body this summer, even though it may seem a long way off. I've never felt more focused

Thank you for a push in the right direction
Jess, London



Greener habits

I enjoyed 'Your green living makeover' (February) and agree we need to clean up our act. I already buy my clothes from charity shops and most of my furniture was secondhand. But I was shocked to learn that if food waste was a country would be the third-biggest polluter after the US and China. I'm taking your suggestions on board – washing my clothes at 30 degrees, saving for an electric car and putting on an extra jumper instead of cranking up the heating. I've now changed to a renewable energy plan and unplug devices once they're charged. There are so many ways to make a difference

Vanya, Cheshire



Shona Nicolson
'Trying out some of the recipes from this month's *healthy*. Totally delicious.'

Michelle Stromgren
'Great article on #bluelight – with a dad who has AMD... it's a reminder on the importance of healthy screen use.'

WRITE TO US



If your letter is printed here, you'll receive a Dead Sea Spa Magik gift* (worth £35). The star letter also wins £50-worth of Holland & Barrett gift vouchers. We reserve the right to edit letters, comments or tweets. Email us at healthy@therivergroup.co.uk or write to *healthy*, The River Group, Garden Floor, 16 Connaught Place, London W2 2ES

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Yoga Design Lab Travel Mat Mexicana (£52, yogamatters.com)

A refreshing cleanse for clearer skin

Q+A Natura Skincare Peppermint Daily Cleanser (£7.50, 125ml, 28 points)

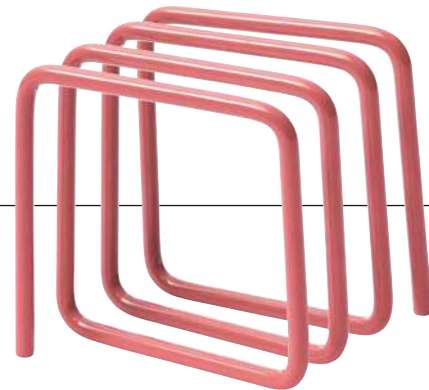


Revive skin and mind with this invigorating blend

UpCircle Coffee Body Scrub with Lemongrass (£14.99, 200ml, 56 points)

Loose papers, meet your match

Letter Rack (£12, blockdesign.co.uk)



THE HEALTHY HOTLIST

SPRING UPGRADES TO REVITALISE YOUR ROUTINE

Cut down on waste with this eco beauty swap

Holland & Barrett Thick Cotton Pads (£8, 6 pads, 32 points)



WE LOVE!

Just one nourishing product for bath and shower

Jason Himalayan Pink Salt 2 in 1 Bath Soak & Body Wash (£11.99, 887ml, 32 points)



Never lose an important document again
Arreglo Document Holders (£25 each, laredoute.co.uk)

One eco-friendly spray for everything

Method Antibac All Purpose Cleaner Wild Rhubarb (£3.29, 828ml, 12 points)

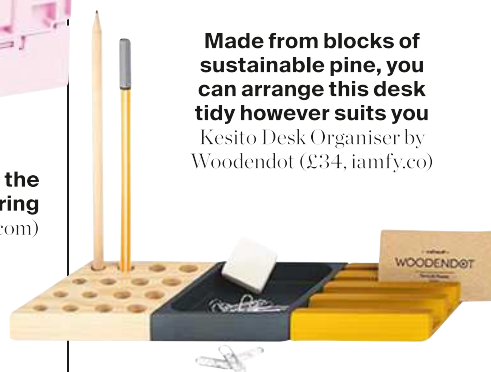




These stackable crates are the ultimate in stylish decluttering
HAY Colour Crate (£6, hestonstore.com)

WE LOVE!

Made from blocks of sustainable pine, you can arrange this desk tidy however suits you
Kesito Desk Organiser by Woodendot (£34, iamf.co)



With pink grapefruit and lemongrass to help replenish your body
Westlab Cleanse Bathing Salts (£6.99, 1kg, 24 points)



Kickstart your day with this apple and blackcurrant, vitamin-infused beverage
TEA+ Cleanse Vitamin Tea (£3.99, 4 bags, 8 points)

WE LOVE!

Sustainable kitchen storage, ideal for teas and spices
Large Bamboo Storage Canister Set (£29.99, curatedpieces.com)



Biodegradable formulas with a lasting botanical scent
Wilton London Jasmine Eco Laundry Liquid and Fabric Conditioner (from £6, 1L, 24 points)

This versatile basket is perfect for hiding mess or storing bits and bobs
Yellow Checked Seagrass Storage Basket (£19.50, oliverbonas.com)



Say goodbye to plastic bottles cluttering your bathroom shelves
Ethique Pinkalicious Shampoo Bar For Normal Hair (£12.99, 110g, 48 points)



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Aromaworks Basil & Lime Reed Diffuser (£11.99, 100ml, 44 points)



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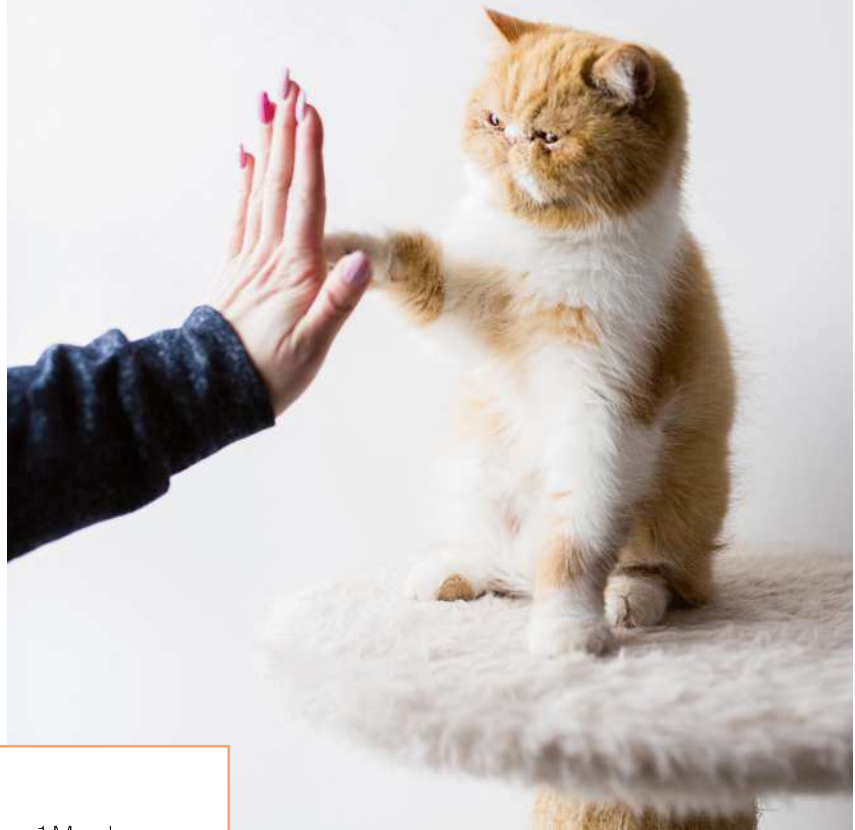


Seeking help for an eating disorder

Findings from the Health Survey for England 2019, published late last year, revealed that 19% of women screened positive for a potential eating disorder, with more than one in four women under the age of 35 at risk. And as feelings of uncertainty can trigger disordered eating, it's likely that even more women have been struggling through the pandemic. If you think you might have an eating disorder, contact your GP as soon as you can. They can offer guidance or refer you to a specialist who is qualified to help. If you're worried about a loved one, or want a private chat, you can also call eating disorder charity Beat's confidential helpline on 0808 801 0677. Or visit beateatingdisorders.org.uk

WHY OUR PETS KEEP US HEALTHY

With National Love Your Pet Day approaching (20 February), it's worth reminding ourselves why we should appreciate our furry friends all year round. While some of the benefits are obvious – owning a dog that needs regular walks can help fitness – research reveals other more surprising advantages. Studies show stroking a pet can help lower blood pressure, reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and promote release of the 'cuddle chemical' oxytocin. What's more, animals can be meaningful companions for those of us who are feeling lonely, with pet owners less likely to suffer from depression.



NEW WAYS WITH PB

Peanut Butter Lover's Day takes place on 1 March – it's the perfect excuse to try these tasty treats.

- **Cupboard staple** Upgrade brekkie with *Manilife Original Peanut Butter* (£3.99, 295g, 12 points) – it strikes the perfect balance between creamy and crunchy.
- **Portable fix** *Pip & Nut Squeeze Pack Peanut Butters* (99p, 30g) are great for an energy fix on-the-go. Take them along on hikes and cycles
- **Butter cups** Sprinkled with sea salt and encased in vegan chocolate, *Love Raw Peanut Butter Cups* (£1.99, 34g, 4 points) are heavenly. All at hollandandbarrett.com



WALKING FOR A CAUSE

If your lockdown activity levels have slipped, why not set yourself the challenge of walking 10,000 steps a day in March while raising money for Cancer Research UK. The charity's **Walk All Over Cancer** event (1-31 March) requires participants to complete 310,000 steps over the month. And as you can complete the challenge individually, it's Covid-safe – all you need to keep a record of your progress is a fitness tracker or the step-counting function on your smartphone. Visit cancerresearchuk.org

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With spring around the corner, many of us are looking for new ways to stay healthy and happy whatever 2021 throws at us. A subscription to *healthy* magazine is the perfect way to keep latest wellbeing trends and get up-to-backed health advice. Plus each issue is full of features on psychology, clean beauty and don't miss our food section, full of vegetarian recipes and nutrition advice to help you reach your healthy eating goals. Subscribe today and receive a stylish Vegan Happy headband, keeping you cosy till spring arrives.

Elie

Editorial Director @elliehughesUK

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HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHY

With spring in sight, many of us are finally starting to feel a bit more positive about the year to come. Now is the perfect time to reflect on what we might want to change in our lives for 2021

WORDS BY LAURA POTTER

WELLNESS
REFRESH

It's an instinctive thing: as we see the natural environment around us looking brighter and more hopeful, we respond, often wanting to bring about changes in our lives. When you factor in what we all faced in 2020, and how it laid bare what really matters, now is the perfect time to plan a life refresh. Sure, the world is uncertain but, to a greater or lesser degree, when hasn't it been? 'I've been a career change advisor for over 15 years, and at no point has the future ever been certain,' says Rikke Hansen, host of the Career Change podcast. 'The difference is we just thought it was.'

It's also never been more obvious that any changes we make need to enhance feelings of contentment and stability, the qualities we know that we need. 'We've faced so much uncertainty, so much change and so much has been thrust upon us. Now we need to bring our focus back to what can we do something about, and what things we need in our everyday life to help us function well,' says chartered psychologist Suzy Reading.

Over the next few pages we'll teach you how to make anything from a smallish tweak to a full-blown 180-degree switch in a considered, life-enriching way that feels good for you. ➡

REFRESH



THE EXPERTS



RIKKE HANSEN is a transition advisor and careers coach, and host of the Career Change podcast.



SUZY READING is a chartered psychologist specialising in stress management, and the author of *Self-Care For Tough Times* (Octopus, £12.99)



DOROTA KLOP-SOWINSKA is a coach/counsellor and author of *Career Jump! How to Successfully Change Your Professional Path* (D&R Coaching, £17.85)

We all have a greater awareness of our emotions now, because in the absence of all the usual distractions, we have had to sit with them more – good, bad and ugly.

That means we're more focused on feeling grounded, stronger and better able to tackle challenges and, according to Reading, we can achieve that with self care. But first she wants to clarify exactly what self care is.

'The messaging around self care is conflicting and unhelpful, but it is simply health care,' she says. 'It isn't indulgence or pampering, but it also isn't self sabotage.' So what about those self-care practices that don't appear so healthy? 'People say their wine in the evening is self care, but there's a second part of the definition: self care helps you cope in the moment but it also makes life easier for your future self.' You may start your day with a lovely coffee, scroll through Instagram, do some online shopping and, after work, share a bottle of wine over dinner. All those things feel good in the moment, but to improve self care, you have to ask what their impact is further down the line. That's not to say you can't have a glass of wine. It's about the overall look of your day. 'There's a need to be met, but see if you can meet it with something that's genuinely life-giving,' says Reading.

Achieving that sense of security in a world where 'normal' is ever-shifting is all about tapping into some key elements. 'I call them

the energy bank basics, and they're the things that every human needs to function – sleep, rest, time in nature, feeding ourselves, moving for mental health, and connection to feed the soul,' says Reading. 'They never change.' What does change, of course, is the world around us. So how can you focus on those things when you have less control than usual?

Reading points out that when it comes to socialising, we have proved we can adapt. 'We need to be fluid and responsive to changing variables. Exercise is another good example. It's not the time to beat yourself up, there's enough to contend with – instead we need gentle, soothing ways of moving.' Tune in to what your body is asking for, rather than do what you've always done.

RECALIBRATE

When it comes to changing our mind-set, we shouldn't just look to be more positive. 'There's a concept of toxic positivity, which we want to avoid because it minimises

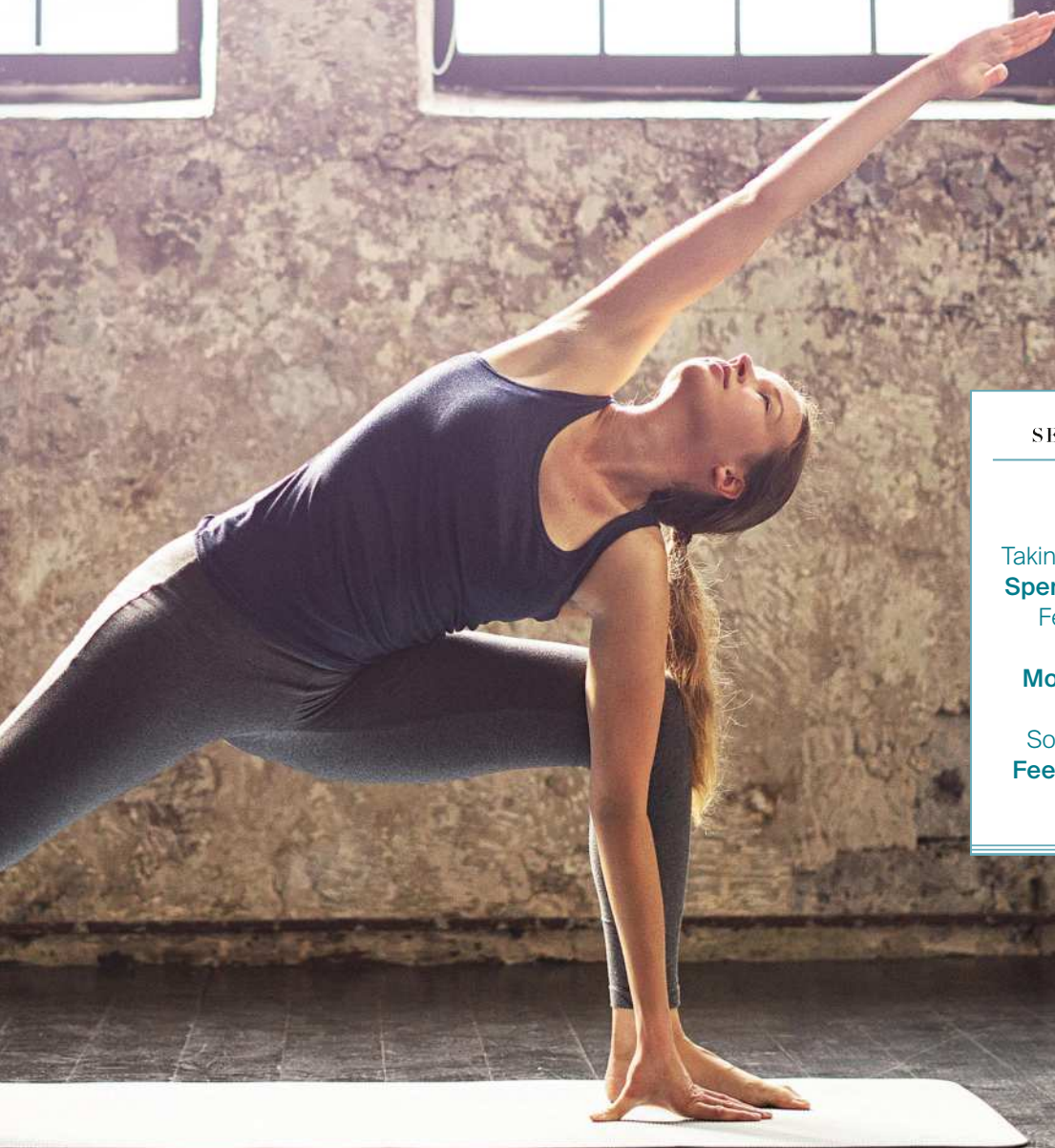
"When we feed our brain or move our body, the small things don't knock us as much"

{spring clean your mind}

people's experience and denies their right to feel,' Reading explains. What we should be aiming for instead, is to feel healthy and energetic with a balanced mind set. 'That means giving ourselves permission to acknowledge our loss, stress or worries, and allowing ourselves to have a normal human response to them, but staying anchored in perspective and being aware of our blessings, too.' And having given ourselves this permission, we need to nourish ourselves. 'Bring your mind to the things that *are* going well, or at least think about what you're learning to find perspective.'

Also be careful how you use your free time. 'For a lot of people, downtime has been equated with screen time,'





SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

Are you...

Prioritising sleep

Taking proper rest in some form

Spending time in nature dailyFeeding yourself enough
nourishing food**Moving your body in a way
that feels good**

Socialising with loved ones

**Feeding your brain by doing
something creative**

says Reading. 'When we've got a spare moment we watch something, but be mindful of your visual and auditory diet.' So what would be better? 'Rather than numbing ourselves out, we can choose to do things that help pique our curiosity or help us develop new skills – and creative pursuits are a beautiful way of doing that.'

REPLENISH

When you take care of your needs, it does more than make you feel better. 'As soon as we start feeding our brain, hydrating our mood, moving our body or getting out in nature, it literally changes how we interpret life,' says Reading. In other words, the small things don't

knock us as much. 'All these habits have a powerful, cumulative effect that gives us a protective buffer against the next thing that side swipes us,' says Reading. Self care, in other words, definitely isn't self-indulgent.

On board with the concept but wondering where you'll find time? 'Instead of viewing self care as another activity on your to-do list, look for ways to weave it into the things you're doing already,' says Reading. 'I can fold the washing feeling irritated or I can simultaneously listen to a podcast. I can have a shower and ruminate on the horrible thing someone said to me earlier or I can use it as a meditative experience where I notice the scent and feel the cleansing property of the water.' ♦♦

{ make a new start, the smart way }

Whether you're after a total transformation or a bit of a re-jig, it can feel daunting, so adapt your approach. 'We create change in tiny micro moments, little rituals that we can build into our day,' says Reading. Change doesn't have to mean finding 30 minutes a day to practise yoga, write a journal or try transcendental meditation, it can be incredibly simple. 'Tune in to your senses – really savour a few sips of your morning coffee, enjoying the aroma, giving yourself permission to do that with your full attention, without trying to answer emails at the same time,' says Reading.

INSTIGATE CHANGE

If you want to change something in your life, it's also about breaking down what isn't working. Job dissatisfaction is a good example. 'A complete career change might not always be the solution,' says coach and author Dorota Klop-Sowinska. 'You may want to do the same job, but in a different environment, such as a smaller organisation that would better match your values. Or you may realise you love the company you work for but the function is not the right fit.' It's about taking a look at where your dissatisfaction comes from.

Hansen agrees. 'Ask yourself, "What's my problem?" Is it actually your profession or is it just your current job?

Is it just the company culture? Is it your job at all or just your commute? Once you have a better idea what the problem is, you'll know how much of a change you need or want.' Apply this method to any areas of your life in need of a shake-up.

As well as questioning what isn't working – and that goes for any change, not just a job – Reading recommends asking yourself what you need. One way to do that is to reflect on happier times. 'Ask yourself what you used to do that you're not doing now. Look at times where you felt you were really cooking on gas and think what was the scaffolding in your life that allowed you to feel so full of energy – and whether you can reclaim or resume it.' If you're leafing through old pictures of your

"Look back on happier times – what made you feel so full of energy, and how can you reclaim it?"





REBOOT YOUR CAREER

It could feel reckless to consider jacking in your job now, but you could flip that perspective on its head. 'It's always been potentially risky to change careers, but Covid-19 has shown us that we need to learn how to adapt,' says Hansen. 'That's where you find safety, not in a monthly pay cheque.' We also want more than a carriage clock for 20 years' loyal service now – we want satisfaction. 'Many people have been brought up to think having a good salary, good car and a nice house is the holy grail in professional life, but having finally got there, many of us discover we feel burned out, disengaged and bored,' says Klop-Sowinska. 'Our work doesn't have meaning for us, so we pay a very high price for our "success".'

year out backpacking around South East Asia and you're now a mum of three with a hectic job, you're never going to reclaim that exact feeling. But we have all had periods where life has felt easier, cheerier, fuller. So what were the aspects that helped you to feel that way, and can you implement them, even if it's slightly differently?

As well as reflecting on moments where you felt full of beans, Reading also suggests looking at times where you've overcome challenges and asking yourself what the qualities were that you called upon to navigate that experience. 'Even just labelling those can help you realise you can use those same strengths again.'

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

So how can you find something you would bounce out of bed for? 'Look at what you are already really good at,' advises Hansen. 'Think back to two or three achievements you've had in your career where you also enjoyed the experience, and pull apart what you actually did.' Rather than trying to find your true calling, focus on mastery. 'The better you get at something, the more you enjoy it,' she says. Also, be realistic, not head-in-the clouds about it. 'Just thinking about *your* passion is very selfish. What if I'm your prospective employer – what's in it for me? It's better to think about what problem you're solving or what experience you're providing, and what it is that you want to get even better at.' ➡➡



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{ ID your motives }

An often-touted tip is to look to your hobbies for inspiration, but our experts beg to differ. ‘Just because you love doing yoga but you hate your accountant job, that doesn’t mean you should retrain to become a yoga teacher,’ warns Hansen. ‘Because maybe you don’t actually like teaching people.’ Instead, look at what motivates you. ‘For some people autonomy matters, for others it’s purpose, but what every single career comes down to is the things you do every day, with whom, when and how,’ says Hansen

Klop-Sowinska agrees, adding that when her clients know they’re unhappy but have no idea why, she suggests delving deeper ‘Is it the content of the job that’s boring, are there people with whom you don’t click, is it environment – the culture and values of the company, or the size of it? Once you get awareness, you can make a good decision about next steps,’ she says

That could mean anything from researching similar careers at different companies to asking your boss if you can take on a different responsibility. It doesn’t have to mean running for the hills, P45 in hand. Equally, you might be in the right career but the wrong niche. ‘One of my clients practised international aviation law. She loved the research, writing and interviewing, but she hated the subject matter,’ says Hansen. Again, maybe all that’s required here is a sidestep, not a leap.

TRUST YOURSELF

Another often-dispensed career change tip is to ask loved ones what they think we’re good at, but that’s a no-no for Klop-Sowinska. ‘The ideas they give you will come from their own point of reference, so if they’re risk averse, they will advise you to take small steps. And as they have a certain perception of you, it could be difficult

“Listen harder to the positive, creative side that tells us to do the things we love and dream about”

GET A SIDE HUSTLE

Crazy about photography or gardening or poetry? Think laterally – could you teach an online course, set up a YouTube channel or start a blog? It doesn’t have to be your main career, you’ll nurture your happiness by doing something you love.

for them to see you otherwise,’ she explains. ‘The more uncertain you are, the more dangerous it is to ask others for their input.’

If you feel like taking a leap – or just a side shuffle – trust yourself, and don’t let any inner critical voice hold you back. ‘Listen harder to the positive, creative side, which tells us to do the things we love, to dream, to be creative, to not be afraid to try and to fail,’ says Klop-Sowinska. ‘Failure is just a lesson learnt.’

She points to her six key ingredients of a meaningful and successful career: values, talents, passion (think effortless things that bring us joy), life mission, people and environment. Play around with those and you could revolutionise your nine-to-five – and your life! ♦♦




{ discover your passions... or don't }

It's something you hear constantly; follow your dreams! Find your passion! But according to Reading it can be misleading. 'It's like saying you were put on this earth to do one thing, and until you find it, you'll be unfulfilled. I think that's really unhelpful.' What's better, she argues, is to tap into your strengths and values – what matters to you. 'That could be some kind of action, or it could be a quality, like patience or kindness,' she explains. 'It can take different shapes.'

She cites her own career path: training as a psychologist, then working as a PT for 10 years, then as a yoga teacher and coming back to psychology. 'The values and ways I wanted to help people have remained constant. It's just the modality that has changed.'

Hansen agrees. 'The backbone of my entire career has been giving frank, direct advice,' she says. 'You could drop me anywhere and I would always go back to looking at problems and finding solutions because that is my strongest skill.' So if the idea of finding the one magic thing that you are incredibly good at, love from the depths of your heart or were born to do is daunting, that's because it's too much pressure. 'We often think a talent is something spectacular like singing or painting,' says Klop-Sowinska. 'It's actually a repetitive behaviour that is automatic and normal to us, but not to others. Because it's effortless, we often think it is nothing special, but it is. Once we have identified our talents, we need to critically look at which ones give us most fulfilment.'

Maybe what's important to you is making wholesome meals, and you're complimented on your delicious cooking. Perhaps feeling your body is strong and healthy matters, and running clears your mind. Maybe you think having adventure is key, so go out there and scratch that itch. 'When we're guided by our values and strengths, we feel like we're living a life that's meaningful – and easy,' says Reading. 



PINPOINT WHAT MAKES YOU TICK

Suzy Reading breaks down how to tune in to your needs, to nurture them daily

'STRENGTHS are things that you do naturally and effortlessly, you choose to do them and they energise you.'

'VALUES also energise you, and are deeply important to you, but you don't necessarily have to be good at them.'

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“It took me a while to trust myself”

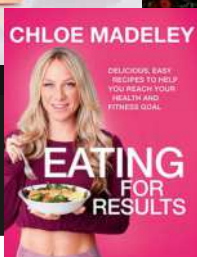
Chloe Madeley used to feel under pressure to look a certain way. Here the TV-personality-turned-PT shares how she learned a new approach to wellness

I decided I wanted to carve out a career in fitness about nine years ago, when I first started lifting weights. My boyfriend at the time was a PT and I said I'd let him train me. I'd had zero interest in going to the gym, but as soon as he put a bar on my back and taught me to squat, I was hooked. I suffer with anxiety, but weightlifting helps me manage it as it takes a lot of mental concentration – you have to be present. I loved how it made me feel so strong and determined

I had career jealousy, so I decided to move back in with my parents and enrol myself in a Level Two gym

instructor course. After that, I did my Level Three in personal training, and a nutrition course. I gave out flyers to get my first clients and started training people in parks and fitness studios. At the same time, I was writing a blog and documenting my own body transformation. Gradually, my online audience grew

‘For the first time in my life, I felt the pressure to look a certain way. The media labelled me a “fitness fanatic” and I worried that if I gained body fat, people would comment on it. I got in my own head and it took me a while to realise that I should trust my instincts. For ➡



Clockwise from above: Eating healthily at home; at the gym; Chloe's adorable dog; tying the knot with husband James. *Eating For Results* by Chloe Madeley (Bantam Press, £16.99) is out now.

a woman, it's incredibly hard to maintain very low levels of body fat, so it's important to remember that if you don't have visible abs, that doesn't make you a phoney

'Now I'll only enter a fat-loss phase when I've got a big photo shoot coming up. The rest of the time, I'll eat well and stay active, working out on a minimum of four days. I'm healthy and strong, but I'm not going to look like a fitness model every single day of the year – that's just not realistic.'

STAY HEALTHY AT HOME

'Since meeting my husband [former England rugby player James Haskell] our mutual interest in health and fitness has been both beneficial and, at times, irritating. If I'm in a fat-loss phase, it helps that we're both focused on training and nutrition, as my environment is in line with my goal. But when we're on holiday and he's telling me how many calories are in the piña colada I'm drinking, it's the last thing I want to hear!'

'We're very lucky to have a home gym, which meant we could keep up with our workouts throughout the pandemic, but we soon realised we don't train well

"Protein is really important, whether you have physique goals or not"

together. I do a lot of heavy lifting, which I need a lot of space for, and James runs around doing cardio, bodyweight exercises and circuits people tend to think it's the other way around. After getting in each others' way for a few weeks we decided to schedule our workouts. Now I'll go first thing, while he has breakfast and then we'll swap

'You can eat together as a couple and still cater to different nutrition goals. If I'm in a fat-loss phase, I'll just make some simple swaps. I'll have bolognese with courgetti and James will have pasta. Or for breakfast, he might have a four-egg omelette and I'll have scrambled egg whites. Generally, I stick to three square meals a day, which are packed with protein and fibre to keep me satiated.'

FEEDING THE HABIT

'Protein is really important, whether you have physique goals or not – it's one of the body's building blocks. If you have a sweet tooth, like me, protein powders and bars can be really useful. I like the Grenade Carb Killa High Protein Bars (£2.49, 60g, 8 points) and I bake with PhD Diet Whey Vanilla (£27.99, 1kg, 108 points, both hollandandbarrett.com) in place of flour. It contains a thickening agent called xanthan gum, which gives bakes a fluffy consistency.

'My latest book, *Eating For Results*, is a cookbook with different physique goals in mind. There are fat-loss recipes, which are low in calories, but high in protein and fibre for satiety. Then there are muscle-building and performance recipes, which are higher in calories to fuel training and aid recovery. Finally, there are general health and fitness recipes, for people who don't have a specific physique goal, but who want to take good care of their bodies – these contain a nice balance of proteins, fats and carbs and focus on nutrient-dense ingredients.

'It's wonderful to see so many people are prioritising their health at the moment and that the health and fitness industry is thriving. The pandemic has been a horrible time, but it's encouraged people to start taking care of themselves, which is definitely a silver lining.'

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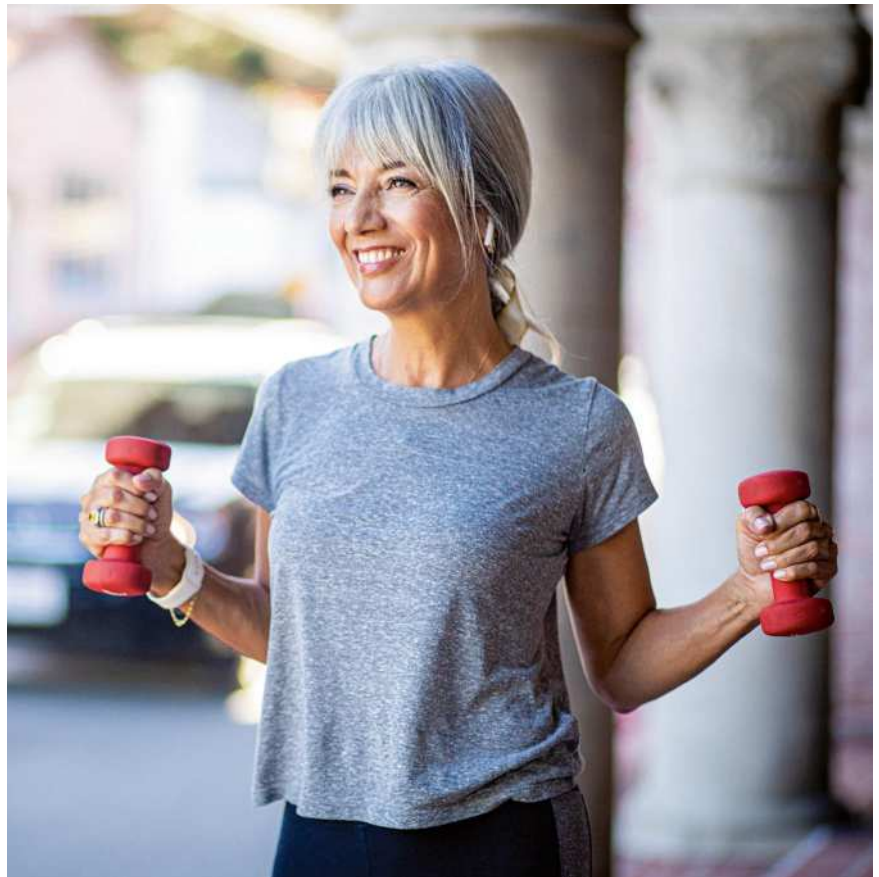
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CAN SUPPS HELP?

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HA levels and keep your joints healthy. It's easy to use, no matter how busy you may be – just mix a sachet of Syno-Vital into a drink of your choice and enjoy

Research shows that taking HA supplements may also be useful for patients with osteoarthritis, helping to reduce inflammation and pain to support them with their daily mobility and overall lifestyle

ANY OTHER BENEFITS?

As well as reducing joint pain and mobility problems, HA is essential for keeping your skin looking young and fresh. As natural HA levels drop with age, your skin appears less smooth and supple, with fine lines, wrinkles and uneven tone. Taking HA supps daily may help keep your skin looking youthful

It's also ideal for anyone who suffers with dry, itchy, tired eyes HA helps keep them moisturised and hydrated, helping you maintain that sparkle in your eye



"I CAN BEND MY KNEES WITHOUT PAIN!"

'I've been taking Syno-Vital for about six months now. I'm amazed by how young looking my skin appears – I look younger than ever! I've been suffering with stiff joints over the past few years, but I can now bend my elbows and knees much easier without pain. I'd recommend Syno-Vital to all my friends and family.'

Liz Parkin, Huddersfield

the clinic

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SLEEP BETTER

For many of us, a decent night's rest is the holy grail. Dr Karina Patel shares five ways to help you achieve sweeter slumber
page 45



PLUS... **32** SHOULD YOU BE WORRIED ABOUT OVARIAN PAIN? **36** YOUR GOOD POSTURE GUIDE
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SHOULD YOU BE WORRIED ABOUT ovarian pain?

Most of us get the occasional 'ouch' down there, but when are tender ovaries a cause for concern? Consultant gynaecologist Caroline Overton explains

THE EXPERT



CAROLINE OVERTON is a consultant gynaecologist and spokesperson for Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (rcog.org.uk). She is former chair of the NICE committee which developed guidance on the diagnosis and management of endometriosis. caroline-overton.co.uk

After 32 years as a gynaecologist, it saddens me that women are still enduring ovarian pain for far too long. On average, it takes eight years from the onset of symptoms for a woman to get an endometriosis diagnosis a condition where small pieces of the uterus (womb) lining are found outside the womb. That is unacceptable and needs to change. Health professionals need to acknowledge the significance of symptoms and women should feel confident in coming forward.

Some ovarian pain is normal. For example, you might have an ovary that's feeling tender before ovulation and you 'bump' into it during sex. But if you get pain every time, always on one side and in one position, it could be a sign of an ovarian cyst, infection or endometriosis.

THE BASICS

You have two ovaries, each about the size of a plum. They're attached to your womb and

while their primary function is storing eggs, they also produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. Oestrogen builds up the lining of your womb each month, preparing it for an egg to implant, while progesterone changes the lining of your womb to be most receptive and hold onto the pregnancy in the early stages. Your ovaries also produce androgens or testosterone-like hormones, important for energy, stamina and libido

KEY SYMPTOM

A tenderness that's more on one side

This may well be caused by normal pains from ovulation. Around 40 per cent of women suffer from mittelschmerz (German for 'middle pain'), which occurs with ovulation. The eggs inside your ovaries grow in fluid-filled bubbles and as the egg grows and ripens, the bubble fills up with more fluid, almost like a blister. When it gets to about 2-3cm in diameter, the bubble pops which can be painful. You'll feel tenderness more on one side than the other and that can last for a few days. You might get mittelschmerz every month, or some months and not others. It can be accompanied by slippery, egg white-like vaginal mucus, which may have blood in it – that's normal.

KEY SYMPTOMS

Pressure in your lower tummy and the bladder

Ovarian cysts are common before the menopause. For a 30-year-old woman, the chance of her cyst being cancerous is one in 1000. At the age of 50, it's three in 1000. Cysts that develop during ovulation can be simple or fluid-filled, others are haemorrhagic ➡

NATURAL HELPERS

- **Holland & Barrett Femlieve Agnus Castus** (£15.99, 60 tablets, 60 points) can help with bloating.
 - **Miaroma Chamomile Essential Oil** (£8, 8ml, 32 points) can be used for relaxation when you're premenstrual.
 - **Holland & Barrett Raspberry Leaf** (£9.99, 36 capsules, 28 points) can relieve menstrual cramps.
- All at hollandandbarrett.com







or blood-filled cysts. These are all nothing to worry about and will disappear on their own. However, cysts can be caused by endometriosis [see below]. Symptoms can include pressure in the lower tummy, pressure on your bladder so you need to urinate more, bloatedness and feeling full quickly when eating.

KEY SYMPTOMS

Pain before and during your period, during sex and going to the loo

Endometriosis affects around 10 per cent of women in their reproductive years. Here's what we think happens: when you have your period, the blood should come down through your cervix, through your vagina and out, but some of the blood and cells go the wrong way, down your fallopian tubes. They plant inside your pelvis and grow as endometriosis. The upshot is painful periods, pain before your period, pain going to the toilet (passing urine, opening your bowels or both) and discomfort during and after sex. Fatigue is also common.

You're more likely to have endometriosis if a family member such as your mother or sister has endometriosis – we don't think it's directly inherited, but there is a family tendency. We assume a diagnosis based on symptoms. If we suspect endometriosis, we do a transvaginal ultrasound – a normal scan does not rule out a diagnosis of endometriosis.

Treatment aims to make your periods lighter and less painful, so you could be offered hormonal treatment like the combined pill, progestogen-only pill, progestogen hormonal coil, progestogen implant or injection. Of course, if you want to get pregnant none of these are suitable. We would manage pain with a combination of paracetamol and ibuprofen. Laparoscopy is the next step if your pain doesn't get better, you're wanting to get pregnant or hormonal treatment isn't suitable.

OVARIAN CANCER

Once you've been through the menopause, your pelvis should feel entirely comfortable. If you're getting period pains, urinary frequency, bloating, pressure on your bowels, a feeling of early fullness or if you're losing weight unintentionally, make a GP appointment. Ovarian cancer can be symptomless until it's at an advanced stage. There is currently no test to diagnose at pre-cancer stage. All our tests are about trying to pick up ovarian cancer as early as possible. Your GP can do a CA125 blood test which measures levels of a protein called cancer antigen 125 – this is produced by some, but not all, ovarian cancers. If the test shows a high level of CA125, you'll be referred for a scan to check for possible causes. A raised CA125 doesn't necessarily mean you have cancer, as it can also be raised with endometriosis, pregnancy and fibroids (non-cancerous growths on your womb).

KEY SYMPTOM

Sex hurts, every time

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is an infection of the womb, fallopian tubes and ovaries and the red flag is, does it hurt every time you have sex? You might also bleed after sex, between periods, experience heavy, painful periods, or get abnormal vaginal discharge which may be green or yellow or unpleasant-smelling. Around 25 per cent of cases of PID are caused by a sexually transmitted infection (STI) such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea, but also a lesser-known STI called mycoplasma genitalium, which infects the urinary and genital tracts. It can also be caused by 'normal' bacteria living in your vagina. Treatment is a course of antibiotics. The peak age for PID is 15-24 years old and the best way to steer clear is by getting an STI test when you have a new sexual partner.

“Endometriosis affects around 10% of women in their reproductive years”

SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR?

If you need to take painkillers, or pain interrupts your daily activities (you need to take time off work or have a lie-down), that's significant pain and you should see your GP. And do go back if you've had a normal test or scan, but your symptoms don't improve **b**

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Poor WFH set-ups and Covid stresses have caused a posture pandemic, with more of us experiencing neck and back pain than ever before. Here's how we can prevent lasting damage

Your good posture guide

THE EXPERT



CRAIG MCLEAN is the founder of Chiro London. He has 25 years' chiropractic experience.

As many of us have spent a large portion of this past year hunched over a laptop at our kitchen table, it's no wonder that we're going through a posture pandemic. During lockdown, Google searches for 'back pain' soared, while a survey of 2,000 UK adults by Nurofen found that one in three of us reported an increase in aches, with a quarter believing our home workspaces were to blame. Craig McLean, chiropractor and founder of Chiro London, believes that two factors were responsible. 'The combination of people working from home and feeling pretty stressed – both have the potential to create an abnormal amount of tension through the neck and shoulders.'

'If you're leaning forward over a laptop, the muscles at the back of your neck have to work overtime just to hold your head up,' says McLean. Meanwhile, worrying about the health, financial and social impacts of the pandemic might have caused us to tense up through our shoulders, contributing further to any posture issues. And while niggling pain might be a short-term symptom, a poor desk set-up can cause lasting damage over time. 'The muscles at the front can get quite weak,' says McLean. 'Over time, the bones in the upper back get thinner at the front and stay the same height at the back, which creates a hunch.' Luckily, there are some easy changes we can make to limit lasting damage.

BE DESK SAVVY

One easy thing you can do to stop yourself from hunching is raise your screen. 'In an ideal world, we'd all have a good office chair and a standing desk,' says McLean. But if you're short on space, a laptop stand

and a Bluetooth or plug-in keyboard should do the trick. 'That way, you can still type at table level, but the screen is at eye level, so you're not stooping down.' When you're setting up your desk, check that the top third of your screen is level with your eyes. If you're sitting on a chair, your legs should form a 90-degree angle from the seat, with your feet firmly planted on the floor and your lower back supported. Alternatively, swap your chair for an exercise ball. 'They're cheap and it's very difficult to slouch when you're sitting on one,' says McLean.

GET ON YOUR FEET

Sitting still for long periods of time can negatively impact our posture. 'In a normal working day, you might sit at your computer for an hour, then get up from your desk for a

"If you've got a Zoom call, put your laptop on a bookshelf and stand in front of it"

meeting,' says McLean. 'Now we're joining a 10 o'clock Zoom call, instead.' Longer walks to the loo and tea breaks punctuated by natters in the kitchen with colleagues also meant that when we did get up, it tended to be for longer, so McLean recommends standing up for calls. 'If you're on Zoom, put the laptop on your bookshelf and stand in front of that,' he says. Ironing boards and chests of drawers can also become makeshift standing desks. 'Or set a timer that goes off every 20-30 minutes, which will help remind you to walk about.'

PRIORITISE MOVEMENT

'Your daily routine should involve taking every joint in your body through its full range of motion – at least once,' says McLean, who says that desk workers often fail to do

this. 'Commonly, the base of the spine – the lower vertebrae – is stuck for people who sit all day. By the same token, the top part of the neck is wedged from craning forwards.' To combat this, tilt your head through six positions of movement: 'Left-to-right, side-to-side and forwards and backwards,' says McLean. 'Add it to your shower routine, while hot water is spraying on your neck.' Daily yoga or Pilates practise will also help you stay mobile. 'People get scared off by hour-long yoga routines, but there's no reason why you can't find time for a simple 20-minute sun salutation,' says McLean. And you can eventry working from the cobra position to help your posture. 'If you lay stomach-down on the floor with your laptop in front of you and prop yourself up on your elbows, that helps extend your neck and back in the opposite direction of the hunch try it for 15 minutes.'

SLEEP SMART

You might not realise that the way you sleep could be damaging your posture, too. 'The worst thing you can do is sleep on your stomach, because then your neck is twisted to the side,' says McLean, who has a handy hack for anyone who wants to kick the habit. 'Tying a knot in the front of your T-shirt can help, as it makes being on your front uncomfortable.' Sleeping on your back or side is the best bet, but make sure that your neck is properly supported by a pillow – if you're experiencing neck ache, McLean recommends trying a contoured one. 'It has a little ridge in it, which supports your neck in a better position.' You might also find it comfortable to sleep with a pillow between your knees to reduce the stress on your hips and lower back. 'This can be particularly helpful for pregnant women.' **B**

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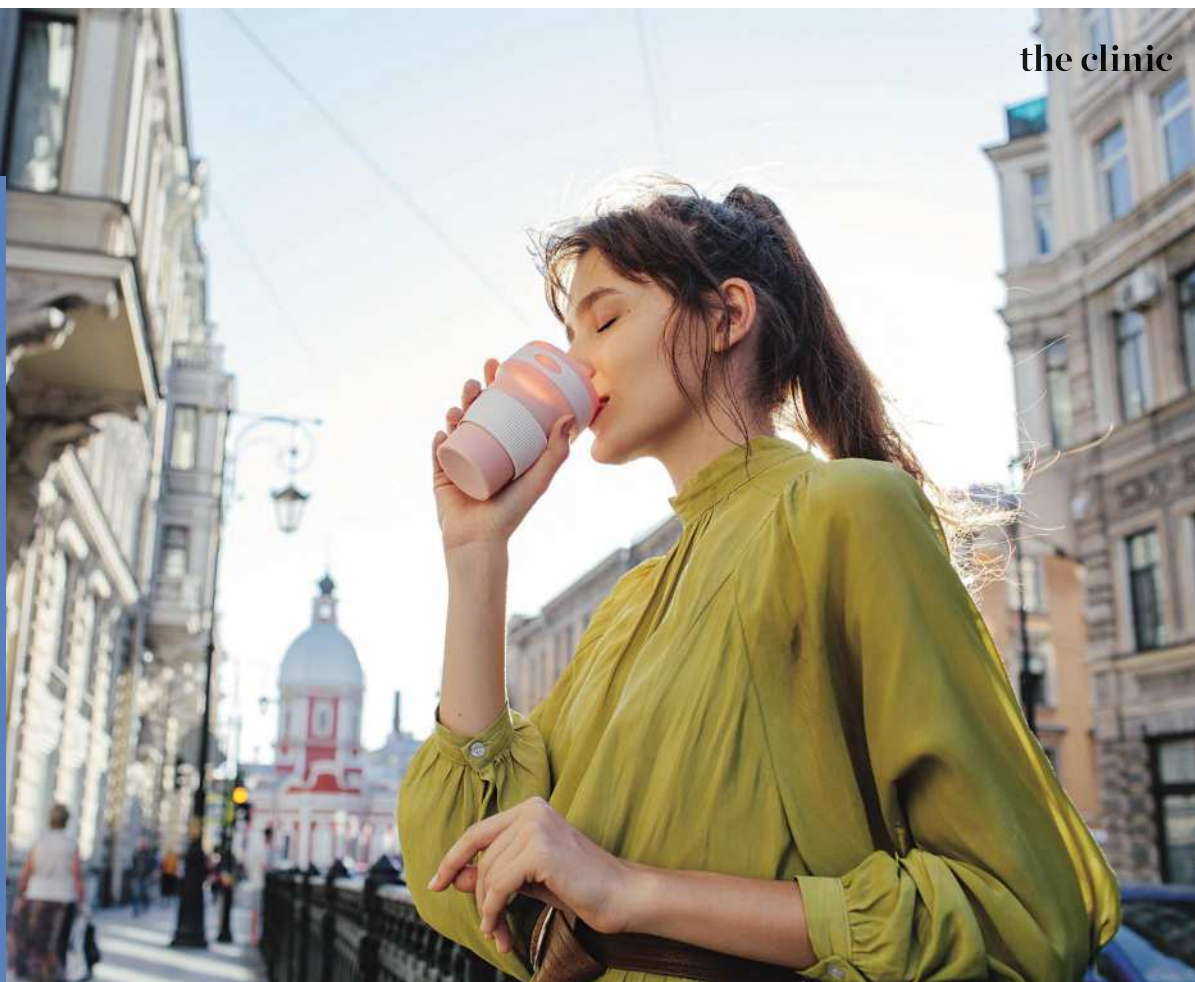
THE EXPERTS

**DR SOHÈRE
ROKED**

is a London-based GP and author of *The Tiredness Cure* (Vermilion, £12.99). She has a specialist interest in integrative medicine and hormone health. More info at drsohereroked.co.uk

**SHARON STILES**

is an energy psychologist and hypnotherapist based in Bristol. She uses hypnosis, NLP, CBT and meridian energy techniques. More info at sharonstiles.co.uk



If you're feeling like that pep in your step is short-lived, an energy audit could be the key to conserving your reserves

Are you energy efficient?

We have an energy crisis in the modern world. Our increasingly busy lives mean many of us wake up each morning feeling physically, mentally and emotionally drained. In November 2020, data from the YouGov Weekly Mood Tracker revealed that just 10 per cent of people in Britain would describe themselves as feeling 'energetic', while a survey by nutrition brand Revvies found over a third of Brits were the most tired they'd ever been during lockdown, despite doing less

'A dip in energy levels can manifest in a variety of ways,' explains Dr Sohère Roked, GP and author of *The Tiredness Cure*. 'Brain fog, tiredness, low motivation and difficulty concentrating are all your body's way of telling you you're running on empty.' In one study, researchers found low energy levels were also commonly associated with anxiety, panic and depression.

When it comes to boosting energy, most of us know the drill: get more sleep, exercise and eat the right foods. But like lottery winners who wind up broke a few years later, unless we make a conscious effort to conserve our hard-earned energy, we can easily fritter it away, leaving us energetically bankrupt. Our first response to dwindling energy levels is often time management, but energy management is where you score the biggest gains

'Time-management skills are undoubtedly important for our physical and mental health,' says energy psychologist and hypnotherapist Sharon Stiles. 'But if you don't take the time to assess your energy-related habits, you'll miss stealth energy seepage that could be occurring. We need to become our own energy economists and take stock of our energy expenditure.' So how can we audit our energy in order to keep the scales of vitality tilted in our favour? ➡➡



BUILD ON YOUR ASSETS

No one can guard our energy and control how it's spent better than ourselves, so we should be wary of the types of activities we choose to do. 'Make sure these are healthy for your body and your mind,' says Roked. 'Don't simply chase joy. We should actively plan to prioritise self-care activities that are calming to our nervous system, such as making nourishing foods and walks in nature.' In one study, women who spent 15 minutes strolling in a forest saw improvements in their energy level, mood and mental clarity. Another study, carried out by King's College London, found that being outdoors in nature improved mental wellbeing, with the benefits still evident several hours after the exposure.

Other hacks shown to improve low energy levels include listening to music, doodling and meditation. In one study adults who were taught the basics of mindful breathing meditation had lower levels of the energy-zapping stress hormone cortisol. 'Cortisol increases stress and inflammation so any activities that lower it are going to be a definite energy asset,' says Roked. 'This could be something as simple as conversations or online art classes with a friend, yoga or making time for a relaxing bedtime routine.'

EXAMINE YOUR HABITS

'Energy management is about self-care,' says Roked. 'We need to carve out time to assess which of our habits are resulting in inefficient energy flow.' A practical tool to support this process is creating a list, which studies have shown increases success and productivity due to its ability to reduce cognitive load. 'The aim is to write down all the things that boost and drain your energy,' says Roked. 'You could even keep a diary over the course of a week, which will help you be mindful of your behaviours.'

One habit many of us fall into is saying 'yes' to everything. 'Regularly overextending yourself forces you to put your own energy needs behind those of others,' says Stiles. 'A simple "I can't right now" is a helpful, immediate fix. You can come back to these requests if and when your energy budget allows.'


“Writing down just one positive thing per day can increase our energy”

Another common issue is negative thinking. In one study, researchers found that people who catastrophised and focused on negative thoughts were more likely to experience fatigue. Fortunately, there are strategies to counteract this. 'Writing down just one good thing a day can help to increase positive energy flow,' says Stiles.

IDENTIFY YOUR LIABILITIES

'It's similar to managing your personal finances,' says Stiles. 'We want to look for ways we can increase energy assets in our lives and decrease our energy liabilities.' Exploring our diet, exercise, sleep and stress management habits will allow us to find these. 'We need to be honest with ourselves,' says Roked. 'How many hours do you sleep a night? Do you vary your exercise? Are you eating too much sugar? These little things can all add up to drain our energy.' One review looking at the effects of sugar consumption found that too much can potentially damage the energy-generating mitochondria inside our cells, hindering energy production.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

As with most things, one size doesn't fit all. 'Asking yourself what you'd do on your perfect day is a great way to uncover those self-care activities that work for you,' says Stiles. 'If you're an introvert, you might choose reading, painting or being in an isolated environment. For extroverts, it could be having a meal with friends, connecting online or picking up the phone.' Sometimes a little trial and error may be required. 'Experiment with different activities,' says Roked. 'The key thing is cultivating healthy routines that are recharging for you.' 

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Practise good sleep hygiene

You'll have heard about blue light and staying away from phones and electronic devices before bed. A lot of phones and screens come with blue light filters now, but they don't remove the electromagnetic radiation that comes from them, which also heightens brain activity. If you can, keep them out of your bedroom. Ensure your room is ventilated and avoid caffeine late in the day – swap it for a calming tea like chamomile or peppermint to promote getting to sleep faster. You could also try a lavender pillow spray to help induce a more relaxed state.

2 Breathe easy

Make sure you have good nasal air flow. The proper way to breathe is through your nose, but a lot of people mouth breathe, which doesn't protect against bacteria and viruses. Plus, if you're congested, you'll be in a heightened sense of awareness and might not get through sleep cycles efficiently. Try a herbal decongestant with essential oils, nasal strips to ease blockages, nose cones to prop the area open, or herbal nasal sprays. Your GP can refer you to an ENT specialist if these don't help.



3 SUPPLEMENT YOUR SNOOZE

These days, many of us are stuck in the sympathetic nervous system, which controls your fight-or-flight emergency mode. This makes it hard to switch off. Ideally, you should mostly function in the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) for normal hormonal regulation. Supplements like magnesium and valerian can increase levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid, a brain messenger that helps get you back.


5 ways to sleep better

Better sleep comes with a host of benefits, from reduced stress and improved concentration to lowered blood pressure. **Dr Karina Patel** explains how to get there

Prioritise posture

Correct spinal alignment is important. Check you're getting support from your pillows and mattress, but that your head isn't too elevated, or scrunched up. Ideally you want your spine flat, so if you're lying on your side, you fill the gap between your head and the mattress and your head stays straight. The same goes for knees and hips: if you sleep on your side, a pillow between your legs can really help.

HEALTHY RECOMMENDS

- **Holland & Barrett Magnesium** (£9.99 100 tablets, 36 points)
 - **Holland & Barrett Valerian Plus** (£9.99, 30 tablets, 36 points)
 - **Puressentiel Respiratory Decongestant Nasal Spray** (£9.99, 15ml, 36 points) 
- All available at hollandandbarrett.com



THE EXPERT

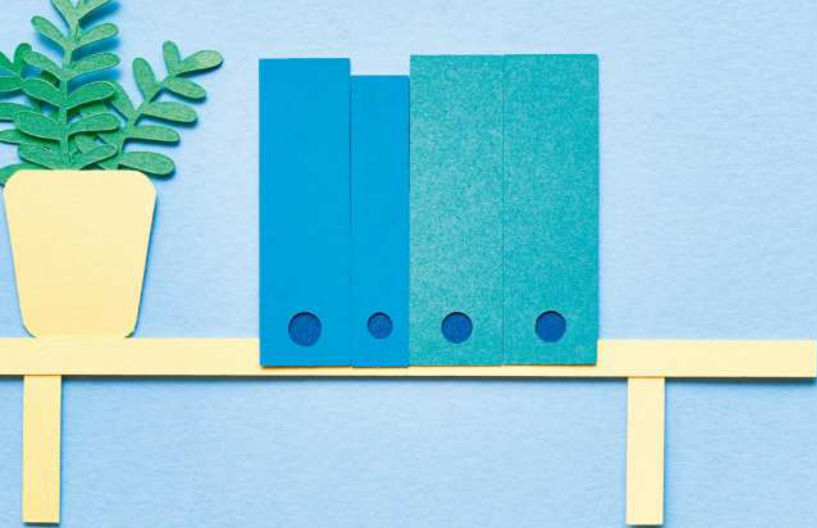


DR KARINA PATEL is a sleep expert, based at The London Sleep Centre, who takes a multidisciplinary approach. She's a specialist in dental sleep medicine and craniofacial pain and director of the TMJ & Sleep Therapy Centre of London.

5 Take a morning walk

Exposing yourself to light first thing does a number of things. It helps regulate body temperature, increases levels of serotonin and suppresses the sleep hormone melatonin decreasing levels wake you up faster. These all help regulate your circadian rhythm, or sleep/wake cycle. Light stimulation will keep you alert in the day, help sleep come at night and get your circadian rhythm working as it should.





SHOULD I TRY IT?

Online therapy

We've relied on Zoom for work meetings and pub quizzes, but could virtual therapy sessions replace face-to-face appointments? Proponents of this practice certainly think so



Coronavirus continues to have knock-on effects on many aspects of healthcare, not least our mental health services. And as we navigate the uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness caused by the pandemic, it's no surprise that many of us have been struggling with emotional wellbeing more than usual. Meanwhile, therapists have been forced to find alternative methods to deliver their services remotely to those in need enter online therapy.

Also known as e-therapy or teletherapy, online therapy relies on technology to help therapists communicate with clients remotely. While our face-to-face interactions are limited, it serves as an interim

solution for those already seeking help *and* an introduction to therapy for those whose mental health has been affected by the pandemic.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

Although you might find it useful to talk to your doctor if you're struggling with your mental health, you don't need a referral from them to start online therapy. If you live in England and are registered with a GP, you can refer yourself online via the NHS service IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Services). They will contact you to ask about what problems you're experiencing, discuss your therapy options and let you know how long you'll have to wait for a session

Alternatively, you could book a private therapy session, which will cost you money, but might offer more treatment options. Just check that your therapist's areas of expertise match up with your needs and look for credentials on their website. Online platforms such as Talkspace ([talkspace.com](https://www.talkspace.com)) and BetterHelp ([betterhelp.com](https://www.betterhelp.com)) help match you with a therapist, while professionals listed on the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) website ([bacp.co.uk](https://www.bacp.co.uk)) have all graduated from a BACP-accredited course – most will offer remote services.

Once you've found a therapist, they'll probably contact you to arrange a consultation. A treatment

case study



"I tried it!"
During lockdown, online therapy services offered a lifeline to

25-year-old Amy Duffy, who suffers with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and depression

A big focus of BPD is not having a fixed identity, and struggling with relationships, low self-worth and paranoia. I also have a history of depression. Just before the pandemic hit, I had an initial NHS assessment and then began talking to a therapist remotely in lockdown. I live alone, so just having someone to speak to was a relief. Sometimes, I wouldn't realise what it was I'd been getting worked up about until I talked things through. I'd also heard about dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), which can help people with BPD. Last year I joined group sessions through a London charity called Body & Soul (bodyandsoulcharity.org). The sessions were a game-changer and I loved the convenience of joining from home. I've also got a workbook to practise skills. Right now, I'm in the best place I've been.

programme might then be offered over a video call service – like Zoom, FaceTime, Skype – or a secure platform unique to your therapist

Alternatively, your therapist might send you exercises to work through at home and offer feedback over a messaging app or via email.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

For anyone who's sheltering, or who lives in a remote or rural area, online therapy offers easy access to mental health services – all you need is an internet connection. Those with mobility issues, or whose job means they're too busy to take time out, or who have caring responsibilities might also prefer to chat with their therapist from home rather than travel to a clinic. If you find it difficult to open up about how you're feeling, or are struggling to leave the house because of agoraphobia, anxiety or depression, online therapy might seem less daunting than face-to-face treatment

If therapists can operate from their own homes rather than rent an office space, they might also be able to offer competitive prices. Plus, your therapy platform might offer

"If you tend to struggle with agoraphobia, online therapy can feel less daunting"

a messaging service, which could help put your worries to rest between appointments

ANY SCIENCE BEHIND IT?

Although concerns have been raised about the potential for therapists to miss important body language cues from clients, several studies have shown that online therapy can be just as effective as face-to-face treatment. That said, much less research has been done on online therapy than traditional services.

ANXIETY DISORDER

In a 2014 study, people suffering with anxiety disorder were assigned a programme of internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). For each module, the participants were given exercises to work through at home, as well as weekly essay questions, which their therapist used to assess their progress. The therapists then provided feedback to their clients using an online messaging service. Nearly half of the treatment group showed an improvement in their anxiety after the programme ended. And it seemed to have a lasting impact – their anxiety levels remained the same a year later

DEPRESSION

Another study looked at whether internet-based CBT might help treat depression. Over eight weeks, 62 participants were assigned internet based or face-to-face CBT. Both groups worked through the same modules. At the end, both groups showed a reduction in symptoms. Interestingly, after a three-month follow up, the results remained stable for the online group, while

symptoms worsened again for the face-to-face group. However, the sample size was small, so larger scale, long-term

studies need to be done before we can determine lasting effects

AGORAPHOBIA

In a Canadian study, people with agoraphobia and panic disorder were offered 12 sessions of remote therapy, using video conference software. Before the trial, all eight participants were experiencing panic attacks but by the end, all saw improvements and five were panic-free. Again, further large-scale studies need to be carried out **h**

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MUSCLE



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THE EDIT

The new studies and stats you need to know about

WHY HOLIDAYS MAKE US HAPPIER

If planning a post-pandemic trip is the only thing keeping you motivated, new research could explain why. A US survey found that individuals who regularly travelled at least 75 miles away from home were 7% happier than people who didn't. While the impact on our overall wellbeing is small compared to work, family and friendships, the results reflect the importance of shaking up our routine and experiencing new things every now and again. The research also showed discussing travel plans with friends means that we're more likely to stick to them. So start name-dropping those dream destinations now for when restrictions lift...

SIMPLE STEPS TO HEART HEALTH

Keeping your ticker in good nick should be a priority for a long, healthy life. And research shows the time it takes you to climb stairs could be an indicator of heart health. The fitness of 165 patients was tested on a treadmill, measured as a metabolic equivalent (MET) score. Then they were timed on how long it took them to climb four flights of stairs at a fast pace. Those who took less than 45 seconds had higher MET scores, indicating healthier hearts. Those who took more than 90 seconds had lower scores, indicating greater health risks. If you take a similar time to climb 60 steps, talk to your GP.

EAT DRIED FRUIT FOR A NUTRIENT BOOST

New US research has found people who ate dried fruit were healthier than those who didn't, partly due to consuming more nutrients like fibre and potassium. To reap the benefits, check labels to ensure no sugar is added, swap for snacks like biscuits, and try sprinkling raisins or chopped dried apricots on porridge – a more nutritious sweetener than sugar. Finally, stick to a small serving size as dried fruit can be easy to overeat (as a portion appears smaller than one of fresh fruit). **6**

That's the percentage of Brits who've gained weight since the first UK lockdown, says research by sweatband.com. With an average gain of 3kg per person, we've put on over 126,000 tonnes (nearly 20 million stone) as a nation. Our weight isn't the only indicator of health – waist measurement might be better – but if you've noticed a change, you might want to look at your lifestyle. If you've been moving less, prioritise daily exercise. And try to break the habit of processed snacks or alcohol for comfort.



SPOTLIGHT ON
SUPPS

CBD

The CBD market is booming, but if you've never tried it, it can be difficult to navigate. So what exactly is it, can it make you high and how much should you take?

It's been a wellness buzzword for several years now, but CBD is only continuing to grow in popularity. With an estimated 11 per cent of Brits having tried it in supplement form, the UK has the largest CBD market in Europe, valued at £400m and projected to reach £1bn by 2025. And with more food, beauty and wellbeing CBD products than ever, it looks like it isn't going away any time soon. Here's what you need to know

WHAT IS IT?

The *Cannabis sativa* plant, otherwise known as hemp, contains at least 144 different chemical compounds called cannabinoids. CBD, or cannabidiol, is one of the most significant. In fact, CBD accounts for 40 per cent of the total cannabinoid content in hemp. CBD is primarily obtained from hemp paste, made from the leaves and flowers of the plant, but it can also be extracted from the seeds. Importantly, CBD is not to be confused with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive compound in hemp that makes you high. The strains of hemp grown for use in supplements have been cultivated to contain extremely low levels of THC.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To understand how CBD interacts with the body, first we have to learn about the endocannabinoid system (ECS). The ECS is a network of molecules called endocannabinoids, which occur naturally in the body. By binding with cannabinoid receptors in the nervous system, they can send messages to the brain about how our body should function. After binding, the endocannabinoids are then broken down by enzymes. We have two main cannabinoid receptors: CB1, found mostly in our central nervous system, and CB2, mostly in the peripheral nervous system. THC binds to both CB1 and

CB2 receptors, which means it can powerfully affect a wide range of bodily processes. This is why cannabis can make you feel hungry or drowsy, and cause side effects such as anxiety. Unlike THC, CBD does not bind to our main endocannabinoid receptors so it can't make you high. Some researchers believe that CBD prevents our endocannabinoids from breaking down, which means they can continue to send signals. Others believe CBD binds to a new receptor we haven't yet discovered

HOW IS CBD OIL MADE?

In order to make CBD oil – the ingredient commonly found in supplements and beauty products

extracted CBD is diluted in hemp seed oil or another carrier such as coconut oil. All CBD products sold at Holland & Barrett use high-quality ingredients, are manufactured by responsible brands and go through rigorous checks to ensure safety.

CBD products described as full spectrum contain all the naturally occurring compounds in hemp, including trace amounts of THC (less than 0.05% – not enough to have any effect), while broad spectrum CBD is THC-free but has other compounds. CBD isolate is the pure form, containing no other compounds.

HOW DO I TAKE IT?

If you've not taken CBD before, start with a small dose of a lower potency product first and then build up if necessary. For tinctures of CBD oil, start with 2.75% strength before trying 5%, or take only one capsule instead of two. Always stick to the label instructions and don't exceed the recommended daily dose. The Food Standards Agency's consumer guidance advises taking no more than 70mg CBD daily. If you're on medication, remember to speak to your doctor before using CBD supplements, and keep out of the reach of children

CBD FOR BEAUTY

Some early studies have suggested that CBD oil might have a positive effect on the skin.

Addressing oily skin and acne

Researchers found that CBD oil may reduce the production of excess sebum. Due to the reduced production of sebum, CBD oil in beauty products can also help reduce the likeliness of spots and pimples as well as reduce the appearance of redness.

Helping to reduce the appearance of wrinkles

CBD is a powerful antioxidant so could stop free-radical damage that causes skin ageing. **6**

How can I take it?

CBD supplements come in many forms. **Pureis Ultra Pure CBD 20mg** (£17.99, 7 capsules, 68 points) are easy to swallow, while **Jacob Hooy 5% CBD Oil + Vitamin D3** (£31.99, 10ml, 124 points) can be dropped on your tongue for quick absorption. CBD oil has a distinctive taste so can take some getting used to, but **Love Hemp 300mg CBD Spray** (£14.99, 30ml, 56 points) has a raspberry flavour. The innovative **Reakira RxPen** (£44.99, 10ml, 176 points) delivers a measured dose of raw hemp paste with a simple click. CBD also comes in skin creams, muscle balms, soft drinks and herbal teas, and often contain extra nutrients such as B vitamins or magnesium. All products available at hollandandbarrett.com



THE LOWDOWN ON

Dreams

Sleep research has revealed an increase in strange and vivid dreams since the start of the pandemic. But what do these subconscious experiences mean in the real world?



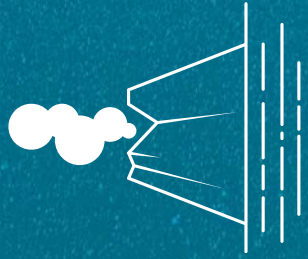
WHY DO WE DREAM?

There's plenty of research linking sleep to health, but less is known about our sleep hallucinations, or dreams. We do know that dreams occur most strongly during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and that they are autobiographical in that they tend to be influenced by what's going on in our lives.

COVID DREAM METAPHORS

These could all represent the virus in your dreams...

- Zombies
- A swarm of bugs
- A mass shooting
- Shadowy figures
- Monsters
- A natural disaster



They help us to process emotions

In a UK study, subjects were asked to keep a diary, then monitored while sleeping in a 'dream lab'. Researchers found brainwave intensity was linked to the number of 'diary items' popping up in dreams. This suggests intense dream activity occurs when our brains are processing recent emotional experiences.



THE POWER OF LUCID DREAMS

These occur when you're consciously aware you're dreaming, and you can learn to positively influence them. By removing stressors like digital devices, settling down early and thinking about dreams you'd like to experience, you're more likely to manifest a positive experience.



62 *That's the percentage of us who got just as much sleep, if not more, during lockdown. Remember: more sleep tends to mean more REM sleep, which means more dreaming.*



WHAT CAUSED 'QUARANDREAMS'?

AKA bizarre dreams during lockdown. Big life changes (such as being cooped up at home for weeks on end!) can result in vivid dreams, but it may also be as simple as having more lie-ins thanks to working from home. As morning alarms tend to interrupt REM sleep, in which we dream most vividly, those of us who ditched them during lockdown were more likely to recall our dreams.

Nightmares worrying you?

A herbal remedy might help. Schwabe Vitano Rhodiola 200mg (£7.99, 16 tablets, 28 points, holland andbarrett.com) could offer temporary relief from stress symptoms, and Holland & Barrett Lemon Balm 171mg (£9.99, 30 capsules, 36 points, hollandandbarrett.com) may ease mild anxiety. If recurring nightmares are affecting quality of life, talk to your GP.

27,100



People dream about their teeth falling out each month, according to research by Mattress Next Day. No one knows why. While some experts say it's a general sign of stress, others believe it's more specifically linked to insecurities about our appearance. Interestingly, research indicates that dreams about tooth-loss are more common in women going through menopause.

THE FULL SPECTRUM

Most of us dream in colour, with a small percentage dreaming in black and white. Soft pastel shades are the colours most commonly experienced.

35%
That's the increase in our dream recall since the start of the pandemic, according to a French study. 15% of participants also reported experiencing more negative dreams than usual.



THE GENDER DREAM GAP

Research from Harvard University found that women's dreams were more strongly affected than men's during the pandemic. Women showed significantly higher rates of negative emotions and health worries compared to pre-pandemic dreams, but the effects were less pronounced for men.

THE NAKED TRUTH

Psychoanalysts believe that dreaming about being starkers in public could be linked to feelings of vulnerability or insecurity. Perhaps you're preparing for a presentation at work and don't want to mess it up, or you're hoping for a new relationship to flourish.





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“A plant-based diet will help you live longer”

Losing her father prompted Dr Gemma Newman to take a closer look at how nutrition affects our health. Her book, *The Plant Power Doctor*, was the result

Eating plant-based can be life-changing – people don’t realise until they try it. I’ve seen patients reverse diabetes or eliminate menopause symptoms simply by adapting their diet. I’ve also had patients who have niggling high blood pressure. Eating plant-based has helped them reduce it. You don’t have to go 100 per cent plant-based – start with one meal or make simple switches. If you love spaghetti bolognese, try a lentil version with herbs. Or add one more vegetable or pulse, for example, by stirring chickpeas into a curry.

Menopausal women can benefit from soya in their diet. Minimally processed soya contains selective oestrogen receptor modulators [which influence how the body responds to oestrogen]. There are two main types of oestrogen receptors – alpha and beta. Soya binds mainly to beta receptors, mostly found in bone, and there’s some evidence to suggest it can help improve bone health during menopause. As soya is less likely to bind to alpha receptors in the breast and womb, it may reduce the long-term risk of breast and endometrial cancers. If you’re going through menopause, try a portion of edamame or tofu daily.

The American College of Cardiology states plant-based eating is one of the best ways to prevent heart disease. My father dying of a heart attack in his 50s was a big incentive for me to make the shift. As a young medic, I didn’t look after myself. I felt sluggish and could barely keep my eyes open. Something had to change, so I started to exercise and eat healthily. But even when I hit my fitness goals, dropped a few dress sizes and felt fantastic, I had



raised cholesterol. My grandfather had died from a heart attack, and when my father met the same fate, I thought that was my genetic destiny. But then I read about the benefits of a plant-based diet and decided to try it. After a month, I was amazed to find my cholesterol was normal.

Eating plant-based could speed up recovery time for runners. Several years ago, my husband had to keep halting his marathon training because of injuries. He started reading about runners like Scott Jurek, and realised they ate plant-based diets, so thought he’d give it a go. He improved his marathon time by an hour and 10 minutes. The increased antioxidant content of a plant-based diet helped him recover more quickly.

Blue zones are areas in the world where research has found people live longer. And their inhabitants tend to eat a 90-95 per cent plant-based diet. I eat 100 per cent plant-based now, as I believe the further you can go with it, the more benefits you’ll experience. **📧** For a chance to win a copy of *The Plant Power Doctor* by Dr Gemma Newman (Ebury Press, £16.99), sign up to our email newsletter at healthy-magazine.co.uk and keep an eye on your inbox. Dr Gemma presents *The Wellness Edit* podcast – download now from major podcast platforms

healthy promotion

The power of nature

Reakiro's innovative gold-standard CBD range delivers *all* the natural qualities of hemp

Thanks to the events of the past year, we're all more focused on our health and wellbeing than ever before. And that's led to more and more people talking about CBD, as they discover how to incorporate it into their daily routine. But if you're new to CBD, it can be difficult to get your head round, as it is a complicated topic.

However, Reakiro have done the hard work for you to keep things simple. That's because they've got a product to suit everyone – whether you've heard a lot about CBD recently and are thinking of trying it for the first time, or you're already a CBD enthusiast.

Working with their customers to take on board their feedback, Reakiro have developed a wide range of innovative products that deliver CBD in a variety of strengths and formats including oils, sprays, raw hemp extract and gel capsules.

NOTHING TAKEN OUT

Put simply, Reakiro literally means recovery. New to the UK, Reakiro's mission is to help people discover the best in CBD products. Their premium CBD extracts contain the whole plant – this is known as full-spectrum CBD, considered the gold standard. And they are all fully 'seed to shelf', meaning there is focus on quality, consistency and traceability: every batch of CBD

extract is tested in an independent laboratory. Right from the start of the process, Reakiro care about finding the very best strains of hemp, cultivated across Europe. Careful extraction ensures all the natural cannabinoids, terpenes and flavonoids in the plant are preserved

SAFE AND VERSATILE

Be reassured that Reakiro products have minimal to no trace of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychoactive compound that can cause 'highs' and mind-altering effects. The low-THC strain of hemp they use ensures that levels of THC will always be lower than 0.05%.

All Reakiro products are non GMO and gluten-free – and the Oil (tinctures), Spray and RxPen are vegan-friendly too, ensuring there truly is something for everyone in the range. No surprise, then, that Reakiro was selected by an independent review as a top-three brand in Europe for the best CBD oils in 2020.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE REAKIRO CBD RANGE?

The innovative **Reakiro Raw Hemp Extract Hemp RxPen** delivers CBD extract as a paste that resembles hemp in its purest form, with all the natural cannabinoids and terpenes preserved. Delivering 25mg of CBD in each click, this unique airless device ensures the paste stays fresh from the first to the last (40th) click.

For those not so keen on the 'earthy' taste of hemp, **Reakiro CBD Gel Capsules** contain full-spectrum CBD in a flavourless, easy to swallow capsule, available in four strengths. Each capsule is precisely measured, so you don't have to worry about the dosage – they've done all the hard work for you! If you're new to CBD, start with the lowest dose and work up to a stronger dose if necessary.

Then there are the **Reakiro CBD Oil** tinctures, one of their most popular products, developed in a range of strengths – from 300mg up to 1000mg. Like all Reakiro products, these premium tinctures have been tested both by Reakiro's in-house PhD Chemists and by Europe's leading testing specialists – so you can take them with confidence.

Finally, full-spectrum CBD extract is combined with the fresh taste of peppermint in **Reakiro CBD Oil Spray**. It's a great on-the-go option – one spray is one serving, making it the convenient way to add CBD to your busy day.



REAKIRO

Not suitable for use during pregnancy, breastfeeding or by persons under the age of 18. Food supplements must not be used as a substitute for a varied and balanced diet. Always read the label. Photograph / Stockby Getty Images



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READER OFFER



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Terms & conditions: 1 Standard terms and conditions for all giveaways, competitions and offers that appear in healthy magazine can be found on page 126. 2 The closing date is 27 March 2021 unless specified otherwise

fitness

THE BEST FITNESS INSPO, TRENDS AND WORKOUTS

We were already spending too much time sitting down – then WFH came along, meaning most of us were doing even more of it. Experts have been increasingly vocal about the negative health impact of our sedentary lifestyles – 10 hours or more of daily sedentary time is linked to serious ill health and a heightened risk of death, particularly among people who are physically inactive. But the good news is that, according to new World Health Organization global guidelines, those effects can be offset by exceeding your weekly recommended exercise levels. Thirty to 40 daily minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity substantially weakens this risk, bringing it down to levels associated with very low amounts of sedentary time.

‘Although the new guidelines reflect the best available science, there are still some gaps in our knowledge. We are still not clear, for example, where exactly the bar for “too much sitting” is,’ said co-editor Professor Emmanuel Stamatakis, of the University of Sydney. ‘But people can still protect their health and offset the harmful effects of physical inactivity. As these guidelines emphasise, all physical activity counts and any amount of it is better than none.’





Your injury prevention plan

Gym closures and lockdowns have led to a surge in exercise-related injuries as we work out alone. Here's how to cut your risk

THE EXPERTS



LOU NICHOLETTOS is a chartered physiotherapist with special interest in running injuries and back pain. cornwallphysio.co.uk



LAURA DALBY is a soft-tissue therapist at Flexology Studio, specialising in injuries. flexologystudio.com

A recent study by Bupa UK found that 7.2 million adults suffered exercise related injury in the first lockdown. These ranged from sprains to pulled muscles, damaged knees, backs and ankles. Specialist chartered physiotherapist Lou Nicholettos isn't surprised. 'The biggest risk factor for injuries is change,' she explains. 'And in March last year, the change to everybody's habits and lifestyles was huge.'

Nearly a third of us increased our exercise, and one in five tried something new. But the rise in injuries is not just down to switching from Zumba to running, or going from nothing to doing Joe Wicks workouts five days a week. When it comes to injury prevention, it's what we do when we're *not* exercising that matters.

'The lockdown caused our baseline activity levels to plummet. Without having to walk to the station, or get a sandwich at lunchtime, people became incredibly sedentary. That coupled with taking up different activities when their usual classes were cancelled wrought havoc,' says Nicholettos. 'If you sit at a desk for eight hours a day, even if you then go out for a run, overall you're very inactive.'

METHOD TO YOUR MOVEMENT

Running saw a boom in 2020, but research from sportswear brand Asics found that 47 per cent of new joggers lacked knowledge about how to avoid pain, 43 per cent didn't know



how to avoid injury, and almost a third had no clue how to create a training programme.

'Statistically, you're most likely to get injured in your first six months as a runner,' says Nicholettos, 'because your body needs to adapt.' This is also why uncertainty around building a training regime is a key factor. 'Even for someone who is usually fit and goes to the gym five times a week, if they've replaced that with running five times a week that's a different way of using your body, with a lot of demand on your bones and tendons.'

To avoid these strains and pains, you should increase exercise gradually. Try following an online plan such as the NHS Couch to 5K. You should also up your baseline activity. 'If you have just taken up HIIT classes or running,



TAKE IT EASIER

If you feel pain during a workout, reduce your tempo or effort level, then ease it back up slowly.

you need to also go for a walk at lunchtime, do some stretches or yoga for 10-20 minutes, stand up when you're on zoom calls. Scatter movement through your day,' says Nicholettos.

WARMING UP

It's also important to take the right approach to warming up. 'There's limited evidence to support static stretches,' says Nicholettos. These are where you hold a stretched position without movement. But Nicholettos prefers a more dynamic start to your workout.

Laura Dalby, a soft-tissue therapist at Flexology Studio, agrees: 'Start off by doing a slower version of the exercise. So if you're going for a run, walk, then ease into a jog, and then run. If you don't, tight areas from where

you've been sitting all day are not ready for exercise so they're slow to react, and won't give you the range of movement you need.' This is why you see Olympic athletes jogging, or jumping at the start line. 'It's getting the blood pumping faster, so you're ready.'

There's one instance where a few static stretches may be helpful, according to Dalby. 'Those whose muscles are quite inflexible, should do both static and dynamic stretching.' If that's you, take a bit of time holding each static stretch for 40 seconds to a minute.

COOLING DOWN

At the end of your workout, keep your 'cooling down' simple. 'Just allow circulation and body temperature to return to normal gradually ♦♦

by walking around a little bit,' advises Nicholettos. The key thing, whatever you've done, is not to just crash.

'We've pumped blood all around our body quickly. If we then just stop, it can lead to dizziness or cold hands and feet,' says Dalby. 'I know it's tempting to give it that extra push to sprint to the door, but walk round the block for one or two minutes after. That would be the same for everything – so with cycling, for example, ease off a little bit towards the end.'

LOOK AT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Both experts also point to wider aspects of our lifestyle feeding into our risk of injury. 'Two people could be doing the same exercise routine, but if one isn't sleeping well and isn't recovering properly, they're much more likely to get injured,' says Nicholettos. 'You need to look after your diet, sleep, and recovery.'

Dalby also highlights stress: 'If we go from a workout straight into a stressful environment, that impairs recovery.' So take that little bit of time to bring your heart rate down. 'Doing a full-body "pencil" stretch is a great idea,' advises Dalby. 'A lot of people never stretch their hands above their head and get up onto tiptoes, but it really helps with energy and mood. It's uplifting. Do that each lunchtime.'

KNOW YOURSELF

Get to know your body better, too. 'A lot of injuries occur because we're not aware of the tight areas or weaknesses in our bodies,' says Dalby. Identifying where we need some work by comparing left and right – is key.

'Lay on your back and do a hamstring stretch, where you raise a leg in the air using a towel. If it's harder with one leg than the other, you need to pay more attention to that side.' Other ways you can test imbalances and spot tightness are simple things like sitting cross-legged or even doing up your bra.

ENTER MAINTENANCE MODE

Crucially, stop thinking of stretching only as something to do before or after exercise. 'I would love to see people put a 20-minute stretching session in the week, as their third or fourth exercise day,' says Dalby. 'That way, you'll go into your exercise in a better position, preventing injury rather than patching things up on exercise days.'



INJURY CLINIC

**RUNNER'S KNEE**

A catch-all term to describe injuries causing pain around the kneecap. 'It's caused by a lack of strength in the muscles that support the knee, especially around the hip and glutes. It's a biomechanical injury, that nearly always needs treating by improving running technique,' says Nicholettos. 'Prolonged sitting means you get weaker in your hip and glutes, which are important to protect the knee joint, too.'

Stretch it 'Stretch the outside of your thighs,' says Dalby. 'Stand and cross your legs, then reach down to each side to stretch your iliotibial band (ITB), because that's what's pulling around the knees.'

**SHIN SPLINTS**

Caused by excessive stress, shin splints refers to aching or throbbing pain in the shin. 'Again, it's biomechanical and to do with technique and a lack of strength. You need to be strong and flexible in the right places and allow yourself time to get used to running,' says Nicholettos. 'You get temporary relief by stretching your calf. But never push through it – stop and walk home.'

Stretch it 'Look at the range of motion in your ankles and feet,' says Dalby. 'Make rotating ankles part of dynamic stretching. Then stretch your calves – lean your hands on a wall with one knee bent and one leg back. This also focuses on the ankle.'

**PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

This is pain on the bottom of the foot, around the heel and arch. It's often particularly painful when you start walking after sleep or rest. 'It's linked to general health, too much too soon, a lack of strength around the hips or it can be to do with foot posture,' says Nicholettos. 'Rolling a tennis ball or a plastic bottle filled with ice under your foot will give temporary relief, but you'll need advice from a physio to address the underlying problems.'

Stretch it 'Work on ankles and calves,'

says Dalby. 'So do calf stretches, but also use a foam roller on the fascia [the tissues connecting your heel to your toes] at the bottom of the foot.'

**BACK INJURIES**

'The latest thinking on back pain is rather than looking at *how* we're sitting, looking at *how much* we're sitting,' says Nicholettos. 'Be like a cat. If they've been sat for a while, they do a whole stretching routine. Also, sit-to-stand desks are absolutely brilliant.'

Stretch it 'Because hamstrings are often tight, the compensation pattern gives you pain in your back,' says Dalby. 'Lie down, keeping your back flat, and raise your legs, one after the other, using a towel around the foot. A pec stretch in a doorway really helps too, when we get tight around the chest from hunching over computers.'

**ACHILLES TENDINITIS**

A result of overuse of the Achilles tendon, causing pain along the back of the leg near the heel. 'It's linked to doing too much too soon, but also blood sugar, hormones and circulation,' says Nicholettos. 'At perimenopause, you're more likely to get tendon issues. Gradually increasing how much you're doing makes a big difference, and strengthening the muscles that support the tendon.'

Stretch it 'Do calf raises on a step, as a form of dynamic stretching,' says Dalby. 'But if you have pain, you should always seek advice.'

**PULLED MUSCLES AND SPRAINED ANKLES**

'Pulled muscles could occur if you've been very still all day, then do something high-intensity without warming up, while most often sprained ankles are just caused by bad luck, tripping over something,' says Nicholettos. 'They're both trauma injuries, so the treatment is RICE (rest, ice, elevation, and compression) for the first 24-48 hours.' **h**

healthy promotion

A fresh new look

Proven to protect our eye health as we age, MACU-SAVE contains the highest-quality vision-protective ingredients – now with sleek new packaging

We all want a fresh start in 2021 and for eye health supplement MACU-SAVE, this means embracing a whole new look, with sleek, sophisticated new packaging. But inside you'll find exactly the same high-quality vision protecting product as ever.

MACU-SAVE is an easy-to-swallow, one-a-day food supplement, which provides advanced nutrition for the eyes. As we grow older, our eye health comes under pressure, so it's important to protect it. In particular, the macula at the back of the eye – responsible for clarity of central vision and allowing us to see detail – can become damaged. Age-related macular decline (AMD) is the most common cause of sight-loss for over-50s and while it doesn't cause total blindness, it can make everyday tasks more difficult.

FOOD FOR YOUR EYES

Our macular pigment is made up of three carotenoids: lutein, meso-zeaxanthin and zeaxanthin. As our bodies can't produce lutein or zeaxanthin, we risk macular damage

if we don't get enough through our diet. This is why it might be a good idea to use a targeted eye supplement, like MACU-SAVE.

NATURALLY SOURCED

The three macular carotenoids in MACU-SAVE are all of the highest-quality, harvested from the marigold plant, *Tagetes erecta*. These include FloraGLO Lutein and OPTISHARP Natural Zeaxanthin

both of which have been clinically proven to enhance quality of vision and visual performance.

In fact, FloraGLO Lutein is the most clinically researched lutein brand worldwide, with over 90 human clinical trials published. Its bioavailability is similar to lutein obtained from foods. MACU-SAVE is suitable for diabetics, gluten-free, yeast-free, lactose-free and contains no artificial preservatives or sweeteners.



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{ GET STARTED }

weight training

Working out with weights isn't just for men. Resistance training improves muscle tone and builds bone density – so reap the benefits

Ever glanced across at the weights area of the gym, only to be put off actually going there by the presence of a few muscly men? Fight the fear – likelihood is they'll be focused on their own workout, and not you. 'The key is to walk over to those weights with confidence,' says Samantha Stone, instructor at boutique fitness studio chain, Barry's (barrys.com). Once you're there, don't feel self-conscious if a pair of light dumbbells is the best that you can manage. 'Like changes in any routine, it's usually beneficial to start small and build it up.'

For anyone worried about form, it might be worth booking a few sessions with a personal trainer to check that you're carrying out the moves safely. 'If you're unsure, even a few one-to-one sessions can help to refine your technique,' says Stone. Once you've mastered the basics, you can move on to solo training at home or in the gym, or have a go at group classes. 'The beauty of a class such as LIFT at Barry's is that it offers weight options for everyone from less experienced lifters right up to very confident and strong clients,' says Stone. 'Everyone is encouraged to work at the appropriate tempo for them and take breaks when they feel they need to.'

Don't let the fear of bulking up stop you from progressing to heavier weights either. Our body composition means that most women can't build huge muscles, even if they want to. 'In reality, it would take a lot of effort for women to create extra bulk,' says Stone, who points out that women who compete in body building competitions follow particularly strict diets,

taking added supplements to help build muscle mass. 'Contrary to the misconceptions, weight training can actually be an efficient way of losing weight.'

THE BENEFITS

While cardio should have a place in our fitness routines, balancing it with strength work can help you avoid injury. 'Weight training becomes more important as you get older,' says Stone. As it helps improve bone density, it's recommended we do muscle-strengthening work at least two days of the week. 'It also helps you maintain a better posture,' she adds. In addition to improving muscle tone and burning fat, Stone believes resistance work can improve self-esteem. 'Weight training can help individuals feel empowered as they become physically stronger.'

WHAT KIT DO I NEED?

The first, obvious thing is weights. These come in a range of forms – kettlebells, barbells, medicine balls – but dumbbells also do the trick. 'Use small weights for moves that work your arms, medium weights for upper body work and heavier weights for lower body and compound movements, such as deadlifts and squats,' says Stone. If you don't want to spend a fortune, go for something in-between. 'You're best off purchasing a medium-sized pair of dumbbells and doing fewer reps on smaller muscle groups and a higher number on bigger ones.' When it comes to clothing, choose an opaque pair of leggings or shorts you'll feel comfortable squatting in and a racerback sports bra that won't limit movement. **b**



The fitness tracker

Whether you're pounding pavements or finding your Zen, this easy-to-use tracker can help you reach your goals. With heart-rate monitoring, guided breathing, sleep tools and up to 10 days battery life.

Fitbit Inspire 2, £89.99, [fitbit.com](https://www.fitbit.com)



The backpack

Made completely from synthetic recycled materials, the innovative dyeing process involved in this bag's production means that 10 litres of water are saved.

Crosstrail 24, £85, [jack-wolfskin.co.uk](https://www.jack-wolfskin.co.uk)

Whether you're starting a new regime or looking to raise your game to new levels, these performance-tested bits of kit will help you smash your fitness goals

Your high-tech kit list

FITNESS

The cycling sunnies

The wrap-around design protects your peepers, while semi-rimless frames allow you to see more. Plus the lenses enhance colour and contrast for clearer vision of the road ahead.

Sutro Lite, £143, [oakley.com](https://www.oakley.com)



The parka

High-tech waterproof fabric protects you from the elements, while allowing sweat to escape. Designed for equestrians, it has a zippered back vent, which comfortably fits around a saddle.

Tempest Insulated H2O Parka, £295, [ariat.com](https://www.ariat.com)



The smart scale

Not your average bathroom scale, this one calculates your average weight over time, as well as your body fat percentage, muscle mass and hydration levels – and it even tells you the weather.

Index S2 Smart Scale, £129.99, garmin.com



The leggings

Designed to keep you warm, these leggings also wick sweat away from your body, helping you stay dry. The seams wrap around your largest muscles to offer support when you feel the burn.

Alphaskin Cold Weather Leggings, £37.95, adidas.co.uk



The earphones

These wireless earphones come with a portable charging case for up to 30 hours of playtime. A touch interface lets you switch tracks and answer calls without reaching for your phone.

Beoplay E8 Sport, £300, bang-olufsen.com



The bonding bracelets

Like to run without your phone? These paired bracelets let you send your partner or roommate a quick buzz notification to let them know you're safe – much easier than texting mid-jog

Pair Of Bracelets, £93, bond-touch.com



The puffer jacket

This high-performance puffer bounces your body heat back to you to keep you up to 20 per cent warmer. Body mapping technology helps provide pockets of heat where you need them most.

Women's Combust Reflect Jacket, £200, berghaus.com

The trainers

These foamy soles have been specially engineered for comfort – it's like running on a cloud. What's more, the breathable upper is built to stretch with you, offering a soft, supportive fit.

Women's Fresh Foam 1080v11, £135, newbalance.co.uk





“I knew that setting
a goal would help
me recover”

Experiencing first hand the detrimental effects of taboos around women's health, Andrea Mason, 38, from Blackpool, took on an epic challenge to raise awareness

It was around three hours into the swim when the sickness hit. Due to closing weather windows I'd had to start in the middle of the night. Having no fixed point of reference, with only the boat bobbing up and down in my eyeline, was making me really nauseous. Then a voice in my head said, "I don't know how I'm going to do this." I still had nearly five days of continuous effort to go.

"Thankfully, my brain then revisited all the reasons I was doing what I was doing, and I knew there was no way that I couldn't finish. I just needed to keep putting one arm in front of the other. And that's how it went for the next few days – whenever I had a low moment, I had to take stock and think about my motivations.

"I've suffered from endometriosis ever since I started my first period. I've always had pain above and beyond what's considered normal. But for far too long I was just told that's what it's like, and I needed to "grow into" my periods. I suffered a lot, particularly at school. Heavy bleeding meant that I was always running out of class to change, and it was embarrassing.

"When I was 14, the pain was so bad that my mum took me to A&E. They rushed me into theatre and took out my appendix for no reason. They didn't do any other checks and couldn't understand why there was nothing wrong with my appendix. My whole life I've been being going into A&E and sent home with a hot water bottle and instructions to take painkillers.

"I wasn't officially diagnosed with endometriosis until I was 24. Even now, it takes on average seven-and-a-half years for somebody to get diagnosed. Both in my case and other people's, I believe that delay is down to a lack of education and awareness. Education is key – it removes taboos and aids understanding."

INCREASING AWARENESS

"I've had 10 surgeries for endometriosis, but I also had some large fibroids and a condition called adenomyosis, basically an inflammation of the womb. This led to me being told I needed a hysterectomy in 2017. Afterwards, they found that I'd had stage 1B cervical cancer.



Cycling around Mont Blanc; opposite, Andrea in action, swimming across Lake Annecy.

"I already knew that I wanted to do something to help raise awareness of endometriosis, and this revelation added to my motivations. I want to make sure that young women and girls are having their cervical screening tests, because I was one of those who didn't. I always had an excuse, never found the time, and just didn't understand the importance of regular screening. Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that can be treated if detected early.

"I was in hospital recovering, mulling this all over with my husband, Carl. I knew that setting myself a goal would help me recover. I've been sporty all my life and done a lot of triathlons and similar challenges, so I needed this one to be bigger, and I knew I wanted to use it as a platform to raise awareness. We ruled out swimming the channel and climbing Mont Blanc (we live in Chamonix, France) because lots of other people have already done those things. Carl then jokingly said, "Why don't you do both, and cycle in between?" We laughed it off but over the next few weeks it kept playing on my mind. I researched whether anyone else had ever done it – they hadn't – and my mind was made up.

"So in September 2019 I set off on an 11-hour swim across the Channel. Starting was amazing because I knew then I'd already achieved something, given the ♦♦



Clockwise from left: on the cycling leg of Andrea's sea-to-summit mission; hiking through the alpine landscape; two wheels good; tired but happy at the end; day one, ready for her Channel swim



amount of pressure I'd felt beforehand. Logistics and the weather had been a nightmare, and in March I'd been knocked off my bike by a truck and broken my arm. It was plated and pinned back together, and the very first time I got back on a bike in May I fell off and broke it again. You couldn't make it up! So to put my foot in the water and know I'd managed to get back to a position where I could swim 34km was a huge relief.'

THE WATER CURE

'While swimming through the night was mentally very challenging, overall the swim couldn't have gone better. The whole way across I didn't get stung by a single jellyfish. However, on my 500m swim back to the boat, I got stung three times! But after that it all fell into place. I had some high points on the bike – from someone bringing me a portion of chips in the middle of the night to seeing friends and family who'd come to support me.'

'The climb was the biggest unknown as I haven't done much alpine hiking. There's a gully on Mont Blanc called the Grand Couloir which can only be crossed on foot and is quite dangerous. I was afraid and had built it up to be a lot worse than it was, so once I was over that I felt amazing, and knew I was going to make it to the top.'

'Finishing was just awesome. There were a lot of different emotions flying around from relief to pride,

"Someone bringing me a portion of chips in the night was a high point on the bike"

the perimeter of Lake Annecy (38 km), cycling around Mont Blanc (330km) and running/hiking the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (170 km). It sounds clichéd, but again, any low moments were quickly chased away when I remembered why I was doing it. Next I plan to swim the three longest lakes in Wales, England and Scotland, run the traditional Three Peaks (the three highest mountains in Wales, England and Scotland) and then cycle all the bits in between – all in the space of five days.'

Andrea is founder of Lady Talk Matters, a charity that aims to remove taboos around women's reproductive health. ladytalkmatters.org

but overall I was so happy to show people that you really can do anything if you set your mind to it. You do have to train and have a plan – but if you're willing to put the work and effort in then you really can achieve anything.'

'A year later I wanted to stress how important it was that women continue to get health screenings during the pandemic, so I took on a new challenge – swimming

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healthy promotion

Just flow with it

With benefits for physical and mental health, yoga is like medicine for the body. Here's how to get started

It's no surprise that yoga fast became our favourite activity of 2020. As well as slotting easily into our home-based lives, its mental health benefits meant it became a lifeline for many during lockdown. Plus our increasingly sedentary lives meant we were all in need of a good stretch. Yoga tones and strengthens the entire body while also improving balance, flexibility and breathing. It supports cardio health, reduces injury risk and can even help you lose weight. Plus it's proven to decrease stress and fight depression.

GET STARTED

Thanks to online tutorials, getting your flow on is easy to do anywhere, and all you need is a yoga mat and comfortable clothes. You can include blocks, bolsters and straps,

and alignment mats (with markings to guide your body) are good if you can't get to a class.

Search for videos or classes suited to your level. If you're a beginner, first try to master the basic poses (or asanas), such as downward facing dog, child's pose and savasana. Focus on pressing your hands or feet into the floor, lengthening your spine and relaxing your hips. Your instructor will likely guide your breathing, too – so try to learn awareness of your breath.

YOGA FOR EVERYBODY

Remember, everyone of any size, shape and fitness level can benefit from yoga. Don't be intimidated by terminology or deterred if your body makes different shapes to those around you. Just let go of any expectations and enjoy

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food

VEGGIE AND VEGAN TRENDS, NUTRITION ADVICE AND RECIPES



An avocado a day keeps your gut microbes happy, according to a new study. Avocados have long been the poster food for wellness, and now it seems we can add better gut health to their powers. The researchers found that people who ate avocado every day as part of a meal had a greater abundance of gut microbes which break down fibre and produce metabolites that support gut health. They also had greater microbial diversity compared to people who did not receive the avocado meals in the study. 'Microbial metabolites are compounds produced by microbes that influence health,' says Sharon Thompson, nutritional scientist and lead author on the paper, published in the *Journal Of Nutrition*. 'Avocado consumption reduced bile acids and increased short-chain fatty acids. These changes correlate with beneficial health outcomes,' she explains.

Avocado is an energy-dense food that's also nutrient dense, containing vital micronutrients we don't generally get enough of, like fibre and potassium. 'It's just a really nicely packaged fruit that contains nutrients important for health. Our work shows we can add benefits to gut health to that list,' says co-author Hannah Holscher.



BAKE OFF

Spring's long weekends are the perfect time to take your baking to a lighter level, using tofu and vegan ingredients

Sweet Sunday rolls

Serves 4

80g coconut oil, plus a little extra for greasing the dish

40g desiccated coconut

100g soft light brown sugar

1 tsp ground cinnamon

300g plain or wholemeal flour, plus extra for dusting your work surface

2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp cream of tartar

150ml plant milk

100g raisins

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

90ml maple or barley malt syrup

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 7, and grease a 28cm round baking dish or similar ovenproof dish with a generous coating of coconut oil. Sprinkle the desiccated coconut over the greased dish jostling it a little to distribute evenly.

2 Combine the sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Sprinkle half of the

cinnamon sugar over the coconut coated baking dish. In a separate bowl, mix the flour, bicarbonate of soda and cream of tartar. Add the 80g coconut oil and use a table knife to 'cut' it into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the plant milk and stir well, then knead to a firm dough using your hands. Lightly flour a work surface.

3 Turn out the dough and shape it into a rough rectangle. Use a rolling pin (or simply press with your hands) to flatten it into a bigger rectangle of about 20×30cm, with a thickness of about 1.5cm. With the long edge closest to you, spread the raisins over the dough, leaving a gap of about 3cm all around the edges. Lightly press the raisins into the dough. Sprinkle the remaining cinnamon sugar over the raisins, and drizzle with the olive oil and half of the syrup. Roll the dough into a log from the long edge, working away from you. Press firmly as you roll

to ensure that the filling is properly embedded. Check that the ends and long edge are closed – if necessary, dampen edges and press together to seal. Using a bread knife, cut into slices 3cm thick. Lay the slices flat in the baking dish, leaving a little room between each one. Bake for 15 minutes.

4 While the rolls are baking, cut a piece of baking paper large enough to cover the dish. When rolls are cooked set dish on a wire rack. Lay the baking paper over the dish and put a large plate or tray upside down on top of the paper, with the baking dish centred underneath. Using oven gloves, lift the dish and plate, holding them firmly together as you turn them over.

5 Leave the baking dish upside down on the plate for 2-3 minutes, then lift off. Collect and spread any coconut mixture left in the dish over the rolls. Drizzle the remaining syrup over the rolls while still hot. Cool for 10-15 minutes, and eat while still warm.

Baked, lemon-scented pancakes

Serves 4-6

For the pancakes

340ml plain soya milk

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp baking powder

Grated zest of 1 lemon

215g plain flour

Coconut or sunflower oil, for frying

For the filling

340g firm tofu

685ml thick soya or oat cream

Pinch of salt

Freshly squeezed juice of 2 lemons

Grated zest of 3 lemons, plus extra to garnish

Grown rice or agave syrup, to taste

30-60g raisins (optional)

You will need

A 23 x 30cm baking pan or ovenproof dish, well oiled

1 For the pancakes, m'x the soya milk and 225ml water in a bowl. St'r in the salt, baking powder and lemon zest. Gradually add the flour, whisk'ng vigorously unt' smooth. The batter should be thicker than egg-based pancake batter. Rest for 15 minutes.

2 Heat a heavy-based frying pan and brush a little oil over 't. When hot, pour

a small ladle of batter into the pan and t' t the pan to spread the batter evenly over the surface. Once the edges turn golden brown, flip over and cook until golden on the reverse. Transfer to a plate, re-oil the pan and keep mak'ng pancakes in this way until the batter 's used up. Try to make them quite thin – that should give you 10 pancakes.

3 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Put the tofu, 225ml of the cream, salt, lemon juice and zest

and syrup, to taste, 'n a food processor and blend until smooth. M'x in the ra's'ns, 'f using, and add a little more syrup 'f you w'sh.

4 Divide the fil'ng between the pancakes, spread'ng it over each one. Roll them up tightly and arrange 'n the prepared baking pan. Pour rema'ning cream over the pancakes and garn'sh w'th lemon zest. Bake in the oven for 15-20 m'utes, until golden. Remove and serve e'ther warm or cold. ♦♦

TOP TIP

Indulge at breakfast or save for pudding if you prefer. Serve with vegan yoghurt or cream 'f you iike, or fresh berries for an added v'tamin hit.





Apple, poppy seed and walnut pie

Makes 12 squares

500g (12 sheets) filo pastry
100g sunflower oil

For the poppy seed layer

400ml non-dairy milk
200g ground poppy seeds
5 tbsp brown rice syrup
40g raisins
¼ tsp vanilla powder
1 tbsp rum

Grated zest of 1 lemon

For the tofu layer

400g medium-soft tofu
2 tbsp cornflour
110ml non-dairy milk

55ml freshly squeezed lemon juice

3 tbsp brown rice syrup

For the walnut layer

200g walnuts
30g fine breadcrumbs
5 tbsp brown rice syrup
230ml non-dairy milk

For the apple layer

500g tart apples
40g raisins
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
2 tbsp brown rice syrup
Freshly squeezed juice of ½ lemon

You will need

20 x 30cm baking pan, well oiled

DID YOU KNOW?

This more'sh pie is a vegan version of the dessert *gibanica*, originating from the border between Croatia and Sloven'a.

1 For the poppy seed layer, bring the milk to a boil and pour it over the remaining ingredients. Mix well and cover until ready to use.

2 For the tofu layer, crumble the tofu with your fingers. Dilute the cornflour in a little milk, then whisk together.

3 For the walnut layer, finely grind the walnuts in a spice mill. Mix with the breadcrumbs and syrup. Boil the milk and pour it over the walnut mixture. Cover until ready to use.

4 For the apple layer, peel and grate the apples with a grater, or core them and use a food processor to grate them. Combine with the raisins, cinnamon, rice syrup and lemon juice.

5 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. If the sheets of filo are bigger than your baking pan, cut them to size. Don't worry if a sheet tears as you can easily patch up any damage

only the top 3 sheets need to stay undamaged. Place a sheet of filo in the baking pan. Cover the remaining sheets with clingfilm to prevent them from drying out. Brush oil lightly over the sheet. Cover with another sheet and oil it. Cover with a third sheet (this one doesn't need oiling).

6 Spread the poppy seed layer evenly over the top with a spatula. Cover with one sheet, oil lightly and cover with a second sheet. Spread the tofu layer on top. Cover with one sheet, oil lightly and cover with a second sheet.

Spread the walnut layer on top (if the mixture has soaked up all the milk, sprinkle on some more). Cover with one sheet, oil and cover with a second sheet. Spread the apple layer on top. Brush a little oil over the remaining 3 sheets and lay them on top of the pie. Brush a little more oil on the top sheet.

7 Tuck in any pastry or filling sticking out of the pan by pushing a spatula between the pie and the pan's sides. Use a sharp knife to score 12 squares into the pastry. Bake in the oven for 45-50 minutes, or until the top turns golden brown and the pie isn't wobbly or soft to the touch. Remove from the oven; cool in the pan before serving.



Rosemary twist

Makes 2 loaves

1 heaped tsp sugar

1 x 8g sachet or 2 tsp dried yeast

500g strong white flour

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra

for oiling the baking sheets

2 tbsp dried rosemary

1 tbsp dried sage

1 Measure 250ml warm water into a measuring jug and dissolve the sugar in it. Add the yeast, stir well and set the mixture aside to turn frothy. Measure the flour into a large bowl and make a well in the centre. When the yeast mixture is frothy, stir in the oil, then pour the yeast and oil mixture into the flour. Measure another 100ml warm water into the jug and keep it near to hand.

2 Stir together the flour and liquid with a wooden spoon until it becomes difficult. Scrape the dough from the spoon and begin to knead the dough with your hands, adding a little of the extra water if needed. Aim to make a firm dough that is not sticky. Cover the

bowl with a clean tea towel, and leave the dough to rise for 30 minutes

3 Meanwhile, crush the dried herbs using a mortar and pestle, or in a bowl with a wooden spoon. When the dough has risen, tip the herbs over the dough. Lightly oil two baking sheets and rub a little of this oil onto your hands as you begin to knead the herbs into the dough.

4 Divide the dough in two. Lift one half to eye level and, using both hands, swiftly elongate it to form a thick rope. Immediately fold the rope in half and twist the two halves against each other. The twist should be 25-30cm long. Immediately rest it onto one of the baking sheets, then repeat this manoeuvre for the second portion of dough. Cover the loaves with a tea towel. Set aside to rise for 30 minutes.

5 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6. Bake the loaves in the hot oven for 5 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4 and bake for a further 20-25 minutes. Allow the loaves to cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. ➡



Apricot and tofu baked cheesecake

Serves 6-8

For the sweet pie dough

400g plain flour
150g fine cornmeal
½ tsp salt
3 tsp baking powder
240g margarine, chilled
130g agave syrup
Grated zest of 1 lemon

For the tofu cream

500g medium-soft tofu
100g vanilla soy custard
1 ½ tbsp margarine
85g agave syrup
Freshly squeezed juice of 1 ½ lemons
Grated zest of 2 lemons
1 tbsp plain flour

4-5 ripe apricots, pitted and sliced

For the apricot jelly

1 tsp agar powder or 2 tsp agar flakes
110ml apple concentrate
135g apricot jam

You will need

40 x 28cm (for a thin crust) or 23 x 30cm (for a thick crust) baking pan
28cm springform cake pan or loose-based tart pan

1 Put the flour, cornmeal, salt and baking powder in a food processor and pulse. Add the margarine and pulse 6-8 times until mixture looks like coarse breadcrumbs. Add the syrup and lemon zest, and pulse 2-3 times.

2 Add ice-cold water one tablespoon at a time (up to 110ml), pulsing until the mixture clumps together. On a floured work surface, knead dough enough to form a ball (do not over-knead). Shape into a disc, wrap in clingfilm and refrigerate for 1 hour. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4.

3 For the tofu cream, blanch the tofu in boiling water for 2 minutes. Put in a food processor with the custard, margarine, syrup, lemon juice and zest, and flour. Blend until smooth.

4 Take the dough out of the fridge 10 minutes before using. Place between 2 sheets of parchment paper and roll out to a 31cm diameter circle. Loosely roll around the rolling pin and unroll over the tart pan. Neatly line the pan with the dough and trim off any excess. Prick base all over with a fork and bake for 8-10 minutes. Remove and pour the tofu cream into the tart crust, spreading it level. Put back in the oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until the tofu cream turns very lightly golden. Allow to cool completely in the pan. Arrange the apricot slices on top.

5 For the jelly, put the agar, apple concentrate, jam and 285ml water in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, whisking occasionally. Lower heat and cook for 2 minutes using agar powder, or 8 minutes if using flakes. Gently ladle over cake. Allow to cool completely in the fridge. Cut into slices and serve.

Blueberry apple pie

Makes 1 large pie

400g vegan shortcrust pastry
2 medium apples
1kg fresh blueberries
50g granulated sugar
2 tbsp plain flour or 1 tbsp oat bran

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Line a 28cm pie dish with half of the pastry, and prepare the top crust.

2 Peel, core and slice the apples. Spread the apple slices over the bottom of the pastry base. Tip the blueberries into the pie dish and spread evenly to cover the apples. Mix together the sugar and flour in a small bowl. Sprinkle evenly over the berries.

3 Position the prepared top crust over the pie, seal together the edges of the pastry and pierce the top crust with a fork or knife. Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden and crisp. Cool and serve **h**

Sweet Sunday rolls
Rosemary twist and
Blueberry apple pie from
The Contented Vegan by
Peggy Brusseau (Head of
Zeus, £25). Photographs
© Ian Garlick
Lemon-scented pancakes,
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Sprouted grains

Proponents of sprouting claim that allowing wholegrains to germinate before harvesting boosts their nutritional profile and makes them easier to digest. Here's how...

You're familiar with wholegrains, but how much do you know about sprouted grains? They might not sound that appetising, but they're simply wholegrains given just enough heat and water for a tiny root and shoot to appear. They're usually dried out or ground down – halting the germination process – for use in food

So what's the point? Well, sprouting is believed to improve the nutritional value of grains and make them easier to digest. When a seed germinates, it releases enzymes that break down its carbohydrates, proteins and fats into smaller molecules. Many grains also contain phytic acid, a substance that binds to minerals including zinc, iron and calcium. As phytic acid breaks down during germination, our bodies may better absorb these minerals when we eat sprouted wholegrains. Sprouting also boosts levels of vitamin E, which supports skin health, and B vitamins, needed for energy.

However, a 2018 review pointed out that sprouting outcomes can be unpredictable. It depends what seed you start with, and the conditions it germinates in. Although nutrient profiles change in certain seeds, no human studies show increased mineral absorption as a result. That said, research shows levels of lectin – a protein linked to leaky gut syndrome – were halved in wheat seeds left to sprout for a month. Sprouting can also reduce the gluten in wheat (think loaves like Everfresh Sprouted Wheat Bread, £1.99, 400g, 4 points, hollandandbarrett.com). To try at home, soak grains in water, rinse, drain and transfer to a jar. Cover with a cheesecloth and leave for a few days. Once sprouted, don't eat raw, as the moisture can encourage bacterial growth; cooking or baking should make them safe



Sprouted buckwheat granola

Serves 10

130g sprouted buckwheat
170g rolled oats
60g pecans, roughly chopped
40g pumpkin seeds
40g sunflower seeds
1 tbsp chia seeds
2 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp coconut oil, melted
5 tbsp honey (or maple syrup for a vegan alternative)

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Line an oven tray with baking paper.
2 Tip all the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl, stir to combine, then add in the melted coconut oil and honey (or maple syrup) and stir to coat evenly.
3 Spread mixture over the baking tray, place in oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until golden-brown. Cool on the tray before serving. It should keep in an airtight container for two weeks ♦♦



Sprouted wheat fruit bread

Makes 1 loaf

300g sprouted wheat flour
140g dried fruit and nut mix
2 tbsp soft butter
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tsp instant yeast
1 egg, beaten
1 tsp salt

1 Tip all of the ingredients into a large mixing bowl, stir everything together, cover the bowl and leave it to rest for around 30 minutes.

2 Knead the dough for about 5 minutes, transfer to a lightly greased

bowl, cover, then leave it to rise for 1-2 hours.

3 Grease a loaf pan, shape the dough to size and drop it in. Cover it again and leave for 1-2 hours or until the dough has risen 2cm above the rim of the tin

4 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Put the loaf in the oven and bake for 40 minutes, or until it's brown on the outside and makes a hollow noise when you tap it

5 Turn loaf out onto a wire rack and let it cool completely before slicing. It will keep for a few days well-wrapped.

Sprouted lentil burgers

Makes 4 patties

1 slice bread
200g sprouted lentils
Handful walnuts, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp wholegrain mustard
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground coriander
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 tbsp olive oil

To serve

4 burger buns
1 tomato, sliced
Lettuce leaves
Mayonnaise

1 Put the slice of bread in a food processor and pulse into fine breadcrumbs. Tip the breadcrumbs into a bowl and set aside.

2 Tip the lentils, walnuts, garlic, mustard, ground cumin and ground coriander into the food processor and blitz until combined, seasoning well.

3 With wet hands, divide the mixture into four roughly equal-sized balls and then form them into burger patties. Coat in the breadcrumbs; set aside.

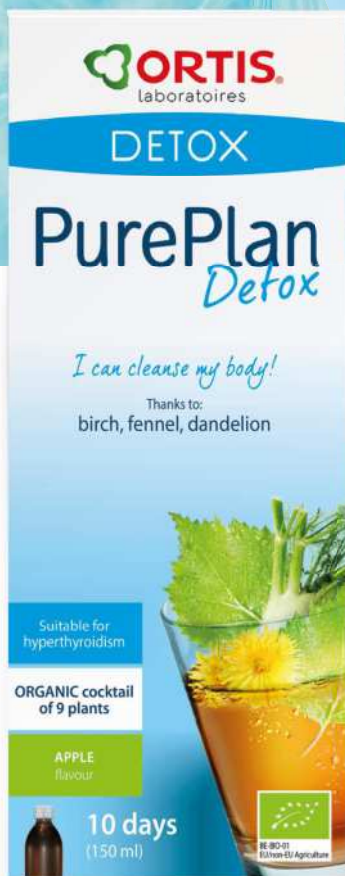
4 Heat the olive oil in a frying pan on a medium-high heat, and fry the patties for about five minutes on each side, until cooked through – you might need to do this in batches.

5 Place each burger in a bun, topped with sliced tomato, lettuce and mayo, or the condiment of your choice. **1**







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A large bowl of lemons and a single lemon on a white cloth. The bowl is filled with many bright yellow lemons, some whole and some cut in half. A single lemon sits on the white cloth to the right of the bowl. The background is a white, textured cloth.

IN SEASON

lemons

Packed with vitamin C, this citrus fruit can support energy levels and slow skin ageing. When life hands you lemons, put them in everything!

It's believed that the ancient Romans didn't actually like the sour flavour of lemons. Instead, the attractive yellow fruits were used purely for decorative purposes when they were first brought to Europe, from India, in around 100 AD. Fast-forward a couple of thousand years and lemons are getting a lot more love in the kitchen. Their zest and juice are relied upon to give stews, salads and bakes a sharp citrus hit. And as well as making food taste great, research has shown that lemons come with their own host of health benefits.

First off, they're a great source of vitamin C, which supports our immune system and helps keep us fighting fit. Vitamin C also helps us absorb iron from other foods, preventing iron deficiency anaemia, which is common in pre-menopausal women. Plus, lemons may have beauty benefits, as vitamin C helps the body produce collagen, which maintains our skin's elasticity.

Research indicates lemons might help to reduce the risk of certain cancers, including breast cancer, due to powerful compounds called limonoids. Some studies indicate drinking lemon juice could prevent kidney stones by reducing the saturation of calcium and other crystals in the urine. Lemons also

provide vitamin B6, involved in converting food to energy, and potassium, which can help lower blood pressure. Plus, they contain a fibre called pectin, which slows the digestion of sugar and starch, keeping blood sugar levels steady

HOW TO USE THEM

Unlike some other fruits, lemons don't ripen or improve in quality after picking. So ones that are bright yellow, firm and heavy when you buy them are likely to taste best. They should keep for several days at room temperature, or longer in the fridge. To get the most juice out of them, roll lemons under your hand on the kitchen counter or heat them in the microwave for a few seconds, before cutting. The peel is particularly nutrient dense, so don't just throw it away. Instead, grate the zest and sprinkle it into a salad, or add it to a marinade. Or preserve lemons by slicing and packing them into clean air-tight jars with salt, dried chillies and herbs. Store for a few months, then add to curries and tagines for a powerful flavour boost. If you struggle to drink enough, try adding a little lemon juice to your water to flavour it. However, citric acid can damage your teeth over time, so use a metal straw to protect them.

WORKS WELL WITH

The sharpness of lemon juice and zest complements the savoury taste of olive oil in a dressing – add some chopped fresh herbs and drizzle over a salad, or stir through cooked pasta.

As lemons can help us absorb iron, combine them with iron-rich veg, such as spinach or broccoli. Mix lemon juice with honey as a marinade for Asian-inspired dishes, or serve lemon wedges with a bowl of laksa or pho, to squeeze into the spicy sauce.

The sharp citrus taste is also perfect to complement sweet flavours in baking, which is why lemon drizzle cake tastes so delicious.



WHAT'S COOKING

Cypriot 'ful medames' with preserved lemon salsa

Serves 2

- ½ tbsp cumin seeds
- A splash of olive oil
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- A cinnamon stick
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large ripe tomato, diced
- 400g can borlotti beans, drained
- 160ml vegetable stock
- A pinch of sugar
- Extra virgin olive oil
- A sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds
- Dried chilli flakes, to garnish (optional)
- A few coriander leaves, to garnish
- Greek yoghurt and warmed pitta breads, to serve
- For the preserved lemon salsa**
- 1 tomato, deseeded and diced
- 1 tbsp diced red onion
- ½ a preserved lemon, diced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander

- 1** For the salsa, mix all the ingredients in a small bowl and season with salt. Taste and add more extra virgin olive oil, vinegar or salt to taste. Set aside.
- 2** Toast the cumin seeds in a small, dry frying pan until just fragrant and tip

into a mortar with ½ tsp of salt.

Coarsely grind with a pestle; set aside.

3 Add a splash of olive oil to a large saucepan and fry/sauté the diced red onion for a few minutes, until it has softened and started to caramelize. Add the garlic, ground cumin seeds, cayenne pepper and cinnamon stick. Before the spices start to catch, add the tomato and let simmer for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper.

4 Add the borlotti beans, stock and sugar. Leave uncovered over a low heat on a gentle simmer for 5 minutes until the liquid has reduced by half. Remove from the heat, discard the cinnamon stick and mash half the beans with a fork to get the mixture as smooth as possible – add a small splash of water if it's too thick

5 Spread the beans on serving plates and add a couple of tablespoonfuls of the salsa. Finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, some toasted sesame seeds, a pinch of dried chilli flakes (if using) and some torn coriander leaves.

6 Serve with dollops of yoghurt and pitta breads. **1**

Recipe from Rustica by Theo Michaels (Ryland Peters & Small, £16.99)



LUNCH, SORTED



Recipes extracted from *Vegetarian, Hassle Free, Gluten Free* by Jane Devonshire (Bloomsbury Absolute, £22) Photographs © Mike Cooper

Never have a boring WFH sarnie again. These hassle-free recipes from chef Jane Devonshire are veggie, gluten-free and will make lunch at home something to look forward to!

Asian-style mushroom and vegetable broth

Jane Devonshire, cookery writer and former *MasterChef* winner, says: 'I love spicy Asian-style soups and this broth base is a real favourite. You can make it a few days in advance and keep it in the fridge or freeze it in portions, so you can put something together quickly when you are really pushed for time. Don't be put off by the long list of ingredients – it's very simple to make and you can serve it with whatever veg you wish. I've included some of my favourites to give you a pointer.'

Serves 4 for lunch (or 2 as a main)

For the broth

40g dried mixed mushrooms

1 litre boiling water

Splash of sunflower oil

1 onion, diced

1 red chilli, finely sliced

1 stalk lemongrass, well bruised

½ tbsp grated fresh ginger

3 garlic cloves, chopped

1 sheet nori (optional)

60ml gluten-free soy sauce

2 tbsp rice wine vinegar

To make the soup

200g mixed or button

mushrooms, chopped

110g asparagus, chopped

1 bok choy, green leaves chopped off, base chopped into 4 or 8 depending on their size

1 red pepper, finely sliced

75g beansprouts

To serve

75g cooked rice per person

2-3 spring onions, finely sliced, green parts included

5g coriander, chopped

5g basil, chopped

A little red chilli, finely chopped
10g unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped (optional)

1 Place the mushrooms in a bowl with the boiling water and leave for at least 20 minutes till stewed, or overnight.

2 Heat the oil in a large saucepan and gently fry the onion and chilli until cooked through, about 3 minutes. Add in the lemongrass, ginger and garlic and cook for a further minute.

3 Put the soaked dried mushrooms and stock into the pan with the nori (it adds a fishy flavour to the broth in much the same way fish sauce would, but leave it out if you prefer), along with the soy sauce and rice wine vinegar. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, strain and reserve the stock, discarding the vegetables. Use immediately, or cool and keep in the fridge for 48 hours in a covered dish, or freeze.

4 To make the soup, bring the stock to the boil and add all the ingredients except the beansprouts. Leave to boil for up to 1 minute, turn off the heat and add in the beansprouts. Stir through and serve immediately.

5 To serve, divide the rice among your serving bowls, spoon over the broth with the vegetables, and sprinkle on the spring onions, herbs, chilli and peanuts, if using.

Jane's tip

'I always cook the onions, then add in the garlic for just a minute or two before adding more ingredients. Onions take longer to cook than garlic and burnt garlic is very bitter and can spoil your dish before you start.' ➡

Rice noodles work really well in this dish as well. Just cook according to the packet instructions and add them to the broth instead of the rice.'

JANE'S TIP



Pasta with peas, broccoli and pine nuts

Jane says: 'This is a great pasta for those healthy days when you are trying to eat green.'

Serves 4

250g gluten-free fusilli or similar
100g broccoli, stalks included, cut into bite-sized pieces

Sea salt

2 tbsp olive oil

1 garlic clove, minced

½ tsp cracked black pepper

160g mangetout, each pod cut into 3 pieces

Zest of 1 lemon

75g pine nuts, toasted

Vegetarian Italian hard cheese, grated, to serve

For the pea purée

300g frozen peas

3-4 tbsp olive oil

Squeeze of lemon juice

1 Make the pea purée. Put the peas into a saucepan and pour boiling water over them. Cook over a high heat for 1-2 minutes, until just defrosted and

warm. Drain the peas and place in a bowl of iced water until cold – this will help keep their colour. Drain and place in a blender or food processor. Add 3 tablespoons olive oil and blitz until you are happy with the texture, adding more oil if necessary. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and a pinch of salt to taste then set aside until ready to serve.

2 Bring a large pan of water to the boil and add the pasta with a good pinch of salt. Cook to the packet instructions.

3 In a large saucepan fry the broccoli in the olive oil for 3-4 minutes. Add in the garlic, black pepper and mangetout and stir. Fry for another 2-3 minutes. Add in the lemon zest and turn off the heat.

4 In a small pan, lightly toast the pine nuts. These burn quickly, so be careful.

5 Drain the pasta and reserve the liquid. Pour the cooked pasta into the pan with the vegetables, add the pea purée and toss through with half of the toasted pine nuts. If it's too dry, add a little of the pasta cooking liquid. Serve sprinkled with the grated cheese and the remaining pine nuts

JANE'S TIP

'If you don't have time to make the pea purée, simply cook some peas and mash or blend. It won't be as fine but it will still work.'



Butterbean and broccoli Italian-style bake

Serves 6

1 onion, chopped

2 tbsp olive oil

1 broccoli head, stems included, cut into bite-sized pieces (approx 250g)

2-3 garlic cloves, minced

15g basil, chopped, leaves and stalks kept separate

50g chopped black olives from a jar

50ml brine from olive jar

1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes

150g tomato passata

1 large jar (700g) of butterbeans, or cans, drained, to make about 500g

100g mature cheddar cheese, grated

150g mozzarella cheese, grated

Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

You will need

21cm square baking dish

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Gently fry the onions in the olive oil until softened but not browned about 3-5 minutes. Add the chopped broccoli, garlic and basil stalks, stir gently and fry for another 3-4 minutes.

2 Add the chopped olives, olive brine, chopped tomatoes, tomato passata and drained butterbeans and stir to combine. Add the chopped basil leaves and season with lots of pepper and a pinch of salt.

3 Put the mixture into the baking dish, sprinkle evenly with the cheeses and place in the oven for 20-25 minutes until the cheese is a lovely golden brown and the dish is bubbling

4 Remove from the oven and leave for 10-15 minutes to cool before serving. **10**

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“I want to help kids explore veganism”

Niki Webster was labelled ‘fussy’ when she refused meat as a child. Now her book, *Be More Vegan*, helps teens and parents find the joy in plant-based meals

People thought I was a fussy kid, but I never liked the idea of eating meat. I’ve always been a vegetarian or vegan. Right from when I was tiny, the idea of eating meat was a really disgusting thought – plus, I didn’t like the flavour or texture. Then, I was diagnosed with a dairy intolerance and my poor mum was struggling to feed me. My new book, *Be More Vegan: The Young Person’s Guide To A Plant-Based Lifestyle*, is packed with the information that I wish I’d had then. I know that so many young people are interested in leading a plant-based lifestyle now – whether it be for ethical or environmental reasons – so I hope it will be helpful and will give parents inspiration, too.

Anything that you cook yourself has much more meaning. If something comes from a packet or just appears on the table, you don’t have the same appreciation for it. As soon as I was able – aged 12 or 13 I started cooking my own food. That was a pivotal point for me, because instead of being served food I didn’t like, I was able to take control and create the meals I wanted. I believe that getting young people in the kitchen helps them appreciate where food comes from and encourages them to play around with flavours – it leaves them open to making more exciting and diverse choices.

The best advice I can give is to eat as much natural food as possible. People sometimes think that eating vegan food is a shortcut to helping the environment.



But that’s not necessarily true if it’s from miles away or comes in lots of packaging. Nobody’s perfect and there isn’t going to be a situation where you buy everything from a farmer’s market and never eat anything processed, but you can be a bit more mindful in your choices.

It’s impossible to do everything perfectly, so celebrate what you are doing. When I started my blog Rebel Recipes (rebelrecipes.com) five years ago, being a vegan was still ‘weird’ and now it’s much more normal. That said, veganism can be a minefield, and as there are animal products in so many everyday objects and foods, it’s almost impossible to do everything perfectly. If someone takes a little step towards reducing their animal consumption, that should be praised. I don’t think highlighting the things we’re *not* doing is helpful.

One of the easiest vegan swaps is switching to plant-based milk. There are so many available now and they’re amazing – just check the one you buy is fortified with vitamins and minerals. Other than that, try to cook one or two vegan meals a week. That way you can build up a repertoire of meals that you love and use that as a base to expand on. People often think vegan food is light and non-sustaining. But all the recipes in my new book are hearty, comfort meals packed with flavour. I wanted to include recipes that the whole family could enjoy. 🍷 *Be More Vegan: The Young Person’s Guide To A Plant-Based Lifestyle* by Niki Webster (Welbeck Publishing, £14.99)

6 ways to supercharge your immunity

HEALTH



CLEAN BEAUTY

Facemasks for every skin concern



AT-HOME FITNESS

Best plank variations for sculpted abs



FOOD

Are you getting enough fibre?



SELF

Everyday anxiety hacks

clean beauty

INSPIRATION TO HELP YOU LOOK YOUR BEST, NATURALLY

With topical products only addressing 20 per cent of the skin, beauty isn't simply skin deep. The rest is influenced by what we eat and drink, including dietary supplements. And when it comes to ingestible beauty, collagen is fast gaining scientific backing. This protein plays a key role in skin strength and elasticity, but levels deplete as we age, leading to wrinkles. However, studies suggest that supplements might counter the effects.

One study showed decreased skin dryness and an increase in elasticity; another, looking at a beverage containing collagen, found increased hydration and reduced wrinkles. However, it can be hard to get collagen from your diet, which is why we're so excited about Dose & Co – coming soon to Holland & Barrett. Their dairy and non-dairy creamers, collagen proteins and powders are easy to slot into your life – stir into coffee, smoothies or porridge. For more details of the range, keep an eye on hollandandbarrett.com

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TIME TO GET ACTIVE

They're the backbone of every beauty routine, but hands up if you actually understand what actives do... We thought not! Here's what you need to know

WORDS BY BELLA BINNS

The modern beauty industry is all about transparency and putting us in control, which on the surface is no bad thing. But with the many positives comes an undercurrent of confusion. Gold-packaged creams with names promising what they'll do for your skin are on their way out today's beauty aisle is increasingly full of laboratory style bottles with pipettes, proudly sporting ingredients you can't pronounce on their labels. So if you don't want to be alienated, you need to clue yourself up. And possibly the most confusing ingredients of all are those that fall under the unhelpfully vague term 'actives'.

A CONSIDERED APPROACH

'Active' ingredients are the 'doing' ingredients – those with a targeted function, made to address specific skin concerns. (Think skincare buzzwords like hydrating,

brightening, smoothing, etc.) They're the backbone of a strong routine, but it's important to choose carefully. 'Skin generally needs a good balance of different ingredients and there can be a risk that one particular, possibly trendy, ingredient gets "overkill",' says skincare expert and facialist Antonia Burrell. You could be spending hundreds of pounds on products but if they're full of actives which don't readily combine, or you're applying them in the wrong order, the benefits will be lost. And while we're lucky to have so many actives to choose from, we risk overloading skin, causing irritation and sensitivity – so prioritise your most pressing concerns and focus on the top two or three 'Sometimes, simplifying your regime is the best thing to do,' says consultant dermatologist Dr Emma Wedgeworth. 'I see so many people in my clinic who have dehydrated their skin by irritating it, ➡

YOU WANT	YOUR ACTIVE	TRY IT
To brighten	Vitamin C	Vitaskin Vitamin C Intense Illumination Oil (£18, 30ml, 72 points)
To smooth and firm	Retinoids (vitamin A)	Grounded Egyptian Gold Retinol Facial Serum (£29.99, 50ml, 116 points)
To hydrate	Hyaluronic acid	This Works Morning Expert Hyaluronic Serum (£37, 30ml, 148 points)
To fight inflammation	Niacinamide (vitamin B3)	Oleus Niacinamide & Zinc Serum (£14.99, 50ml, 56 points)
To exfoliate	AHAs	REN Ready Steady Glow Tonic (£27, 250ml, 108 points)
To clear breakouts	BHAs	Alba Botanica Acne Deep Clean Astringent (£9.49, 177ml, 36 points)
To boost collagen	Peptides	Q+A Natural Skincare Peptide Facial Serum (£9, 30ml, 36 points)
To protect	Vitamin E	Holland & Barrett Vitamin E Ultra Hydrating Day Cream (£5, 50ml, 20 points)



THE EXPERTS



DR EMMA WEDGEWORTH is a consultant dermatologist and spokesperson for the British Skin Foundation. @dremwedgeworth



ANTONIA BURRELL is a skincare expert, facialist and founder of Antonia Burrell Holistic Skincare. antoniaburrell.com @antoniaburrell



“Azelaic is the new acid on the block, dubbed a potential saviour for troubled skin”

and they find they lose their glow, with fine lines becoming more obvious.’ It’s well-worth swotting up on the function of products, to check your skin is getting exactly what it needs – use the table on page 95 for guidance

ACIDS EXPLAINED

Despite the alarming scientific names, acids are your allies when it comes to a whole host of concerns. ‘Acids are great for gobbling up dead skin cells for super glow, helping to un-clog pores and having an age-defying effect,’ says Burrell. It’s just knowing which to choose

There are two main types – AHA and BHA. Alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) such as glycolic and lactic acids are water-soluble chemical exfoliants and work on the skin’s surface to address fine lines, texture and tone.

PERFECT PARTNERS

Match made in heaven, or ultimate skin sin? These are the key pairings to try

✓ DOs

Vitamin C + vitamin E = two-pronged antioxidant protection

Vitamin C + SPF = a skin-brightening boost plus all-important UV protection

Retinoids (by night) + hyaluronic acid
counter the drying effects of retinoids with this moisture-magnet acid

✗ DON'Ts

High-strength vitamin C + high-strength retinoids = these can potentially cause irritation when used together

Retinoids + AHAs = as a team they can leave your skin over-sensitised

AHAs + BHAs = used together, they may irritate the skin’s delicate barrier

Meanwhile beta hydroxy acids (BHAs) like salicylic are oil-soluble and have a more penetrating effect, helping clear debris from within the pore itself. While salicylic has traditionally been the go-to for acne sufferers, azelaic is a newer acid on the block that’s being dubbed a saviour for troubled skin. ‘Azelaic acid has anti-inflammatory, anti-blemish and anti-pigmentation properties,’ says Dr Wedgeworth, ‘plus it’s suitable even for sensitive skin.’

But not all acids are exfoliators. Hyaluronic acid is actually a humectant which draws water into the skin’s upper layers for an instant hydrating and plumping effect – a must for dry or dehydrated skins

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Active products can be split roughly into two camps, those that are water-based and those formulated with oil. Liquid exfoliators (like AHAs or BHAs), toners and essences (traditionally more lightweight and less concentrated than serums, used to add another layer of hydration) should be applied directly to cleansed skin where they can target the uppermost layers. Meanwhile serums, typically the most ‘active’ formulas, designed to sink in to the deeper layers of the skin, should be applied as a next step. Then apply oils or oil-serum hybrids – less penetrating than traditional water-based serums, they form a protective barrier higher up on the skin’s surface. Apply moisturiser as a final step to support your skin’s natural barrier and limit water loss. **6**

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BEAUTY
FIX

We tend to treat all acne the same, but identifying different types of breakouts makes it both easier to tackle them *and* to prevent them returning

Beat breakouts

If you're suffering from severe acne, see your GP or a dermatologist.

MASKNE

Also known as mask induced acne, this refers to spots or inflammation on the lower half of your face, caused by wearing a face covering. Friction encourages dirt to enter pores, confined sweating can block pores, while the humid environment speeds up processes that cause acne.

THE FIX First, wash and change your mask regularly. Consider ditching make-up too, as it can mix with sweat to clog pores. Cleanse twice a day with your regular cleanser, and consider washing again with a gentle cleanser after wearing a mask for long periods, particularly if you're sweaty. Try a gentle chemical exfoliant like lactic acid, and consider niacinamide – it calms redness and smooths bumpy skin.

TRY IT Oleus Niacinamide & Zinc Serum (£14.99, 50ml, 56 points) to smooth and balance skin.



HORMONAL ACNE

Think blackheads, whiteheads or inflammatory acne, typically around the jawline for adults, or on the T-zone during puberty. Influxes of hormones from menstruation, menopause or polycystic ovary syndrome can trigger oil production and increase bacteria.

THE FIX Pre-empt breakouts with a mask 10 days before your period look for charcoal to reduce sebum, and calming oatmeal. If acne is inflammatory, choose products with tea tree oil. Otherwise, exfoliate with glycolic acid to unglue shedding skin cells, and switch to a probiotic cleanser to inhibit acne-causing bacteria.

TRY IT Yes To Tomatoes Detoxifying Charcoal SnapMask Stick (£11.99, 44 points) with charcoal to help draw out impurities. All at hollandandbarrett.com



BLACKHEADS

These small black or yellowish bumps develop when a pore is clogged by a mix of sebum and dead skin cells. The pore stays open and oxidation turns the skin pigment black.

THE FIX Remember, your pores are not clogged with dirt, so harsh scrubbing is not the answer. Instead, use salicylic acid to exfoliate dead skin cells from the surface and dissolve debris and excess oil from within the pore. Find it in cleansers or as a liquid exfoliant. A skin brush may also help remove excess dead cells, while a clay mask can draw out oils, helping to unclog congested pores.

TRY IT Clear Skin Days Clarifying Cleanser (£10, 150ml, 40 points) with salicylic and glycolic acids.



INFLAMMATORY ACNE

Bacteria can combine with dead cells and oils and cause an infection, leading to papules (small red spots), pustules (infected pores that fill with pus), cysts (large, painful pimples) or nodules (bumps under the skin).

THE FIX Don't over-wash or pile on treatments. Products with antiseptic benzoyl-peroxide can remove excess sebum and banish bacteria, while

topical retinoids help combat inflammatory papules and pustules. Zinc is anti-inflammatory, while sulphur works similarly to salicylic acid, but is gentler on skin.

TRY IT Weleda SOS Spot Treatment (£10.95, 10ml, 40 points) with sulphur and willow bark, a source of salicylic acid.



BEAUTY & THE BRAIN



Skin health is about far more than the products you use. Hanna Sillitoe explains why, when it comes to skin conditions, the mind is a critical part of healing

THE EXPERT



HANNA SILLITOE

began sharing her personal battle with skin health through an online food blog, which led to her best-selling book *Radiant* (Kyle Books, £18.99). Her second book, *Skin Healing Expert* (Kyle Books, £19.99) is out now.

According to the British Skin Foundation, 60 per cent of British people have suffered with a skin disease. And a recent parliamentary report found that 98 per cent of skin disease patients feel their condition affects their emotional wellbeing. It's a problem Hanna Sillitoe is all too familiar with. Having suffered severe psoriasis, eczema and acne for 20 years, she eventually took matters into her own hands through a holistic approach, considering diet, natural skincare and mind-set

'So many of us notice a correlation between a rise in stress levels and irritating skin flares,' says Sillitoe. 'When we get stressed, our skin seems to take it badly. Then we become anxious and that exacerbates the problem. I believe the brain to be an integral part of the healing jigsaw.' Here she shares her tips for calming your mind and your skin.

THE SKIN WARRIOR POWER MIND-SET

'When we're dealing with the exhaustion of chronic skin disease, we need every ounce of strength to make life changes conducive to our health. Being offered a chemotherapy drug when I was at rock bottom with my skin was a game changer. In that moment, I had two choices: to curl up and quit, or to empower myself to make changes and get well again.

'A strong mind gives us an amazing capacity to face tough challenges head on. That comes from a combination of mindfulness, focus and resilience. If you want a strong attitude, you can achieve it, but it will take work.'

SEEK HELP

'The additional guidance that comes from a positive outside influence can be an ultimate game changer. Life's challenges include work-related stress, money worries, illness or the end of a relationship. Dealing with a skin condition on top of all this can

HANNA'S SOOTHING SKINCARE HEROES

DEAD SEA SALTS Add to a bath to soothe dry, itchy skin. **Try** Westlab Dead Sea Salt (£4.99, 1kg, 16 points)

COCONUT OIL My favourite antioxidant, antifungal, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial body oil. **Try** Fushi Pure MCT Coconut Oil (£15, 100ml, 60 points)

OATS Help lock in the body's moisture, protect skin and soothe any irritation. **Try** Ethique Charcoal, Kaolin & Oatmeal Bodywash Bar (£5.49, 120g, 20 points)

All at hollandandbarrett.com



CALM YOUR MIND, CALM YOUR SKIN

Try meditation

'Research tells us conditions caused by stress can be alleviated through meditating, and anecdotally, many struggling with skin conditions see a correlation between heightened stress and skin flares.'

Set intentions

'Figure out the small stuff that makes you smile – for me that's getting up before sunrise, exercising often, eating well, exploring new places, and enjoying a relaxing salt bath. Set intentions based on these, then write them down.'

Practise gratitude

'Keeping a gratitude journal is a beautifully simple way to record all the things we're thankful for and can have a significant impact on wellbeing. It helps us experience more positive emotions, sleep better, express more kindness, and so build a strong gut microbiome and healthy immune system.'

Disconnect and reconnect

'It can become a habit to begin and end the day staring at your phone. Stepping away into nature has been proven to restore our sense of wellbeing.'

be massive. Counselling can be super helpful. Rather than considering it embarrassing, view this as an investment in your mental health.'

ACCEPT POSITIVITY

'I used to read lots of books about developing a positive mind-set. I'd get frustrated at anything that told me to "think happy thoughts". It's not about being constantly upbeat. It's about embracing both positives and negatives. It's OK to embrace difficult emotions, but speaking to ourselves in a kinder way can begin to change the way we think and feel. We don't always have power over our thoughts, but we can choose how we respond to them.'

CHANGE YOUR MIND

'Negative thoughts can pop up uninvited and leave behind a mess of tangled emotions. We look at our skin and hate what we see, and that makes us feel out of control and the negative thought cycle perpetuates. You could try CBT, where the brain learns to reinforce new positive pathways. You can also learn to distance yourself from your inner critic. I realised mine only ever focused on one way of looking at my skin when, in fact, there were many more positive perspectives.'

Check out *Hanna on the Wellness Edit* podcast from Holland & Barrett, from major podcast platforms. Find the *Hanna Sillitoe* skincare range at hollandandbarrett.com

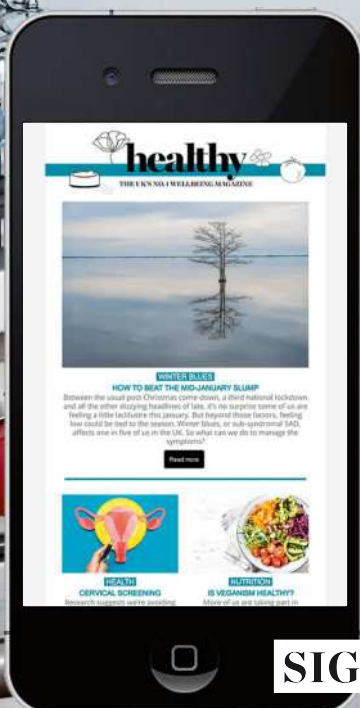


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and naturally protects
the skin barrier



Almond and honey
is a classic feel-good
scent to help lift
your spirits on
dark days

One of the many lessons we've learned from the coronavirus pandemic is the importance of a good hand wash – one that doesn't leave skin flaky and irritated when faced with increased use. While non-drying formulas sold out across the nation, unease at the environmental cost of so many extra plastic bottles grew. Enter milly&sissy, a zero-waste beauty brand offering a range of hand washes and shower crèmes. We love this nourishing almond and honey offering, a delicately fragranced, low-lather, super moisturising hand wash suitable for the most sensitive of skins. Olive oil, coconut oil and argile (a mineral-rich clay) leave hands smooth and supple. Glycerin hydrates while cleansing sodium cocoate, derived from coconut oil, is a natural alternative to SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate)

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Most bathroom products, such as bubble baths or hand washes, contain at least 70 per cent water which then has to be transported. By contrast, milly&sissy's products contain none, which reduces their transport carbon footprint by 94 per cent. Simply add tap water to their vegan and cruelty-free powder formulas to create your own. You can re-use a 500ml bottle that you already have at home or buy one of milly&sissy's beautiful re-fill and re-use amber glass bottles (£10, hollandandbarrett.com) Add 400ml water to your bottle, loosen the powder then pour into the bottle and shake. Leave overnight, shake again and you're good to go. Each powder comes in a biodegradable and compostable sachet, and the labels can be removed and recycled for a truly zero-waste product



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Trilogy Rosehip Transformation Cleansing Oil (£21.50, 110ml, 84 points) effortlessly removes make-up and impurities without stripping for soft, more hydrated skin.

All at holland andbarrett.com



WHY SHOULD I USE IT?

Rosehip oil is rich in omega fatty acids, which help protect and replenish the skin's vital barrier and prevent water loss.

An excellent moisturiser for all skin types, rosehip oil is non-greasy and absorbs easily, allowing its antioxidants to travel deep into skin's layers.

It's high in both vitamins A and C, which encourage skin cell turnover and regeneration, helping to exfoliate, boost radiance and target signs of photo-ageing.

Rosehip oil encourages the production of collagen, as well as inhibiting an enzyme that breaks down collagen in the body.

It's anti-inflammatory, and as it's derived from the hips and seeds of the rose, rather than the flower, rosehip oil doesn't irritate sensitive skins like fragrance can.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Extraction processes involving heat cause it to degrade, so look for cold-pressed rosehip oil.

Rosehip oil is often a key component in soothing night creams, but you'll find it in masks and cleansers too. It's also available as 100% pure oil.

When using pure oil, massage 2-3 drops into the face, neck and décolletage, ideally at bedtime after water-based treatments.

Rosehip oil can be used as a carrier for essential oils which are too intense to put on skin directly.

It's safe to use rosehip oil alongside other ingredients. For extra hydration, you can even add a couple of drops to your usual moisturiser. ☺



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NATURAL CARE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Potter's Echinacea Tincture with Elderberry Juice Flavour is a combination of traditional herbal ingredients including certified organic *Echinacea purpurea*, which contains active substances that enhance the activity of the body's immune system. Also used to help with the relief of cold and flu infections. **£11.99, 100ml**



EXTRAORDINARY CHOCOLATE

Montezuma's cute Clucky, Lucky and Plucky Chicks come complete with the brand's best-selling organic chocolate buttons. The packaging is 100% recyclable, compostable or biodegradable. Available in, Clucky organic milk chocolate, Lucky organic dark chocolate or Plucky organic milk chocolate alternative.



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

With its unique blend of 41 essential oils, Puressentiel's 100% plant-based purifying room spray won Best New Product Launch in the *healthy* awards 2020. Spritz in the air, on carpets or on bedding for a fresh scent without synthetic chemicals. It helps keep homes fresh and clean. One you'll keep coming back to. **£19.99, 200ml**



SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

New Nordic C-immune is a high-dose vitamin C tablet with 800mg of pure ascorbic acid. Vitamin C is important for the body's immune system and contributes to many processes in the body, protecting cells, DNA, proteins and lipids from oxidative damage. For more information call New Nordic 0800 389 1255. **£17.95, 90 tablets**

All products available at hollandandbarrett.com and in selected Holland & Barrett stores

healthy promotion



EASY IBS MANAGEMENT

Backed by scientific research over 30 years, Enterosgel is proven to alleviate acute diarrhoea and IBS diarrhoea, and bloating symptoms. It works by binding bacterial toxins and other harmful substances, removing them from the body with the stool. Plus it's non-allergenic and free from additives. Suitable for the whole family. **£19.99, 225g**



DRY, IRRITATED EYES?

Your eyes can become dry and irritated by many factors from working long hours at a computer screen to pollution. Unfortunately, your eyes can become drier with age, too! Suitable for vegans and those wearing contact lenses, A.Vogel Eye drops contain hyaluronic acid and euphrasia to relieve dry, irritated or tired eyes. **£9.99, 10ml**



NATURALLY DELICIOUS

Mr Organic provides delicious organic food, made with love, for the planet! Made in Italy, the range includes these delicious Biscuits from Emilia-Romagna, as well as their latbreads and Breadsticks from Liguria. All of these products are organic and natural, vegan, palm oil-free, zero air miles. Just yummy naked goodness! **From £2.19**



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Made with 70% dark Colombian chocolate – and 100% crunchy awesomeness. In short: a bunch of really Good Eggs. Doisy & Dam have taken an Easter classic and reimagined it in dark chocolate, vegan certified and without a drop of palm oil, as they believe chocolate should be a force for good. Get crackin'. **£1.99, 75g**



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Vitamin D is essential in supporting a healthy immune system. BetterYou's great-tasting D3000 Vitamin D Oral Spray is specially formulated to deliver vitamin D3 directly to the bloodstream, via the inner cheek for enhanced absorption. And it comes in a bottle made from recycled waste including ocean waste plastic. **£8.49, 15ml**



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Perfect for an energy boost during exercise, or afterwards to help speed up recovery, CherryActive contains no added preservatives, flavours, colours or sugars – just 100% highly concentrated Montmorency cherry juice. Simply mix with water, add to your post-workout shake, or use to flavour smoothies or yoghurt. **From £1.99**

healthy promotion

Your flower essence essential

Trusted since the 1930s,
RESCUE is the handy
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always rely on



It's well established that our emotional wellbeing is linked to how we cope with the pressures of everyday life. And with our 24/7 connected lifestyles, we're feeling the strain more than ever. This in turn affects our ability to switch off at night, depriving us of the restorative benefits of sleep, making us less able to cope during the day.

Unless we take action, this can turn into a vicious cycle.

INTRODUCING RESCUE

Discovered in the 1930s by Dr Edward Bach, the RESCUE formula combines five natural flower essences and is still made using handpicked flowers from his UK gardens in Oxfordshire. Find comfort and support in times of emotional

demand. Keep a dropper on your desk or in your handbag to call on as needed or try the convenient spray.

RESTFUL ROUTINE

When it comes to bedtime, start your restful routine by taking RESCUE Night. This combines the original RESCUE formula with the additional White Chestnut essence, long used to help switch off unwanted thoughts. Disconnect from the distractions and awake refreshed.

PERSONALISE YOUR FLOWER ESSENCES

Why not explore the full range of 38 Bach Original Flower Remedies. Each one corresponds to an individual emotion and you

can combine up to seven (including RESCUE remedy) to make a personalised mix based on how you are feeling.

FIND OUT MORE

For more on RESCUE, the UK's no.1 brand*, follow @rescueremedy on Instagram and Facebook, and find out why millions worldwide rely on their little yellow bottle day or night.



Find the Rescue range and Bach Original Flower Remedies in selected Holland & Barrett stores and online at hollandandbarrett.com

*IRI Value sales in our brand category 52 weeks to w/e 28th Nov 2020. verify@nelsons.net

balance

BECAUSE SELF CARE IS HEALTH CARE

Dropped your New Year's resolutions already? If you really want to be happier in 2021, think about how you can make a positive difference to others. Experts on motivation tend to have 'ambivalent feelings' towards resolutions, given that most of the time we're not successful at them, says Richard Ryan, a psychology professor at the University of Rochester, New York. However, reflecting on our lives, at any time, is a good thing. And what proves most satisfying, and what may also be what's needed right now, are goals that involve giving to others.

Ryan is co-founder of self-determination theory (SDT), which looks at motivation and personality. Research in this field shows that acts of willingly helping others satisfy three basic psychological needs: for autonomy (acts where you find value), competence (feeling effective) and relatedness (feeling connected). 'If you want to make a resolution that really makes you happy, think about the ways in which you can contribute to the world,' says Ryan. 'All three of these basic needs are fulfilled. The research shows it's not just good for the world, but also really good for you.'

And it works just as well at any time of year.

HOW GREEN IS YOUR GARDEN?

We know we should recycle, drive less and invest in energy-efficiency measures for our homes, but these 'green' activities don't always offer a sense of fulfilment. Enter eco-gardening, the rewarding way to do your bit

THE EXPERT



JOHN WALKER

is a lifelong gardener and allotmentee and award-winning gardening and environmental writer. He's author of *How to Create An Eco Garden* (Lorenz Books, £15)*. More info at earthfriendlygardener.net



We tend to think of gardening as inherently eco, but we shouldn't overlook its sometimes negative effects, says gardening and environmental writer John Walker. 'In making and caring for a garden, we are privileged to become custodians of that piece of land. What we grow, how we grow it and whatever else we do in the garden has knock-on effects – good and bad – on other living things.' From fossil-fuelled garden equipment to toxic pesticides, there are plenty of practices that drain or damage our natural resources

'Large, manicured lawns consume huge amounts of energy and finite resources in their upkeep,' says Walker. 'Insecticides, fungicides and weed killers enter our environment – either as spray drifting on the breeze, or washing down drains and into our watercourses. And birds and animals eat caterpillars or slugs killed by chemicals which then enter the garden food chain.'

You'll be pleased to hear, then, that a healthy, flourishing garden is possible while also protecting the environment and encouraging bio-diversity. 'Eco gardening is all about working in harmony with the intricate web of life of which we are ourselves a part,' says Walker. 'Everyone, whatever the size of their plot, can garden in a more sustainable, deeply enriching way.'



TOOLS

If well maintained, garden tools should last a lifetime. 'When buying new, choose tools hand-made by craftspeople as locally as possible, using sustainable materials such as wood from well-managed forests,' says Walker. Ask suppliers where their tools come from, and opt for metal and wood rather than plastic. Used tools can be found in second-hand shops. 'If these will do the job, they are an excellent choice for the eco gardener because they help reduce the demand for new tools and the resources and energy required to manufacture them.' What about powered tools? 'The most eco-friendly equipment is powered by renewable electricity from a green supplier – or from simple human effort.'



COMPOST

As well as a compost bin, opt for environmentally friendly potting compost for sowing seeds and filling planters. 'There are many kinds available and all have some environmental impact, but you can reduce this by choosing peat-free mixes,' says Walker. 'Alternatively, try making your own potting compost using low-impact materials. Garden compost mixed 50:50 with mature, crumbly leaf mould can be used for potting up larger plants with well-established roots.' Seaweed meal, pelleted chicken manure and coir (a byproduct derived from coconut husks) are also good eco options.

"Grow flowers and herbs from seed to help eliminate extra plant miles"

Use a water butt to collect rainwater. Then, to reduce evaporation loss, water your garden with it in the evening.



CONTAINERS

'Globally, most pots and trays are made of plastic or polystyrene, manufactured from oil using fossil-fuel energy,' says Walker. 'You can become more eco-friendly by re-using and eventually recycling existing containers, making your own pots and using biodegradable containers.' He suggests using newspaper as it will rot down in the soil, and toilet roll tubes for raising vegetables and adding organic matter to the soil. 'Pots made from peat should be avoided – always check the label for what pots labelled as biodegradable are made from.' Look for those made from materials such as coir, recycled paper pulp, bamboo fibres, rice husks and straw.



SEEDS

'Growing from seed is the starting point for many plants, and an easy, economical, rewarding and eco friendly way to raise many flowers, vegetables and herbs,' says Walker. 'When you do this, rather than buy them, you eliminate "plant miles", and you can choose pots, trays and compost made from sustainable materials.'



FEEDS

'Use plant feeds made from natural, sustainable materials of animal or vegetable origin, which feed plants gradually over a long period,' says Walker. Synthetic fertilizers are often made from non-renewable resources and use energy in their production. The good news is you can make liquid feeds using garden weeds, and purchase planet-friendly foods like comfrey pellets, seaweed meal, vinasse (a pelleted byproduct of the sugar industry) and alfalfa pellets. Try covering chopped nettle stems with water for 2-4 weeks for a pungent, nutrient rich soup, suggests Walker. Make a solution of one part soup to 10 parts water to feed established, leafy plants.



REPELLENTS

No garden can be slug- and snail-free. 'These pests constantly move and breed rapidly. But they also provide food for birds and frogs, and large slugs eat decaying material so play a part in the composting cycle.' Protect young plants with beer traps, water moats and barriers of wool pellets, sawdust and ceramic shards, or sparingly use wildlife-friendly pellets containing ferric phosphate. **❶**

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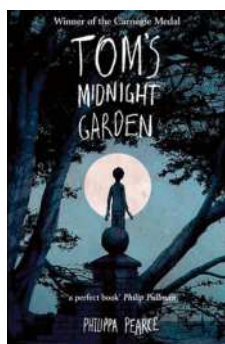
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BOOKS ABOUT GARDENS

READS TO FEED A LOVE OF FOLIAGE



TOM'S MIDNIGHT GARDEN BY PHILIPPA PEARCE (OUP, £6.99)

Ellie Hughes, Editorial Director 'Written in 1958 and garlanded with awards, this is one of those classics I never liked as a child, only to discover as an adult, reading it to my own children, just how astonishingly good it is. Tom is in quarantine from measles (though it could as well be Covid) and sent away to his aunt and uncle's flat in a big old house. Bored and lying awake, he hears the grandfather clock strike thirteen and finds a magical garden that only appears at night. The book is the story of discovering the garden's secrets with Tom – an immaculately plotted, metaphysical detective story about ghosts, friendship and growing up, told with a deceptively light touch. And the ending will almost certainly make you cry.'

PLANT THERAPY BY DR KATIE COOPER (Hardie Grant, £16.99)

Hattie Parish, Commissioning Editor 'A passion for plants but no garden has led me to curate something of an indoor jungle in my poky flat, and this book has been the perfect companion. As well as practical tips on how best to care for houseplants throughout the seasons and where to place them (air purifiers in the bedroom, please), psychologist Dr Katie Cooper explores the human-nature relationship and positive effects plants have on our wellbeing. She explains how we've come to live in an environment at odds with our mental and physical needs, and how we can redress that balance with greenery. Best of all is the plant directory, categorised by benefits from aiding breath to providing a mental boost. A must for those looking to cultivate an indoor garden.'



THE ROSE EXPERT BY DG HESSAYON (PBI Publications)

David Kenning, Chief Sub-editor 'Down-to-earth and easy to follow, *Be Your Own Garden Expert* was published in 1958 by botanist Dr David Gerald Hessayon and quickly grew to become the world's best selling series of gardening books. With editions covering everything from fruit trees to lawns, each is rammed with advice at every step, from preparing soil to taking cuttings, plus a wealth of clear illustrations that even the world's least green-fingered idiot (ie me) can understand. This 1965 entry in the series (updated several times) is not in print currently, but is easy to pick up second-hand. Our copy came in useful last year for a lockdown project of filling the overgrown bed in our front garden with roses. The sea of bright blooms we were treated to as a result was truly uplifting.'

THE ORCHARD COOK BY STUART OVENDEN (Clearview, £25)

Jo Levitas-Clark, Art Director 'I can almost smell my garden when I flick through this breathtakingly beautiful cookbook. At first it seemed a little complicated, full of weird and wonderful foraged ingredients I'd struggle to find in even the biggest supermarket but the bulk of the recipes are cost effective due to their seasonality – often items you can pick up from your garden (or maybe your neighbour's!). Apples are much-loved here, from the russet and rum tarte tatin to the dried ones used in the granola – my favourite. And the apple, elderflower and blackcurrant leaf gin spritzer is a garden in a glass. Plus there are jams, pickles and chutneys plenty to keep us pottering about our gardens (if we're not sick of them by now). Something a bit special.' 🍷



LIFE
SKILLS

THE EXPERT



ANNABELLE KNIGHT is a sex, relationships, dating and body language expert qualified in couples counselling and psychosexual therapy. She co-hosts the podcast *Sex And Other Stuff* and is currently UK ambassador for Climax How.

spring clean your sex life

With libidos across the UK uttering a collective 'meh', invest in your sexual wellness to end the dry spell *and* reignite the spark

The spark, frisson, va-va-voom – whatever you call it, stats and surveys tell us there's been a distinct lack of fiery passion over the past year. Yes, sexual chemistry was yet another casualty of 2020, with sexual activity down 30 per cent compared to pre-lockdown rates. Given the negative impact stress and anxiety has on libido it's hardly surprising, and our cooped-up lives didn't help things. 'Sadly, when it comes to libido, over-familiarity can breed boredom,' says psychosexual therapist Annabelle Knight. 'Trying something new can revitalise your relationship, even if it's just something small.'

So, with spring around the corner and hope in the air, what better time for a sexual reboot? 'Refreshing your sex life is something we all should be looking to do once in a while,' says Knight. 'Even if you're happy with your sex life, there's always room for improvement. Hitting the refresh button can reconnect you with your partner, increase intimacy bonds between you both, and allow you to experiment with new positions, techniques or even toys.'

OPEN UP COMMUNICATION

'If you've been in lockdown with your partner and your sex life has taken a bit of a hit because of it, I'd recommend having a chat. Chances are you're both in the same boat,' says Knight. But casually bringing up sex as if you're commenting on the weather isn't always the easiest or most helpful way of doing things.

To open up a dialogue, Knight suggests first considering your needs and wants. 'When it comes to a happy, healthy sex life, the only way to get what you want is to ask. I don't necessarily mean tapping your partner on the shoulder and blurting it out, but rather communicating your desires in a meaningful way,' she explains. 'All couples are different, so how you do this is down to you. If you're nervous of broaching the subject, I'd suggest a good book. Erotic fiction can be hugely rewarding and can give you some great ideas for the bedroom.'

In terms of how to navigate the conversation, remember it's not a one-sided discussion. 'It's important to ask open-ended questions when it comes to sex – this means questions that require more thought being put into their responses and not

simply yes or no. For example, what do you think you'd like about this scenario? By passing responsibility over to a third (and fictional) person, you're allowing ideas to be explored in a safer space, one where you feel freer to express yourself.'

LET YOUR BODY DO THE TALKING

If the thought of a verbal conversation about sex makes you uncomfortable, there are physical signals you can use to make your feelings known instead. 'Sometimes it can be difficult to communicate our wants and desires when it comes to sex,' says Knight. 'Communicating through body language during the act itself is often easier, and a more natural way to get your point across. If you're really enjoying something your partner is doing in the moment then let it be known in whatever way you usually express your pleasure – it could be a moan, a firm grip or throwing your head back. It's also easier to concentrate on the positives verbally, reminding your partner of times when you've felt the most pleasure will encourage them to do it again.'

GET IN THE MOOD

'Our mind-set plays a huge part in the quality of our sex lives: it can affect everything from how sexy we feel to how likely we are to climax,' says Knight. 'If you're not in the mood mentally then it's unlikely your body will be. Your brain is arguably the biggest erogenous zone, so in order to have great, satisfying sex, you need to be in the right headspace.' The key, Knight says, is 'being present as a partner', which largely comes down to general life management. To step out the role of colleague or parent ➡

Show yourself some love

With increased downtime and sex off the table for many, 2020 saw a self-love boom – and that's no bad thing. Orgasm comes with proven stress-busting effects and benefits for your immune system. Step up your solo time with Annabelle Knight's tips.

- 'Most masturbation sessions take place in the bedroom. My advice would be to enjoy a change of location.'
- 'Solo sex underwater can feel like an entirely new experience, so run yourself a bath, lock the door, and enjoy some alone time under the water.'
- 'There are also sex toys available that are 100 per cent waterproof, so if manual masturbation isn't your thing then get one of these for added pleasure.'



and into partner mode, try to remove distractions, avoid multitasking and pay attention to your partner's facial expressions and responses when you're in the moment.

BE A GAME-PLAYER

Rather than looking online or to insipid apps for inspiration, Knight recommends a more immersive approach. 'A sexy board game is a great option for couples looking to refresh their sex lives. They're far more tactile and allow couples to have fun together in an unusual way,' she says. 'The board game Nookii is amazing, and loved by many couples. If you're looking for something a little less time consuming, then sex dice are an easy and quick way to up the ante sexually.'

DON'T STOP DISCOVERING

You may not know that there are numerous erogenous zones outside the genital area. 'The great news is that discovering them can be an extremely pleasurable activity in itself,' says Knight. Take time to explore your and your partner's bodies for pleasure potential – the nape of the neck and ears are popular. 'The scalp is an untapped erogenous zone. It has tons of pleasurable

HEALTHY RECOMMENDS

Reignite the fire with these sexual wellness buys

- Condom-compatible and containing soothing shea butter and chamomile.

Meg's Menopause Motion Lotion Water Based Lubricant (£10, 100ml, 40 points)

- In discreet, stylish packaging, these all-natural condoms are dermatologically tested and certified vegan.

HANX Condom Ultra Thin 3 Pack (£4.99, 16 points)

- Don't know where to start? With three different natural lubricants, this beginner's bundle has got you covered.

YES Water Based & Plant-Oil Based Natural Lubricant Intro Pack (£12.99, 48 points)

[All hollandandbarrett.com](http://All.hollandandbarrett.com)



nerve endings all waiting to be stimulated,' says Knight. 'Have your partner massage your scalp with their fingers in a circular motion, close your eyes and be mindful, concentrating on the sensations, enjoying each moment.'

CURATE AN ADULT TOY BOX

'Sex toys are a fantastic way to add new dimensions to your sex life,' says Knight. 'They provide extra pleasure, which not only increases your chances of orgasm, but they also make sex in the moment feel even better as well.' Browsing for toys as a couple can help you explore new fantasies, too. 'Build positive anticipation with your partner by shopping together, that way you can veto anything you're really not interested in, and communicate if anything takes your fancy.'

BE MINDFUL

'Mindful sex is something that I wholeheartedly advocate. It's super-simple, free, and will guarantee to up your pleasure potential,' says Knight. As with all mindfulness, being mindful during sex involves living in the moment. 'It's about concentrating on exactly what is happening to your body and how that feels in the here and now. You should take in every sensation, every touch and every feeling. By acknowledging them in this way you're likely to become more sensitive to them. And in turn, that will help you to become more aroused. It's a total win-win situation.' **B**

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(AND THRIVE, NOT SURVIVE)

» 5 NATURAL WAYS TO BEAT HAY
FEVER THIS SPRINGTIME

» FITNESS AND THE FEEL-GOOD
FACTOR: WHY ENDORPHINS RULE

» INGESTIBLE BEAUTY: CAN YOU EAT
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mindful relaxation**

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PLUS! WIN A MAMMOTH SLEEP MAKEOVER WORTH £2000!

Protect your heart, for life

As February marks National Heart Month, here's a reminder of the lifestyle habits we can adopt to protect our tickers at any age



MEET THE EXPERT

Emily Rollason is a senior nutritionist at Holland & Barrett. We asked her to recommend which

supplements might help protect heart health for different age groups.

IF YOU'RE UNDER 35

While heart conditions that develop over time, such as coronary heart disease, tend to be rare in people under 35, leading a healthy lifestyle could stop them developing later

Avoid smoking The chemicals in tobacco smoke put a strain on the heart and damage the arteries, which can lead to heart disease. Even if you're a social smoker, stub it out.

Boost your omega-3s Research indicates that these fatty acids can benefit heart health. Aim for at least one portion a week from oily fish or plant-based sources such as kale

Lead an active lifestyle Aim to fit in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate activity every week. Team sports can be a great way to socialise but brisk walks count, too

Rollason says: 'Fish oil contains the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, which can help promote normal blood pressure, cholesterol levels



and blood triglyceride levels.'
Try it: Holland & Barrett Omega 3 Fish Oil 1000mg (£24.99, 250 capsules, 96 points)

IF YOU'RE UNDER 50

Studies suggest that if you have raised cholesterol in your mid-30s, it could have a lasting impact. Your risk of heart disease also rises after 45.

Eat more fibre Aim for 30g daily from fruit and veg, wholegrains, nuts and pulses – to lower your risk of heart disease. Some fibre-rich foods, like oats, can help lower cholesterol.

Manage stress Chronic stress has been linked to heart attacks and strokes, so if you're struggling, try to find a way to manage it. Many people find yoga helpful or try some mindfulness exercises.

Check your blood pressure Exercise helps keep it under control but many people aren't even aware they have high blood pressure. If you're over 40, get yours tested every five years.

Rollason says: 'If your cholesterol is slightly raised, you may wish to speak to your doctor about taking plant sterols. These are plant compounds that may reduce absorption of cholesterol in the gut.'



Try it: Holland & Barrett CholestaGuard Plant Sterols 400mg (£11.99, 60 capsules, 44 points)

IF YOU'RE UNDER 60

Heart disease risk rises considerably after the age of 45. Oestrogen helps our blood vessels stay flexible, which could be why the risk increases for women post-menopause

Limit sugar Research has linked excessive sugar consumption to increased risk of heart disease. Cut down on sweet treats, fizzy drinks and resist adding sugar to your tea.

Watch your waist Research suggests that waist circumference might be a better indicator of your heart attack risk than BMI. To stay trim, eat healthily and move more.

Drink in moderation Heavy drinking is linked to high blood pressure. Over time, this increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. Stick to a maximum of 14 units a week, spread over three days or more.

Rollason says: 'As we age, our arteries can become stiffer, which may lead to an increase in blood pressure. But studies suggest garlic supplements might help to lower it.'



Try it: Holland & Barrett Garlic Oil 4000mg (£29.99, 250 capsules, 116 points)

IF YOU'RE 60 OR OVER

At this age, heart disease and related conditions like strokes become more common. But you can limit your risk.

Keep eating healthily Eat lots of fruit and veg and keep hitting those fibre and omega-3 goals. Keep cakes and biscuits as occasional treats and try to limit your salt intake.

Use it or lose it Regular exercise plays an important role in heart health at any age. Just keep moving – walking, swimming and gardening all count

Stay social Research has linked loneliness to increased heart health risks, so get out for a walk with a loved one, or schedule a coffee with friends – over Zoom if need be.

Rollason says: 'Coenzyme Q10 may promote normal blood pressure and reduce triglyceride levels. Our natural levels decline with age and can be depleted by taking certain medications.'



Try it: Holland & Barrett CoEnzyme Q-10 30mg (£8.99, 50 tablets, 32 points)

All products at hollandandbarrett.com

7 HEART-HEALTHY FOODS

Make the most of these science-backed, heart-protective foods

1 OATS They contain a soluble fibre, called beta-glucan, which helps lower cholesterol. Not a porridge fan? Try **OatWell Crispy Hearts** (£7.99, 7x30g, 28 points) – with 3g beta-glucan per serving – or sprinkle **OatWell Bran Powder** (£11.99, 150g, 44 points) in smoothies. Find both at hollandandbarrett.com



2 GREEN TEA It's packed with antioxidants which help prevent cell damage, reduce inflammation and protect heart health. Research has also linked green tea extract to reduced blood pressure and cholesterol.

3 AVOCADOS As well as being a source of heart-healthy fats, avocados are rich in potassium, which helps lower blood pressure and keeps the heart's rhythm healthy.

4 SPINACH This has high levels of nitrates, shown to moderate blood pressure and reduce risk of heart disease. It's also a source of vitamin K, which protects arteries.

5 BLUEBERRIES Studies have shown that a daily intake of blueberries can improve blood vessel function. They're also rich in antioxidants like anthocyanins, which help protect against inflammation.

6 FLAXSEEDS

They're a source of fibre and omega-3 fatty acids, which support heart health. Sprinkle over salads, or take **Holland & Barrett Flaxseed Oil 1000mg** (£17.99, 120 capsules, 68 points, hollandandbarrett.com).

7 WALNUTS AND ALMONDS

Studies show that eating walnuts can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. They're a source of magnesium, which plays a role in regulating your heartbeat. Research also links consuming almonds to higher levels of HDL (healthy) cholesterol, which helps stop plaque building up in arteries.

Struggling with stress or anxiety? Finding a few strategies to calm your mind can help life feel more manageable, so try these tips

4 ways to relax at home

1 WRITE IT DOWN

When your mind is racing, it can be difficult to deal with your emotions. Writing your feelings down can help you work through them. Reframe negative thought patterns by keeping a gratitude journal. If you have work worries, identify your priorities and write a plan of action for the day, rather than facing a long to-do list.

2 STAY ACTIVE

After exercise, your body releases endorphins, chemicals that help you feel happy. Getting out for a jog or cycle can have a positive impact on mood for the day. If the weather is bad and you really can't face going out, follow an online workout or try a yoga routine, to help you unwind.

3 REACH OUT

Often we withdraw when we're feeling low. But even if it feels hard, try to reach out to a friend or family member to explain what you're going through – that way they can offer their support. Even the most introverted of us need contact with others, so don't be afraid to pick up the phone or send a message.

4 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Our worries often stem from thinking about the past or future. Mindfulness is the act of paying attention to the present. Try this while in bed: working from head to toes, think about how each body part feels, and imagine the tension drifting away in a coloured cloud.

SLEEP AIDS

If dropping off is a nightly challenge, these soothing products could help

Valerian capsules

This herb helps relieve the symptoms of mild anxiety.

Try **Holland & Barrett**

Valerian 337mg (£18.99, 60 capsules, 72 points).

Sleep gummies

Starpowa Snooze Black Cherry Vitamin (£19.99, 30 gummies, 76 points) provide 5-HTP, which is converted into the sleep hormone, melatonin.

Magnesium bath salts

This mineral plays a role in our nervous system, and can be absorbed through skin, so bathe in **Sea Magik Magnesium Spa Flakes** (£5.99, 1kg, 20 points).

Lavender oil

Breathing in the scent of lavender oil can induce a deeper sleep. Spritz **Miaroma Relaxing Lavender Sleep Mist Spray** (£10, 100ml, 40 points) onto your pillow.

All at hollandandbarrett.com



FREE-FROM EASTER

If you fancy whipping up a sweet treat in your kitchen, why not give this recipe a try

VEGAN NUTTY CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

These delicious teatime treats taste so good that even your non-vegan friends won't be able to tell that you've substituted a chicken egg for a vegan egg.

150g dairy free chocolate drops (plus 30g for decoration)
115g vegan butter, softened
1 Follow Your Heart Vegan Egg*
100g natural unrefined cane sugar
280ml unsweetened almond milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
210g gluten free all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp sea salt
45g hazelnuts chopped
45g almonds chopped
60g organic cocoa powder

1 Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4 and line a 21-22cm square tin with baking parchment. Melt the chocolate drops in the microwave, stirring every 15 seconds until they are fully melted.

2 In a mixing bowl, combine the butter with the vegan egg, cane sugar and vanilla extract. Leave to one side

3 In a separate bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, cocoa powder, cinnamon and sea salt together. Pour into the bowl containing the butter and add the melted chocolate. Whisk until a thick batter is formed.

4 Pour the batter into the square tin and use a spatula to make sure that it's distributed equally. Sprinkle on the 30g chocolate drops, the chopped hazelnuts and almonds.

5 Bake for 25 minutes before leaving to cool. Use a sharp knife to cut into squares



EASTER EGGS FOR EVERY DIET

Made with special dietary requirements in mind, these free-from treats ensure nobody is left out

THE VERSATILE EASTER EGG Free from dairy, gluten, egg and nuts, the allergy-friendly **Nomo Salted Caramel Easter Egg & Bar** (£5.99, 148g, 20 points) is truly delicious.

THE NUTTY WAFER BAR With a silky hazelnut and cocoa filling and melt-in-the-mouth milk chocolate coating, it's hard to believe **Love Raw's Cream Filled Wafer**

Bars (£1.69, 43g, 4 points) are 100% vegan.

THE VEGAN MINI EGGS The classic treat gets a vegan upgrade. **Doisy & Dam Good Eggs** (£1.99, 80g, 4 points) are made with dairy-free Colombian dark chocolate, encased in a crunchy shell. All at hollandandbarrett.com





WIN! A MAMMOTH SLEEP UPGRADE WORTH £2000

Looking for a way to improve your sleep in 2021? We've teamed up with health and wellbeing specialist Mammoth to offer one lucky winner the chance to win an amazing £2000-worth of top-quality sleep products – including a sumptuous Shine Essential mattress and a pair of luxury Ultimate pillows.

If there's one thing we all deserve in 2021, it's a restful night's sleep. Your sleep space is your sanctuary, and a place to unwind after a long day. Choosing the right mattress and pillow combination is crucial for achieving comfortable, restorative sleep and helping to ease away the aches and pains, stresses and strains of the day. Now, thanks to Mammoth, you could be in for a real treat – a special upgrade to your bedroom to help you end the day in the best possible way.

Mammoth is the pioneering brand that brought naturally cooling Medical Grade™ foam technology and made it

available to the general public. As NHS award-winners and official partners with The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Mammoth is backed by health professionals around the country and is recommended by those who value health and wellbeing.

Mammoth's restorative Rise and Shine mattress collection has been scientifically tested and shown to improve sleep. For those who choose wellness, there's no better feeling than sinking into a comfy mattress, supportive pillow and fresh, clean sheets after a difficult day. The right mattress can soothe both body and mind and Mammoth is the healthy choice for 2021.

The Mammoth range of mattresses and pillows is available to buy in over 250 stores across the country. To find your nearest one, log onto mammothcomfort.com, and find Mammoth on Facebook facebook.com/mammothmattress and Twitter [@mammothmattress](https://twitter.com/mammothmattress)



HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win a Mammoth Shine mattress and pair of Ultimate pillows, simply answer the following question:

HOW MANY STORES IN THE UK STOCK MAMMOTH SLEEP PRODUCTS?

- A Fewer than 20
- B More than 250
- C More than 1000



HOW TO ENTER All our prize draws are open exclusively to Rewards for Life members. Enter ONLINE at healthycomps.co.uk – make sure you have your membership number handy – or by POST to the address on page 126. Closing date for entries is 4 April 2021. For full terms and condition see page 126 or visit healthy-magazine.co.uk/terms-conditions

SIGN UP TO REWARDS FOR LIFE NOW

rewards for life
here's to your health

STANDARD TERMS & CONDITIONS

1 The following apply to all competitions and offers in *healthy* magazine. 2 Closing date is 27 March 2021, unless specified otherwise. 3 No purchase necessary. 4 Winner(s) will be picked at random from valid entries by an independent judging body. 5 Competitions open to all UK residents unless stated otherwise stated, except employees and families of the promoter(s), River Group Content Ltd any third parties or anyone professionally associated with the promotion. 6 Winner(s) will receive prize(s) or notification of prize(s) within 28 days of closing date, unless otherwise stated. 7 In line with the ASA CAP code, River Group Content Ltd may have to publish or make available on request the name and county of major prize winners. By entering, you agree to have your name and location published online or in *healthy* magazine. 8 For details of winner(s) send SAE marked '*healthy*' issue date/name of competition' to Promotions, Garden Floor, 16 Connaught Place, London W2 2ES. 9 Contract is with supplier of competition/offer and not Holland & Barrett or River Group Content Ltd. 10 Further terms and conditions may apply – see healthycomps.co.uk

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COMPETITION (pages 124-125)
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DATA PROTECTION: All data received will be used strictly in accordance with GDPR data legislation. *healthy*, published by River Group Content Ltd, will collect your personal information to process your entry. Info at healthy-magazine.co.uk/privacy-policy

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