

MAR 2023

# Health & Wellbeing

DOCTORS' ADVICE



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### LISA SNOWDON

The #1 self-care secret that's changed her life

### Gaslighting

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## EDITORIAL

**Editor:** Holly Treacy

holly.treacy@dcthomson.co.uk

**Senior content creator:** Laura Coppock

laura.coppock@dcthomson.co.uk

**Commercial content creator:** Rae Delanie Passfield

rae.passfield@dcthomson.co.uk

**Senior content writer:** Daniella Gray

daniella.gray@dcthomson.co.uk

**Content creator:** Liz Frost

liz.frost@dcthomson.co.uk

## ADVERTISING

**Group advertising manager:**

Owen Cook, 01206 505939, owen.cook@dcthomson.co.uk

**Advertising manager:**

Emma Steele, 01206 505428, emma.steele@dcthomson.co.uk

**Senior account manager:**

Julie Freestone, 01206 506232, julie.freestone@dcthomson.co.uk

**Account manager:**

Georgia Rowland, 01206 505429, georgia.rowland@dcthomson.co.uk

**Advertisement production:**

Angela Scrivener

## DESIGN

**Art editor:** Richard Allen

**Designers:** Ben Kemp, Charlotte Weatherley,  
Luke Rogers and Adam Barford

## SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

0800 904 7000

## IN-HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

**CliQQ Photography,** cliqq.co.uk

## IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT

**Marketing manager:** Andrea Turner andrea.turner@dcthomson.co.uk

**Accounts:** Debbie Starrs, 01206 505995

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# Editor's Letter

HOLLY TREACY

After what's felt like a very long and cold winter, spring is finally in sight, and with it brings new optimism and joy for the coming year. So who better to grace our cover this month than someone who embodies joy and optimism in abundance... the very fabulous, Lisa Snowdon! She's over on page 16 chatting self-care secrets, life achievements and how she accidentally became a campaigner for the menopause. And, it's not just Lisa that's breaking the taboo around certain topics, we're getting very honest about periods (p118), pelvic floor (p65) and how those pesky hormones can affect our relationships too (p29). It's time to take the power back and talk about these things without the shame stigma attached. I hope you'll agree, that this feels like a really empowering time for women's health. In fact, we're all about positivity this month, dedicating our special to your happiness. We've covered everything from workouts and recipes to boost your mood, to easy gratitude journalling prompts you can start today – I've been following something similar since January and I'm already noticing what a difference it makes to my day. My favourite one to start with? What's made you smile today? I find it's an easy one to identify and will instantly lift your mood when reflecting about your day. So, what has made you smile today? Could it be you've signed up for a charity walk with friends (p78); booked a wellness break to heal your emotions (p103); made a really great playlist to get you pumped for your next workout (p72) – whatever it is that's put a spring in your step this month, we'd love to hear about it. And, here's one more thing to smile about, this issue comes with an extra 48-page mini magazine dedicated to helping you find your confidence. I wish you a very positive month ahead.



Holly

## Editor's picks...



**Laura,**  
senior content creator

"I was struggling to find good light for applying my make-up, especially on dark mornings, but Beautifect's clever lighting tech creates the perfect daylight quality lighting." £279, [beautifect.com](http://beautifect.com)



**Daniella,**  
senior content writer

"On days when meal-prep escapes me – or there's nothing in the fridge – it's Field Doctor to the rescue. Its dietitian-designed, chef-made frozen meals keep me on track with zero effort on my part." Prices start at £6.95, [fielddoctor.co.uk](http://fielddoctor.co.uk)



**Liz, content creator**

There's something so mindful and wholesome about taking a physical photo, not to mention the break from screen-time, which does wonders for mental health. This Instax polaroid camera is the perfect portable companion, small, light and super-easy to use, £79.99, [instax.co.uk](http://instax.co.uk)



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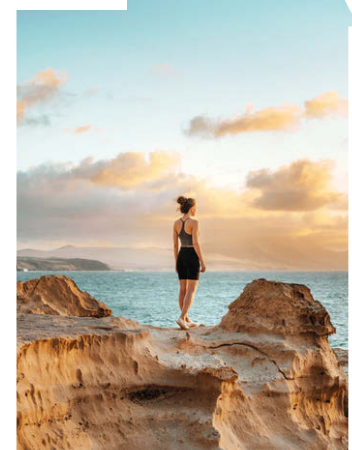


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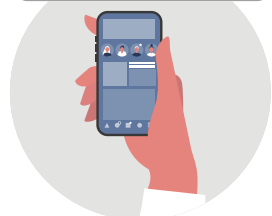
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COVER: Lisa Snowdon

CREDIT: Nicky Johnston/Camera Press

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE: 2nd March



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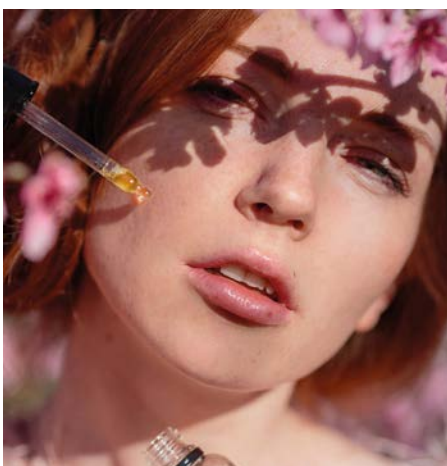
# THE HEALTHY HOTLIST

A bite-size look at what's trending  
in the world of wellness

## NIPPING IT IN THE BUD... WITH NIACINAMIDE

Skincare can feel confusing sometimes. Determining what acid does what, whether you have dry, oily or combination skin, and what to do if you have an acne outbreak before a big event (don't worry, we've all been there), can leave us feeling at a loss. However, if there's one skincare ingredient to have on your radar, it's niacinamide. "Niacinamide, also known as nicotinamide, is a form of vitamin B3 that is water soluble, which means we don't store it in the body," says skin specialist, Dr Lauren Evans. "If we want to reap the brightening benefits of niacinamide, it needs to be ingested via a supplement or applied to the skin regularly." Niacinamide has been shown to help even skin tone, reduce brown spots, lessen redness, and brighten the skin. "It also helps fight off internal and external stressors that can ultimately lead to the deterioration or breakdown of our skin and premature signs of ageing," adds Dr Evans. "As well as that, it has anti-inflammatory properties, making it a better choice for those

with oily or acne-prone skin than its other brightening counterpart ingredient vitamin C, which doesn't always suit those with that skin type." From helping to minimise enlarged pores, soften fine lines and wrinkles, diminish dullness, and strengthen a weakened surface, niacinamide is one superstar ingredient.



## NIFTY NIACINAMIDE



### Arbonne Brighten up Illuminating Toner with Niacinamide, £33, arbonne.com

Formulated with skin-smoothing prickly pear flower extract and niacinamide, this formula hydrates and supports the skin barrier. It also works to enhance the look of skin brightness and prep the skin for skincare products that follow.



### Paula's Choice 10% Niacinamide Booster, £42, cultbeauty.com

Containing an acne-fighting complex of vitamins B3 and B5, Paula's Choice Niacinamide Booster helps to reduce oil production and improve skin texture. Easily added to your existing skincare regime, you can't really go wrong with this simple-to-use product.



### The Ordinary Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1% 30ml, £5.60, lookfantastic.com

This lightweight serum infuses skin with an intense dose of vitamin B3, which helps to minimise the appearance of blemishes and imperfections. With the addition of zinc salt, it works to absorb any excess oils for a more balanced and refined-looking complexion.

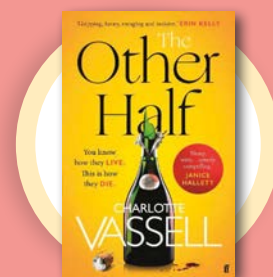
## H&W BOOK CLUB

The best books to curl up with this month



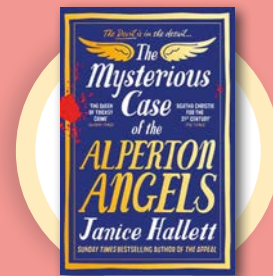
### We All Want Impossible Things by Catherine Newman

Edi and Ash have been best friends for more than 40 years. Since childhood, they have seen each other through life's milestones, so when Edi is diagnosed with terminal cancer, Ash's world shifts to focus on Edi's care. As Edi worsens, together, they work to build on their foundation of memories and learn when to hold on, and when to let go.



### The Other Half by Charlotte Vassell

The morning after Rupert's 30th, his girlfriend Clemmie is found murdered on Hampstead Heath. The party-goers have alibis, so when detective Beauchamp arrives, he knows something is amiss. As he searches for the truth someone threatens to shut down his investigation before it's begun.



### The Mysterious Case of the Alpertons by Janice Hallett

Everyone knows the story of the Alpertons Angels: the cult-like group who were convinced one of their member's babies was the anti-Christ. Nearly two decades later, the Alperton baby has turned 18 and the truth of what happened with the Angels is something much darker than anyone ever imagined.

# HAVE YOU GOT *Friendship* FATIGUE?

40 unread messages from your friends? Friendship fatigue is a real thing, but luckily, there are ways we can navigate it

WORDS | *Stacey Carter*





**O**ur friendships can be one of the biggest sources of joy in our lives, but, just like our romantic relationships, they can sometimes have their trials. Data from the friendship app Peanut found that 76 percent of women surveyed said that their number of close friends has gone down in the past year. If you're struggling to respond to messages, arrange meet-ups and answer phone calls, then you could be suffering from what experts term as 'friendship fatigue' – meaning that while you want to maintain your friendship, you feel too emotionally burnt out and tired to give them the energy they require. Thankfully, there are ways we can avoid feeling emotionally drained by our interactions, according to the experts.

## PLATONIC PITFALLS

Determining why you're experiencing friendship fatigue means you'll need to take a moment to think about your friendship. Is your friendship draining you, or do you have a lot going on at work and home this month? When we feel fatigued by friendships, this can be because of either one or two of these things, explains psychologist Dr Elena Touroni (thechelseapsychologyclinic.com). "From my understanding, friendship fatigue refers to the stress that happens when your friendships are very one-sided, and you're carrying all the emotional weight, or you are simply over-socialising and not taking enough time for yourself." It can be easier to spot signs that our romantic relationship is on the rocks, but if there is a breakdown in boundaries or communication with a friend, this can sometimes feel much harder to navigate, as Dr Touroni explains: "The signs that a friendship might not be serving you include:

- Feeling drained after spending time with a particular friend.
- Feeling alone despite spending time with friends (this is a sign you don't feel seen, heard or understood by the people you are spending time with).

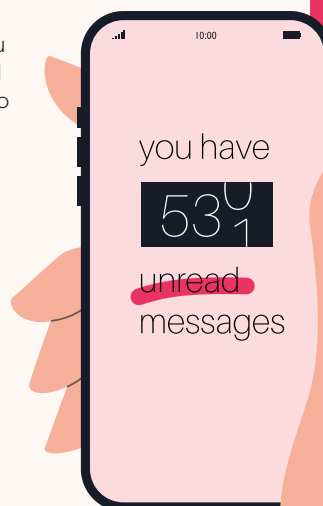
"If any of these resonate, then it's time to set boundaries with your friend or decide whether this friendship is worth continuing," says Dr Touroni. Just like with our romantic relationships, we need to have check-ins with our friendships to decide whether we'd like to keep things the way they are or change things up. Having these conversations can be hard, but doing so can strengthen your bond and lead to happier relationships with improved communication.

## INTENTIONAL CONNECTIONS

The other side of friendship fatigue is a little more complex. While it's true that our friendships make us feel happy and connected, for some, the effort that comes with socialising can feel draining, especially if we already feel burnt out, or pulled in too many directions. "The modern world has come with the expectation of always being available – but this is unrealistic," says Dr Touroni. "For those that are naturally more introverted – and get their energy from alone time – this can feel especially overwhelming." Signs that your energy might be depleted by socialising include:

- Feeling exhausted or burnt out.
- Difficulties sleeping.
- Overwhelmed with negative thoughts.
- Headaches.
- Mental health problems such as anxiety etc.

Sometimes it's not the interactions with our friends that make us feel like we're running on empty, but life overall. Feeling stressed can make us want to retreat inwards and recuperate, so saying yes to every invitation and phone call will only lead to further burnout. It's important that when you feel like this, you recognise it and take measures to recharge. **H&W**



## RECHARGING THOSE (SOCIAL) BATTERIES

Regardless of whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, solo self-care is important. Not only will it make you feel ready and excited for your next catch-up with friends, but it will also help you be more present in your relationships. In fact, research from *Psychology Today* shows that solitude can enhance relationships with others. "It's important to be committed to carving out 'me time', regardless of how busy you are," says Dr Touroni. "That can be as simple as a grounding lunchtime walk in your local park, reading a chapter of your favourite book, going to a regular yoga class, etc. Being connected to yourself allows you to strengthen your connection to others."

For some, recharging their social battery can look like:

- Going on a long solo walk or run – being outdoors has been associated with lower levels of stress and improved attention.
- Practising relaxation techniques – yoga, breathwork and meditation can all help you 'switch off', when you're feeling overwhelmed.
- Making time for your hobbies/passions – according to a study by the University of Liverpool, reading has an enormous impact on stress, with 38 percent of people citing it as their number one way to relax.
- Scheduling breaks between social events – for example, if you know your calendar is going to get busy at the end of the month, then make sure that in between those catch-ups and events, you schedule some time for some solo self-care.

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# LIVE WELL

Whether you're after a healthy mind, bank balance or relationships, we've got all your wellbeing needs covered this month

## ARE YOU BEING GASLIT?

Power dynamics within relationships often ebb and flow, but what happens when your relationship causes you to question your feelings, memory, perception of events, or your state of mind? 📉

WORDS | *Stacey Carter*



**D**espite what glossy social media photos might portray to the outside world, relationships are never perfect. Almost half of all women in the UK have reported that they, or someone close to them, has been the victim of gender-based abuse, according to a nationwide study by Avon. One of the most common forms of this emotional abuse is gaslighting – a manipulative form of behaviour designed to dismantle the other person’s self-belief and judgement. Over time, gaslighting can lead to the recipient feeling confused, unclear, unsafe and depressed, but sometimes, it’s not always easy to spot the signs of this emotionally abusive behaviour. To find out how gaslighting plays out in a relationship and what to do if you think it’s happening to you, we consulted chartered psychologist Rachel MacLynn, CEO and Founder of MacLynn, ([maclynninternational.com](http://maclynninternational.com)).

### FUEL TO THE FIRE

“Gaslighting is a form of psychological and emotional manipulation in which the abuser intentionally creates self-doubt and confusion to gain power and control over the victim,” says Rachel. “It is a process in which the aggressor distorts reality and convinces the other party that they’re irrational, unstable, or not credible.” Gaslighting is a form of emotional and mental abuse, but it doesn’t just happen within romantic relationships. It can take place within family dynamics, in work settings and in educational institutes. “The term ‘gaslighting’ comes from a 1938 British play and its 1944 film adaptation, *Gaslight*, which focuses on an abusive husband and his efforts to convince his wife she’s lost her mind,” says Rachel. “It’s become an increasingly popular term, especially this past year – the Merriam-Webster dictionary made ‘gaslighting’ its word of the year for 2022 after searches rose by 1,740 percent from the prior year.” If you are a victim of gaslighting, your partner will often:

- Place responsibility for their behaviour on your feelings and reactions, instead of evaluating their own role – ‘I was just joking, you’re overreacting.’
- Overrides your recollection of events and asserts that your perception is inaccurate.

- Write off your thoughts and viewpoints, often using language like ‘crazy,’ ‘ridiculous,’ ‘stupid,’ etc.
- Engages in blame shifting – ‘I wouldn’t treat you this way if you acted differently’.
- Double down on their lies, even when presented with proof. They might insist certain events never happened, or that it’s being remembered inaccurately.
- Separate yourself from family/friends who acknowledge inappropriate behaviour, ridiculing them as a means of invalidating their viewpoint.



# 74%

of female victims of domestic violence also experienced gaslighting from their partner or ex-partner.

National Domestic  
Violence Hotline

## "GASLIGHTERS WILL TRY TO SHIFT BLAME ONTO SOMEONE ELSE FOR THEIR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR, LEADING MANY PEOPLE TO FEEL RESPONSIBLE"

Gaslighters will often try to shift the blame onto someone else for their abusive behaviour, leading many people to feel responsible for what is happening to them. In some cases, they will go as far as to spread rumours about their significant other.

### THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Gaslighting can be a one-time event between two people, but it becomes more insidious when it takes place over time in a long-term relationship. "A person who is chronically gaslit will mistrust their judgment and question their own reality, and often will display characteristics of

someone who's been emotionally abused," says Rachel. There are often particular ways that gaslighting is displayed in romantic relationships. A few examples include:

- Using love as a defence: Someone who's gaslighting might claim to only behave a certain way out of your best interest, or because they want what's best for you.
- Accusations of jealousy and paranoia: When raising concerns, gaslighters are quick to shift the focus of the conversation from their own actions to the 'you're paranoid' perception. They might suggest that your 'jealousy' or lack of trust in them is the true root of the problem.
- Constant criticism: The less capable the gaslighter can make you seem, the less credible you'll feel. This allows them to maintain control – i.e. 'you're terrible with money, that's why I control all of our accounts.'

Regardless of how or why it presents itself in a relationship, gaslighting is a huge red flag and should be taken seriously.



## FANNING THE FLAMES

If you're concerned that you're being gaslit by a partner, the first step is to break the cycle and prioritise your mental health. "It's essential that you seek help from someone outside the relationship so that you can formulate your own perception and receive validation for some of your feelings," says Rachel. "This is far easier said than done, as isolation is often a by-product of gaslighting. Find a friend or family member who you can speak openly with, or consider hiring a therapist." Including an impartial third party, like a therapist, to directly discuss this behaviour with your partner can also help on the road to recovery. However, it's crucially important to focus on yourself foremost to break the cycle. Making sure that you have a support system in place to help you if you do choose to leave or create some distance between you and your partner is necessary if you suspect

"IF YOU'RE CONCERNED THAT YOU'RE BEING GASLIT BY A PARTNER, THE FIRST STEP IS TO BREAK THE CYCLE AND PRIORITISE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH"

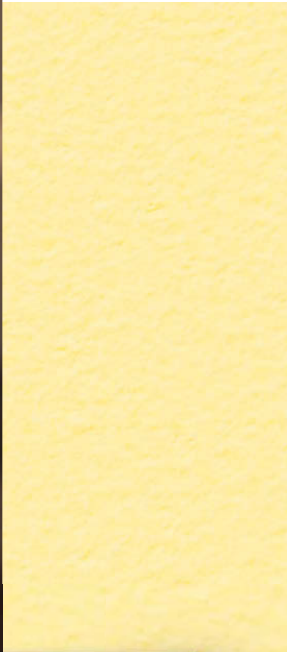
that you're being gaslit. "Creating some space mentally and emotionally will allow you to better identify gaslighting as it occurs and will therefore make you less susceptible," says Rachel. "No one's thoughts and feelings should be subject to debate, but with some practice, you can stand up for yours and ensure that you can achieve a happy and healthy relationship." **H&W**

**33%**

of females have been called 'crazy' or 'insane' by a romantic partner.

YouGov





**Tastes  
Like  
Sugar**

celeb  
interview

# "LET'S DO THINGS THAT SCARE US"

TV, radio presenter and podcast host Lisa Snowdon tells us why she's determined to be brave and live in the moment this year

**L**isa Snowdon radiates calm. She's fresh from a holistic treatment when we talk on the phone for our interview and relaxation oozes from her voice. "I've just come to see my friend Sarah Bradden, she's the most amazing acupuncturist," she tells me. "I had a treatment using ear seeds; it's been beautiful, I'm so chilled out." Ear seeding crystals work by stimulating acupressure points in the ear, which is a key location on the body for acupuncture, to help restore calm and balance energy, according to sarahbradden.com. Well, it certainly seems to have worked on Lisa; I want what she's having!

But it's not holistic treatments alone that keep the star feeling (not to mention looking) great, this is a woman who knows what's good for her and how to prioritise self-care. And the results are clear to see. At 51, the former model defies her years, and has the glowing skin, glossy locks, enviable figure, and more importantly, genuine radiance and energy about her that no amount of products or therapies can offer.

Lisa understands the importance of looking after her mental as well as physical wellbeing. For her, a key priority this year is to focus on gratitude and enjoying the here and now. "I wanted to go into this year being more present, more mindful, and that involves me staying off my phone more which keeps me in the moment rather than losing time scrolling and being on emails too much. Obviously checking in

throughout the day but not having it glued to my hand," she reveals.

"I find it makes me appreciate everything that's going on around me, makes me calmer, happier. And so far, so good. I've been so much more productive – I have a notebook with me so I can write stuff down – and it means when I see my friends and family, I'm enjoying spending time with them. Having phones on the dining table is

such a bad habit we've all got into."

It's a simple, yet effective change that most of us could benefit from, to help us stop and smell the roses more often. "I'm finding that life is going really quickly," Lisa shares. "Now I'm 51, and that year of being 50 just flew by! So I'm like OK, I need to slow everything down and just live in the moment more and appreciate everything that's going on around me."

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Indeed, there's lots to appreciate. Last autumn, Lisa was crowned BBC *Celebrity MasterChef* champion – an achievement she's understandably proud of, not least because it pushed her outside of her comfort zone. "I had a brilliant 2022: turning 50, and saying yes to something I'd always wanted to do but had been too scared," she says of the show. "Just putting my big girl pants on and saying 'OK I'll do it'. And winning it was absolutely brilliant."

It's a testament to the power of doing things that scare you. "My family have always pushed me to do it [go on *Celebrity MasterChef*] because they know how much I love food and I'm always cooking for everybody," Lisa tells me. "I thought, if I do it, I've got to do it properly. And I did; I threw myself in wholeheartedly. I was constantly googling ingredients, working on menus, researching ideas and looking for inspiration. I really pushed the boat out and I was cooking things I never thought I'd do. It was a phenomenal experience I'm so proud of myself."





# celeb interview

How did she manage to cope so well with the pressure, I wonder? "The time is the thing that really gets you. That was the real pressure for me, but you just have to get your head in the game and focus on what needs to happen first, then next, and think of things in logical order," she explains. "I just had to go with the pressure – actually I kind of thrived on it!"

But, for Lisa it wasn't about winning. "I didn't think I would [win], especially being a menopausal woman at 50, I thought I would just be a sweaty mess!" she laughs. "But I thought, you know what I'm doing it for all us ladies who are in their 50s, who might feel like life is over and you're going to be invisible... no, we're just getting started! Let's own it, let's do things that have always scared us, let's jump in feet first. We are fantastic human beings, we're capable of anything, this menopause is just a little bump in the road, let's just go forward. And that's why I just pushed on and thought of doing it for all us girls."

## FEELING GOOD

It's clear that Lisa is a girl's girl who is passionate about helping others feel good. This is a big part of why she adores her work on ITV's *This Morning*, "I just love being a girl, playing with fashion, I love being able to work with women on the show, our viewers who are stepping out of their comfort zone coming onto the show, empowering them to look and feel fantastic, giving them the confidence to wear things they perhaps wouldn't normally wear, if they're stuck in a style rut, helping to pull them out of that," she says. "And then you see them walk on the catwalk beaming from ear-to-ear looking and feeling fantastic – that makes me so happy."

And the feel-good energy doesn't stop there. Lisa is well-known for speaking out to help break the stigma around menopause. Does she see herself as a menopause campaigner? "I guess I am a campaigner... I just want women to recognise what is happening to them and not to feel ashamed about it. It's a natural



Lisa with her MasterChef trophy



The Get Lifted podcast takes a deep dive into wellbeing



Lisa enjoys sharing self-care tips



Follow her on Instagram @lisa\_snowdon

"EDUCATING OURSELVES ON WHAT WE NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO FEEL GOOD, KNOWING OUR OPTIONS, KNOWING ABOUT HRT AND THE INS AND OUTS ABOUT THAT – IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER"

process that we go through," she points out. "Being armed with the right information and educating ourselves on what to expect and what we need to do in order to feel good, knowing our options, knowing about HRT, the ins and outs about that – it's really important. Knowledge is power. I didn't know enough when I was 42 and was first perimenopausal. So, I don't want women to feel lost and alone and ashamed and to suffer in silence. That's why I'm massively proactive about talking about it."

She didn't set out to 'campaign' exactly. "It wasn't my mission, but it just sort of happened through being honest about what's happening to me, which I always try to do," Lisa explains. "I'm just trying to find the answers like everyone." Unsurprisingly, the presenter has amassed a loyal tribe of followers on social media enjoying her regular Midweek Menopause Madness and Self Care Sunday IGTV series. "Sharing on my community has been really helpful to me – a lifeline – and I know it has for so many of my ladies that I feel close to now in my community," she says. "Instagram, for all of its faults and aimless scrolling, it's a fantastic, powerful tool for connecting with other people."

She's also regularly joined by a range of health experts: "There are so many great people out there that are just so knowledgeable and I like to bring that into my self-care and share with my followers on Instagram. I love spreading the word and giving people different ideas that they can do for themselves to make them feel good."

## SHARING SELF-CARE SECRETS

As someone who loves to try different wellness practices, I ask Lisa what's the number one self-care hack that's changed her life. "Breathwork," she says immediately. "Our breath speaks the language of the nervous system. If I realise that I'm shallow breathing and this is giving my body the 'fight or flight' signal, I can slow everything down, breathe into my tummy, and it puts me in the restorative part of the nervous system. That's one of the most powerful self-cares that I learnt in 2020 in lockdown. And it doesn't cost a thing. You can get so

energised from your breath and you can get so sleepy too. It's within our power; we just don't get taught to breathe and we get into bad habits. It's one thing that can change your life, it can change your blood pressure, your mental health, physical health, slow down your stress response... it's amazing."



“That’s something I found out through recording my podcast, *Get Lifted*,” Lisa continues. *Get Lifted* began as “an extension of Self Care Sunday,” Lisa tells me. “It’s all about things that we can do to help ourselves, including things that don’t cost anything that we have the power to do in ourselves. So, as well as breathwork, we cover things like manifesting, journaling, listening to our intuition and more.”

### AN EFFECTIVE ROUTINE

What are the key things Lisa does on a regular basis to feel on top form? “Of course, I like doing breathwork in the mornings and evenings – it helps me get sleepy in the evenings,” she says, having suffered with poor sleep during perimenopause. “The sleep deprivation was terrible! I was waking up every hour, going to the bathroom to pee – I don’t know how I was peeing so much because the bed was soaking wet through sweat! Then I’d be shivering cold – the covers would be on, the covers would be off, on off, on off. George [Lisa’s fiancé, George Smart] would cuddle me then I’d be like get off I’m too hot!”

To combat this, Lisa found that a solid wind down routine in the evenings has massively helped. “I’m all about the small things that make a big difference,” she says. “I stay off screens and devices for a couple of hours before bed; I like good bedding, a cool bedroom, nice pyjamas, low lighting. I take magnesium, 5-HTP plus CBD oils. I also like pillow sprays [REN, This Works and Bamford are her go-to brands]. Then I’ll do some reading or journaling and make some notes of the good things that have happened during the day, to practice gratitude.”

“I really value my sleep,” adds Lisa. She knows only too well, that when you’re not well rested it can exacerbate menopause symptoms: “When you’ve slept well you not only look better, your cortisol levels aren’t as spiked, you’re not as likely to be as hungry the next day because you’re rested; and you’re not craving sugar and coffee to keep yourself awake,” she says. “That’s not to say I don’t love coffee and sugar – I’m not a total saint. I think a little of what you fancy does you good.”

Is there a morning routine that Lisa swears by? She’s up early: “I get up at 5am, have Symprove, which I love because it contains live active bacteria and really helps the good microbiome in your gut,” she says. “I noticed bloating and IBS symptoms brought on I through stress, eating on the go, not being too mindful while eating – and menopause and perimenopause definitely contributed to an imbalance in my gut. So, it’s really important for me to get a little shot of that good stuff every morning before anything else,” she explains, noting that there’s a lot to “that gut-brain connection – a happy gut, a happy head – and skincare issues are often due to an imbalance in the tummy, rosacea and things like that.”



After breakfast, Lisa gets in her gym kit. "I usually try to do some kind of workout each day – something I really enjoy is a cross between stretching, free weights, resistance training – I love working out at the gym with weights – I also enjoy Pilates on the reformer," she says. "I love going for walks to try and get 10,000 steps in a day at least. I just need to move, not only for my fitness levels and metabolism but also for my head, to release those endorphins. I usually walk to the gym or Pilates and back. Once I've done that, I get ready for work."

### FOODIE FAVOURITES

Lisa obviously knows a thing or two about food and nutrition, too. "I cook a lot of fish dishes; I love pan-fried salmon with rice and lots of vegetables. I like to slice up broccoli and roast it with oil, garlic and chilli and put some sliced almonds on – that's a lovely side dish. Or I'll do seaweed with lots of yummy Japanese inspired flavours like soy, ginger and garlic with chicken skewers," she says. "I enjoy plant-based dishes as well. I make a nice butter bean dip with raw garlic, olive oil, salt and lemon so it's a bit like hummous and can go with anything – sweet potatoes, kale, broccoli..." Sounds delicious!

"I also do comfort food some days, like toad in the hole, with roasted garlic mashed potato with loads of butter and cream, and onion gravy. I have a nice balance of comfort food and healthy food," adds Lisa. "I'm a bit of a flexitarian, so I have some meat and fish plus lots of plant-based meals. Lots of colourful, water-rich foods, eating the rainbow basically. A bit of yoghurt with some fruit in the morning, scrambled egg. Just mix it up and keep your body guessing but feed it with lots of nutrients."

It's clear that Lisa is a real foodie, and I ask where the love of cooking comes from. "I started travelling as a model when I was quite young – I lived in Japan for a few months – and got to try all these delicious cuisines. I've been really



**"I JUST NEED TO MOVE, NOT ONLY FOR MY FITNESS LEVELS BUT ALSO FOR MY HEAD, TO RELEASE THOSE ENDORPHINS"**

lucky to be able to learn from that," she says. "Growing up in Hertfordshire, we didn't eat out a lot because there wasn't the money for it. But I've always loved food. I'll always bring things home and cook for family and friends."

### RESTING AND RECHARGING

What does a perfect Sunday look like for Lisa? "George and I always wake up early, so on a Sunday we'll usually watch a documentary in bed first thing. Then after breakfast, we'll go for a long walk in the forest near us before planning some food that we want to make and popping to the butcher or M&S. We'll have the radio on – often BBC Radio 6 music with Cerys Matthews – and just potter around. Usually we'll cook a slow roast, chill out and simply enjoy being at home," she continues. "A bit of exercise, some good food for the soul,

chatting, hanging out together, getting ready for the start of the week." It sounds perfect to me. And Lisa's work life sounds equally as healthy. "I've got a new project that I'm working on, which is really exciting! I can't say too much unfortunately, but I'm enjoying writing and finding it very cathartic," she reveals. "And I've got some more cooking bits and pieces coming up because I love incorporating wellness into my food; I'm passionate about healing ourselves and helping ourselves look and feel the best

we can via the things we eat. I'm also continuing the self-care stuff that I've been doing, plus more fashion on *This Morning*... and what else I don't know!" Whatever it is, I'm here for it and will be following Lisa to glean more of her brilliant self-care advice. After all, the proof is in the pudding. **HOW**

**Lisa is an ambassador for Symprove, a unique water based supplement packed full of live, active bacteria which aids in fostering a healthy and happy gut. Find out more at [symprove.com](http://symprove.com)**



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# This month WE PRESCRIBE...

Just a few of the little things that are bringing us joy

## 1 Getting creative

What's more joyful than unleashing your creative skills? Pott'd kits include everything you need to produce your own joy-inducing clay creations at home: Two bags of super-soft eco-friendly, premium air-dry clay, (enough clay for 8-10 average sized creations, or 2-4 large ones), as well as acrylic paints, bristle brushes, gloss and varnish. No kiln required! Lacking inspiration? Don't worry, each kit comes with step-by-step instructions for a variety of projects. Visit [pottpeople.com](http://pottpeople.com) for more.



*Creativity  
made easy*

## 2 Going organic

If you've ever tucked into some freshly picked strawberries, you'll know the joy that is to be had from nourishing yourself with nature's bounty. We love Organibox for the good feels they give us, by working directly with farmers, dodging plastics and donating 50p from every box sale to The Trussell Trust who are the biggest supporter of food banks across the country. The contents are 100 percent Soil Association Accredited, too. Prices start from £19.45. Visit [organibox.org](http://organibox.org) for more.

*Goodness  
in a box*



## 3 Embracing soft furnishings

Following several months of loving the indoors (hot chocolate by the fire, anyone?) we've learned one thing: Soft furnishings are everything! A comfy sofa can be improved 1,000-fold by a gorgeously soft throw, and a jazzy cushion goes a long way to bringing us joy. Don't believe us? Check out The Pillow Drop's range of unique, colourful and playful pillows, all handmade and stitched. Even Gwyneth Paltrow has one, and reportedly said it's: "My best wellness product for self-care". Visit [thepillowdrop.com](http://thepillowdrop.com) for more information.



*Joyful  
lounging*

## 4 Keeping a journal

In a world dictated by stress and screens, the tactile feel of pen surfing across paper is supremely grounding, and the joyful release after offloading your thoughts can be exquisite. We adore Penheaven's varied selection of pens and notebooks. Treat yourself to a set, or mix and match, keep them in your bag for whenever you feel the urge to splurge. You can thank us later. Visit [penheaven.co.uk](http://penheaven.co.uk) for more.

*Dreamy  
scribblings*



## 5 Showering mindfully

Tuning in your senses during your morning shower can help raise those all-important joy levels. We love Sundae Body, an Aussie-born brand with creamy shower foams to die for. Each of the whipped foams are formulated with native Aussie ingredients like Kakadu plum and finger lime. Our favourite scent is the pomegranate fizz, £12.99, [sundaebody.com](http://sundaebody.com)



*Shower  
upgrade  
alert*

Andrea McLean

# “Wanting something is never enough”

This month our columnist explains manifestation techniques and how to use them to turn your dreams into reality

**M**anifesting is something that has been around for as long as we have existed. But what is it? Is it simply writing down what you want, looking at a picture of it, and then letting the universe take care of it while you sit and watch telly?

The short answer to that is no. Manifesting means imagining the future that you want, being very clear on what it will look like, examining the steps you will need to take to make it a reality and then taking those steps. It really is the same thing as goal setting, but what makes it more fun is that you get to take a really deep dive into the visuals of it, the feeling of it, rather than simply writing down a dry list of things you want to do and then plodding along while you do them.

Why is this important? Because simply wanting something is never enough to get you it. Just wanting something won't make it happen. But if you can get crystal clear on how it will look and feel, it's like putting a destination into your sat nav so you know what you're aiming for.

Manifesting is something that my family and I do together – it's not just for grown-ups. We sit down with our teens and young adults, with sheets of A3 paper, pens, printer primed and ready to go, and we all create vision boards of what our goals are for the year, and what we'd like to manifest.

We centre it around the wheel of life, so that we are manifesting a fully rounded year, so for example:

- Work goals: school, college or uni exam results for them, work goals for us.
- Passion and hobbies: what would we like to get good at, or enjoy spending more time on?
- Health: how energised do we want to feel, and what can we do to achieve that?

Everyone writes down what they want, with descriptions underneath. And then we go onto Pinterest or Instagram, and look for pictures that represent this and print them out and stick them onto the board. The board ends up being full of pictures, drawing and words, all about THEM. It gets the kids excited! They can actually see in front of them

everything that they are dreaming of, with pictures to show it's possible, and action steps to show how they can work toward making it happen for them.

So how can you manifest your goals? Grab a notebook, and jot down your thoughts on the following questions.

## 1. START WITH WHY YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

Too often we set objectives without exploring the underlying motives behind them, but understanding why you are embarking on this journey is key if you're going to succeed. Start by getting to know yourself a little better. What is it that truly motivates and drives you? Do you want this goal because everyone else has it? Or is it something that really means a lot to you?

## 2. WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT BELIEFS AROUND ACHIEVING THIS GOAL?

Do your beliefs around what's possible hold you back from taking action and seeing results? It can be frustrating when we feel like the things we want are so far out of reach. However, it's important to remember that our beliefs have a major impact on whether or not we're likely to achieve success. Remind yourself of things that you once thought were impossible, but you now do without thinking twice about them. It can be when you first started out in your job, or in a new role. It can be learning an instrument, making a new recipe that's now a familiar favourite. It doesn't matter, the object of this is to remind yourself that you have previously done things that you thought were too big, scary or impossible, and you can do it again.

## 3. WHAT IS ONE STEP YOU CAN TAKE TODAY TO MOVE CLOSER TOWARDS YOUR GOAL?

If your goal feels overwhelming, why not start by breaking it down into smaller pieces? Taking one small step today goes a long way in bringing your ultimate goal just that much closer. So, what is one



## THIS GIRL IS ON FIRE

I help midlife women feel great about themselves again – so they can do whatever they want. After two decades working in live television as a national broadcaster, I pivoted to follow my passion for helping women in midlife, through my business This Girl Is On Fire. What started four years ago as a passion project and a free blog is now a global platform dedicated to helping midlife women feel great about themselves again.

I understand that for women in midlife, finding what you need to help you feel good right now depends on your current challenges and what you're ready to commit to. Maybe a quick guide will do to start with, or a book (I've written four). Or you want to take a deeper dive and immerse yourself in a course, or commit to 90 days of group coaching with other women who want to feel great. You may simply want to start by joining a community of women on the same journey as you who want to support each other. I offer all these things globally through online courses, podcasts and live events. My private This Girl Is On Fire community can be accessed on our exclusive app, available on the App Store and Google Play. Or to find out more visit [andreamclean.com](http://andreamclean.com)






actionable step you can take right now to move closer towards achieving your dream?

#### 4. WHO CAN YOU ASK FOR SUPPORT IN ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL?

The biggest mistake we all make when it comes to achieving anything of worth, is thinking that we need to do it all by ourselves. You don't! And you shouldn't. Having a support network is crucial in achieving any goal. But who are these people and how do we find them? By understanding who these individuals can be, we empower ourselves to step out of our comfort zone and move closer towards our personal excellence. Whether it's an insightful mentor or trusted confidant, being connected with the right people gives us access to wisdom, encouragement and resources that help bridge the gap between where we are now and where we want to go. Have a think. Who do you know that can help you?

#### 5. HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'VE ACHIEVED YOUR GOAL?

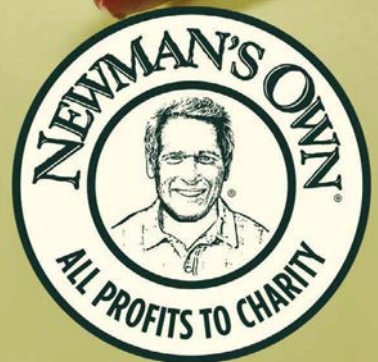
By breaking big tasks down into smaller ones, adjusting timelines accordingly and celebrating small wins along the way – you will have set milestones that will let you know when you have achieved your goal. By ticking each one off, you will have a clear indication of when you have reached it. Why do you need this? Because your goal, when you get there, will not look how you imagined it. It never does! That's because you based it on what you knew at the time. But you will learn and grow in the journey to getting it. **H&W**

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# well being

HELPING YOU ACHIEVE A HEALTHY, HAPPY MIND

## A SIMPLE THANK YOU

In a recent study released by the University of Illinois, gratitude has been revealed to be crucial to those wanting a successful, long-lasting partnership. Over a 15-month period, researchers examined the effects that expressed gratitude had on the relationships of 316 couples. Over this time span, researchers found that those with higher levels of expressed and perceived gratitude were more satisfied with their relationships. Not only were they happier, but these individuals had greater confidence in their future and reported less instability, such as discussions or thoughts about breaking up. Bringing gratitude into your relationship is one of the easiest ways you can strengthen it. From remembering to thank your partner for doing everyday tasks, to openly telling each other what you're most thankful for in your relationship; a simple thank you can really go a long way.



See

Support women in sport this year by tuning into the football League Cup Final at Selhurst Park on the 5th of March. Selhurst is no stranger to hosting top-level women's football, with the Vitality Women's FA Cup Final held there on three occasions. The final will kick off at 15:00 GMT and is due to be on the BBC.



Read

If you want to live life in the slow lane, then *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock* by Jenny Odell, is the book to help you understand the way we experience time. In her book, she imagines what a world not centred around work, the office clock, or the profit motive can look like for individuals.



Do

Struggling with under-eye circles? To help you get the right amount of kip, NEOM's new initiative, the Perfect Night's Sleep Plan, might be the key to helping you doze off. Their science-backed 28-day programme, created and formulated by a sleep consultant, shares the '11 Golden Rules' to practise every day. Find out more at, [neomorganics.com](http://neomorganics.com).

H&W

## WELLBEING TIP OF THE MONTH

### Finding balance

It's no secret that some countries are better at nailing their wellness routines than others, so, if you're struggling to nail your work-life balance, then look to the Swedish practice of 'Lagom'. "The phrase roughly translates to 'not too much, not too little' – something that can be applied to all aspects of life, but which might be pertinent for workaholics," says Ally Fekaiki, a wellbeing expert and founder of employee benefits platform Juno ([withjuno.com](http://withjuno.com)). "To embrace Lagom and create healthier work-life boundaries, sticking to set working hours is a good place to start. This is a helpful way to avoid working too much, and create time in your mornings and evenings to do more of the things you enjoy outside of work."



## PAWSITIVE THINKING

Looking for a different kind of self-care date? The newly opened Pawsitive Cafe in Notting Hill is open to both dogs and humans and is the ultimate space to escape and reconnect with friends, furry or otherwise. Pawsitive's concept revolves around wellbeing, with a focus on Feng Shui design, calming colour therapy palette interiors, and

the mental health benefits that come from spending time with canine companions. With an incredible food menu, the cafe also has its own dedicated doggy menu for anyone bringing their pup with them. Also on the menu at Pawsitive are seasonal DIY therapeutic activities, such as painting by numbers and dried flower pressing. Sign us up!

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- Plymouth

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**Kathy Close, 38,**  
- London

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**Lina Pope, 61,**  
- Derbyshire

"I can honestly say, these tablets have changed my life and would 100% recommend them to anyone suffering from UTIs."



**Karen Boden, 54,**  
- Walsall

"After years of awful symptoms after taking Uralix for just a week my symptoms disappeared, I would really recommend them 100 percent."



**Donna Gouldthorpe, 51,**  
- Suffolk

"I found these capsules and I haven't had symptoms since. They are amazing."



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**Dr Gemma Newman MBBCH DRCOG  
DFSRH MRCGP, Obstetrics-Gynaecology**

'The overwhelmingly positive response after taking URALIX is very encouraging, and in line with the NHS guidelines of reducing antibiotics overuse.'  
**Mr A. Gautama, Pharmacist**

# *Navigating* **marriage** **IN MIDLIFE**

A photograph of a woman with short, white hair hugging a man from behind. The woman is wearing a teal sweater and has her eyes closed, appearing to be in a moment of emotional connection. The man is wearing a brown sweater. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor setting, possibly a beach or a park.

Doing these transitional years with a partner by our side can strengthen our bond with our significant other, but how do our relationships change in midlife? And what can we do going forward?

**R**elationships have different trials and tribulations, regardless of age, but the arrival of midlife (any time from our 50s onwards), can bring forth a new set of challenges. From the emotions that come with children flying the nest to the hormone changes that happen in the menopause, midlife can become a catalyst for many couples to rethink what they want. According to a study by Bowling Green State University, divorce rates for people 50 and over doubled from 1990 to 2010 and haven't decreased since. However, it's not all doom and gloom. 90 percent of men and women aged 50 and over are married, meaning that plenty of couples work through their issues and avoid divorce.

### THE HORMONE FACTORS

The average age for the menopause in the UK is 51, meaning that many married women in midlife have to navigate a huge shift in how they feel physically and mentally, around this time. "Declining hormone levels during the menopause can wreak havoc with sleep, moods, memory, weight and energy levels," says Sarah Woodward relationship expert and divorce coach ([sarah-woodward.com](http://sarah-woodward.com)). "It can also cause crippling anxiety, a loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed and a plummeting libido – these can have a serious impact on relationships." A

study of 1,000 women by the Family Law Menopause Project, together with Newson Health, found that seven out of 10 women blamed the menopause for their divorce or marriage problems. "Another study found that one in 10 women who worked during menopause has left a job because of their symptoms and 44 percent said menopause symptoms had affected their ability to work." Many women also feel a loss of purpose and meaning in life, having been the primary caregiver. It can also be at this point that some couples discover they have nothing left in common with their partner without the children there.

## DECIDING WHEN TO CALL QUILTS

"Divorce or the ending of a long-term relationship is the second most traumatic event you can experience in your life, so make sure you have tried everything before you end your relationship so that you can leave with no regrets," says Sarah. "If you still love your partner, and see your future with them, then work out what needs to change for both of you and commit to working through your issues. Seek professional support if needed."

Signs that a relationship may be over include:

- a lack of trust
- having different values and beliefs from your partner
- growing apart and not wanting the same things from life anymore
- living separate lives

"A lack of communication, intimacy and not feeling able to be vulnerable with your partner can lead to anger and resentment, which can be a sign that it's the end of the relationship," says Sarah. If this is the case, then consulting a marriage counsellor can help you decide whether you should work through your relationship and how you can go about improving it.

### Katie Taylor, 53

Founder of the online community for women in midlife, the Latte Lounge ([lattelounge.co.uk](http://lattelounge.co.uk)) tells us how hormones affected her relationship...

"I was 43 when I first started to experience perimenopause symptoms and from then until about 47, I struggled with low mood, insomnia and brain fog. I'd always had a bubbly personality, and I was really outgoing, but during those years, it was like I couldn't get any joy out of anything. At the time my husband said that he didn't recognise me. We'd watch something on telly together that was funny, but I just couldn't find any humour in it. Even going on holiday,

I didn't enjoy it. My doctor never suggested that it was perimenopause, but eventually, my dad suggested that my low mood and trouble sleeping might be related to hormones. He sent me to a gynae who specialised in the menopause and within about a month, I was prescribed HRT and back to my usual self. HRT was a lifesaver, and I knew when I was better because my husband said it was the first time he'd seen me laugh in four years."

## REAL LIFE STORY



PROMOTIONAL CONTENT

REAL  
LIFE  
STORY**Karen Boden, 54**

Ambassador for Uralix  
(bluegreenhealth.co.uk) says...

"Frequent UTIs not only impacted my quality of life, but they also caused a strain on my marriage. I was 49 when I first started suffering from UTIs and although I tried multiple rounds of antibiotics, and many products without success, I didn't reach a solution straight away. My UTIs carried on for five years before I found a natural solution, and during this time, they created distance between myself and my husband. Not only did they impact my confidence, but when my UTIs finally cleared up, my mood and general health improved greatly, and I could enjoy every day without constantly worrying about my bladder health. This gave me the confidence to talk about my issues with my husband and enjoy spending more time together again."



*"From children flying the nest to hormone changes, midlife can become a catalyst for many couples to rethink what they want"*

## 3 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SEX LIFE

Whether you want to spice things up in the bedroom or simply want to improve your relationship, having a healthy, intimate connection with your partner can strengthen your bond with each other and boost your wellbeing. "The hormonal changes of perimenopause and menopause can have a profound effect on our sex life," says Dr Ghazala, a specialist in integrative women's health and bioidentical hormone balancing for the Marion Gluck Clinic (mariongluckclinic.com). "Hot flashes, night sweats, anxiety and insomnia can impact energy levels, and fatigue and low libido are also common due to declining hormone levels, as is vaginal dryness, which also contributes to reducing your mojo. Women in midlife often have many plates to juggle in terms of teenage children, elderly parents and demanding careers, and all these stressors may push sex to a low priority on their agenda." These tips can help...

### 1 Focus on emotional connection

Emotional connection with your partner is key, and it is important to have honest and open communication about what you really need from the relationship by setting time aside to spend quality time together on activities you both enjoy.

### 2 Remember, don't neglect your self-care

Try to focus on your own self-care from both an emotional and psychological perspective and nurture your own self-esteem because this will also impact what you bring to your relationship and can, in turn, help to support a good sex life.

### 3 Make sure that you're physically healthy

It's vital to be in the best physical health you are able to be, so seek medical advice when needed, and adopt a healthy lifestyle in terms of a nutritious diet, regular exercise, a good night's sleep and try to manage your stress levels.



# Amanda Byram Little Mood Boosts

Our columnist is shaking off the winter blues and stepping into a brand new season with these simple wellbeing hacks

🐦 @amandabyram 📷 @amandabyram 🖨 amandabyram.com

“If you’re new to shopping for pre-loved, you’ll soon be amazed at the gems you can discover”

## For more, read this THE SWITCH



her website, amandabyram.com

For more tips on how to use NLP and switch your everyday language for better mental health, check out Amanda's book *The Switch*, available to order now on amazon.com or signed copies from

**T**here's no denying that the second half of winter is hard, but the good news is that spring is just around the corner and we can beat the winter blues and boost our bank accounts with a few small lifestyle tweaks. Firstly, get outside as often as possible. Not only will the daylight be good for your vitamin D levels, but you'll also find that walking around with all the extra layers will help get your heart rate up and metabolism going. And remember, there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad equipment, so if the thought of going outside is immediately off putting because you hate being cold and wet, then find yourself some clothes that keep you dry and warm in even the harshest of conditions. Fashion can wait until summer! Of course, really good quality winter clothing can be expensive so why not head down to your local charity shop and dig around for a thick, waterproof, coat? It doesn't have to fit perfectly and neither does it have to be something you'd see on the catwalks of Paris Fashion Week, but it should allow you to leave the house without being beaten back by the weather. The same goes for your footwear. Personally, having soggy feet is one of my all-time pet hates so ensuring I have a comfortable pair of waterproof hikers for my daily expeditions is essential.

If you are new to shopping for pre-loved, you'll soon be amazed at the gems you can discover, and all the proceeds go to good causes giving you a karmic kick to boot.

The next tip is to embrace a dry month. If you have already embarked on a Dry January (and February?) go for March and April if you can manage it. That's how I eventually quit booze. As well as being a great way to improve your health and save bucks, by taking part, you're more likely to stick to it.

Bottom line, alcohol is an expensive poison that for some reason we encourage as a society, but the truth is that the

negative impacts of habitual alcohol consumption are far reaching for our bodies, brains and our bank accounts!

It is not easy to quit, particularly if you find booze a useful social crutch or you fear social exclusion. I will admit, I did find social occasions hard for the first few months. However, slowly, I learned to love being in a room without a glass in my hand, because I became more confident that I was just the same person with or without a drink. My energy levels rose, my moods stabilised, I saved money and without the hangovers I was able to get more from my day.

Next up is cold showers! I have said it before and I will say it again, cold showering for two minutes in the morning and evening can have huge implications for your mental, physical and financial health. Not only does it have been shown to improve circulation, elevate mood and increase metabolism, you would be surprised how much money you could save on your energy and water bills. And the numbers don't lie. If you typically are in the shower for eight minutes a day with hot water, you can expect to pay a minimum of £14 a month on your bills.

So, by cutting the amount of time you spend in the shower by half and by turning the dial from red to blue, you could save as much as £100 over the course of a year.

Finally, find time to get yourself into nature as often as possible. The branches might be bare but there is still so much life out there to discover.

So, whether you are heading to the beach, countryside or simply a local park, take some time to appreciate the abundance of greenery and nature we have in this part of the world. It'll be great for your mental wellbeing and you'll be exercising. Plus, with the cooler temperatures, you'll be burning away calories by just being out of the house. Best of all, it's free and available 24/7.

So there you have it, no need to hibernate until spring, embrace the season as much as you can. **H&W**





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**Gabby Logan**



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Chin up, 20th March is the United Nations' International Day of Happiness, recognising that happiness is a fundamental human goal and highlighting the importance of trying to make the world a happier place for everyone. So, let's make an effort to look for the joy in our lives and spread the good vibes to others this month. That's not to say we should be #goodvibesonly – some days it's harder to find the cheeriness. That's why the next few pages are dedicated to ideas on how to support our health and happiness, starting with mood-boosting exercise tips (page 36). We've also got expert advice on how your diet influences your state of mind (page 38) and the everyday self-care habits that really make a difference (page 42). On page 41, see how gratitude journaling is sure to give you something to smile about. Enjoy!



# IMPROVE *your* MOOD

# Jump FOR JOY

Feeling low? Here are five of the best mood-boosting exercises to try, as recommended by the experts...

WORDS | *Claire Munnings*

## Yoga

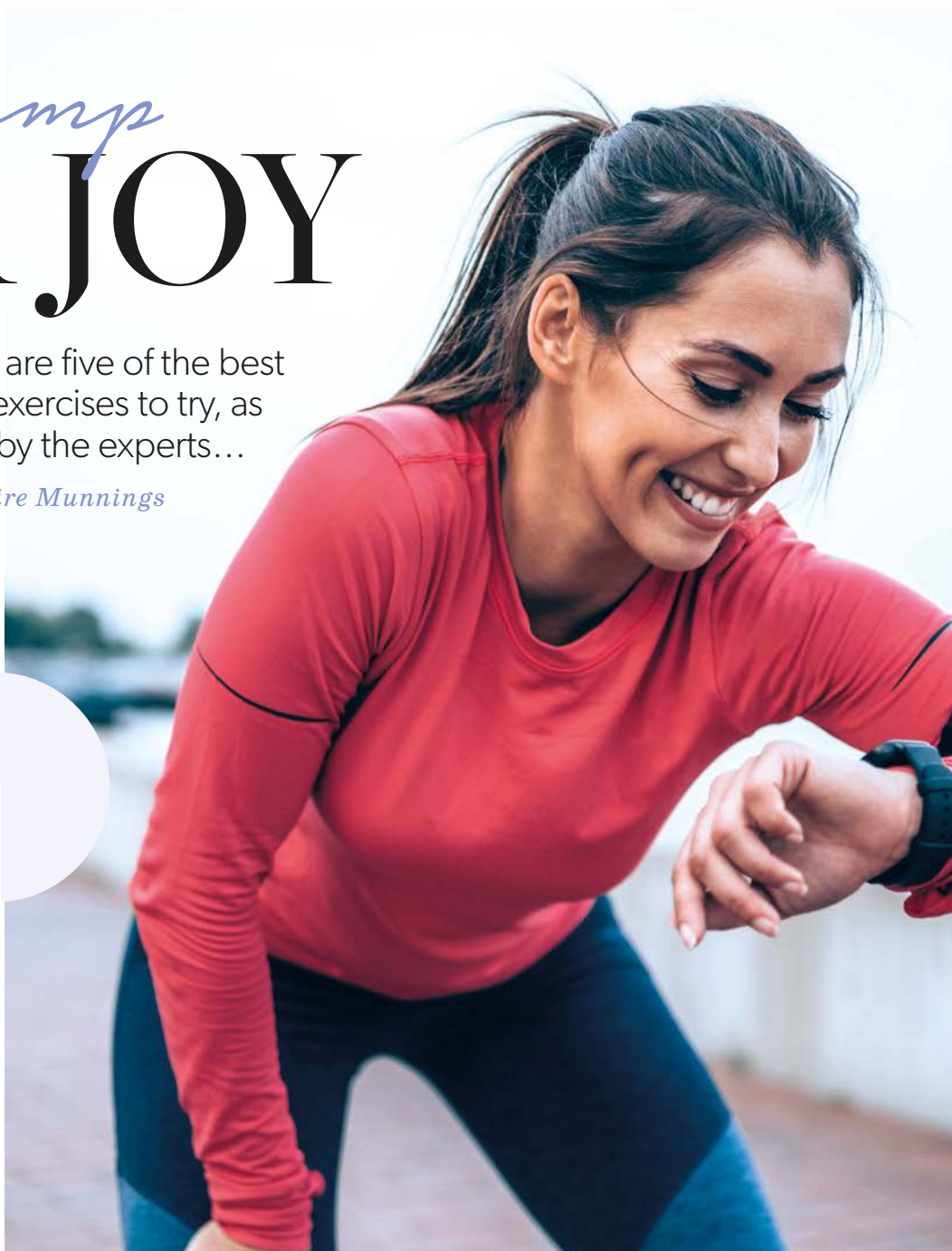
# 1

The joy-inducing nature of yoga has long been celebrated, and for good reason.

A growing body of evidence now shows how this practice can lower the levels of stress hormones in our body, and it's also been found to increase the amount of beneficial chemicals such as endorphins and GABA (a neurotransmitter known for its calming effect). One study, published in the *Journal of Psychology*, even suggested that mindful activities such as yoga could significantly improve your mood after just one session. Sounds good, right?

To ramp up the happiness-boosting benefits of your flow, Cat Meffan, yoga teacher and founder of the Soul Sanctuary ([mysoulsanctuary.co](http://mysoulsanctuary.co)), recommends focusing on warrior poses. "I love to feel the energy radiating through my body in a creative yoga flow that involves lots of fun warrior variations," she enthuses. "By tapping into the warrior energy, we are finding our inner power, our outer strength and activating all the endorphins. These types of flows can be fun and playful."

Cat also advises trying a yogic breathing exercise known as the breath of joy. To do this, start by standing with your feet a little wider than hip-width apart, with some buoyancy in your knees. "Now take three inhalations through your nose, lifting your arms up to the sky, out to the side and then up to the sky again," she says. "On the exhale, really sigh out the breath through the mouth and allow the body to go all floppy in a forward fold. Not only will this have your heart rate rising, it will give you space to feel silly, to be loud and to let tension go."



## Dancing

It's true that any form of exercise can do wonders for our mood and attitude, but as personal trainer Aimee Victoria Long ([aimeevictorialong.co.uk](http://aimeevictorialong.co.uk)) points out, this doesn't always have to involve going to the gym or taking part in a workout class. "Exercise is anything that elevates the heart rate and works your muscles, and something that you may not describe as exercise but is, is dancing – and this is amazing for making you feel happy," she says.

Studies back this up. In fact, one piece of research published in the *Australian Journal of Psychology* found that aerobic dance exercise had a significant positive impact on the mood of participants, while countless other studies have also shown its long-term benefits in alleviating symptoms of depression. If you fancy joining a class, there's a whole host of dance-themed workouts to try (from Barre to Clubbercise) – or you could simply try dancing around your living room the next time you hear your favourite tune.

## 3 Open water swimming

Fancy dipping your toe into something new? Open water swimming could soon become your new favourite exercise – especially when you hear about its mood-enhancing abilities.

Kate Steels, an experienced ice and ultra-marathon swimmer and Red Original ambassador (red-equipment.co.uk), knows first-hand how good this form of exercise can be for your wellbeing. “I tragically lost my beloved son, Daniel, four years ago and I can honestly say that swimming, and the wider swim community helped me keep going,” she explains. “Whilst at times it may be difficult to leave the comfort of your home, or get up at dawn when snuggled under the duvet, I say to myself that I am only one swim away from a good mood.”

Research backs this up too. It’s been found that immersing yourself in cold water can increase the

production of mood-enhancing hormones such as dopamine and serotonin, and regular swimming has been linked to reduced stress and anxiety. “For me, there is nothing better than getting out in nature, meeting friends and dipping or swimming in one of the beautiful swim spots in the UK,” Kate adds. “If you’re new to open water swimming, maybe try a sunrise or sunset swim in the sea, a spot in a river or lake. Open your eyes and listen – what birds and wildlife are there? Week by week as spring bursts into life, you can watch the trees’ leaves and flowers blossom, and hear the birds tweeting and preparing to nest.

“There are plenty of groups around the country which are a font of local knowledge and where you can find swim buddies,” she adds, “and remember, you should never swim outside alone.”

## 4

### High intensity exercise

Hands up who feels like their head is in a better place after a sweaty session? It’s rare that aerobic exercise makes us feel grumpier, that’s for sure, and sometimes we just need to get the blood pumping around the body in order to shake off stress or a low mood.

“The link between aerobic exercise (such as brisk walking, jogging or HIIT) and improved mood has been shown over and over again through research,” explains Hope Choplin, a clinical exercise physiologist and fitness coach at Noom (noom.com).

“Exercise in itself releases endorphins and serotonin, little feel-good chemicals in your brain. Simultaneously, aerobic exercise helps suppress the body’s stress hormones, such as cortisol. Other mood-boosting factors are things such as improved confidence and self-esteem, better sleep, increased energy, and even improved cognitive function, all of which can improve mood and outlook.” To boost the benefits, try going for a run or attending a HIIT session with a friend – bolstering personal connections has also been shown to lead to a more positive overall mood, adds Hope.

## 5

### Walking

Regular readers of *Health & Wellbeing* will know we’re often shouting about the advantages of walking, and its mood-boosting prowess is not something to be ignored.

Studies have shown time and time again that walking can make you feel less stressed and happier, and when you combine it with the joyful benefits of being outside in nature, you’re onto a winner!

“The beauty of walking, especially in nature, is that it uses just enough of your brain power that you actually switch off, which is why you can often walk somewhere and not think about anything,” says personal trainer Rachael Sacerdoti (itssosimple.co.uk). “By slowing your pace and enjoying your surroundings, you’re able to quieten external stimulus and bring your attention to the present moment, almost forcing mental relaxation. Calming your mind with each step, you can really feel your body and hear the rhythm of your breath. This slow and steady movement allows you to engage more deeply with your thoughts, helping to reduce the stress hormone cortisol and improve your mood.”

To get the most mood-enhancing impact from your stroll, pick a scenic route. Finding beauty while we walk allows us to enjoy all the benefits of experiencing awe – which has been shown by psychologists to reduce stress, as well as help inflammation, increase creativity and make you happy. Now, where are your trainers?

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# Happy MEALS

Low mood? Find what to eat, what to avoid, the supplements to take and recipes to make to support overall wellbeing and help give you a lift



You are what you eat, so the saying goes, and it stands to reason that what we choose to fill ourselves up with has a direct impact on our mood. Not least when it comes to gut health – after all, the stomach is traditionally referred to as our second brain and the two are closely linked. “The link between gut health and mental wellbeing is one that increasingly science is proving to be intertwined,” affirms nutritional therapist and gut health specialist, Eve Kalinik. “Whilst we intuitively know that there is a physical connection between our gut and our brain coined with phrases like ‘gut instinct’ and ‘gut feeling’, we are now beginning to understand the full complexity of this special bond and that it is a bi-directional relationship.”

How do the two work together? “Much of this connection is centred around the gut microbiome which are collectively all the microbes that live in our gut,” explains Eve. “It is in fact the gut microbiome that produces 95 percent of all serotonin in the body, known as the ‘happy neurotransmitter’, as well as other neurotransmitters such as dopamine and GABA that influence our mental health.”

## EAT HAPPY

So, what’s the best way to support our gut health – and as a result, cultivate a happier head space too? Eve suggests focusing on fibre and prebiotics. “Eating diverse sources of fibre is one of the most important ways in which we can cultivate an enriched and healthy gut and aiming for at least 30 plants per week is a good place to start,” she suggests. “Sources of prebiotics can be found in foods such as garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, oats and sourdough. Whilst a food-first approach is always preferred, if you are struggling to get enough fibre from your diet, you could also consider using a high fibre supplement, such as Bimuno.”

“THE GUT  
MICROBIOME  
PRODUCE 95  
PERCENT OF ALL  
SEROTONIN IN  
THE BODY”

Nutritionist and best-selling author Rhiannon Lambert (rhitrition.com) agrees that fibre is key when it comes to healthy digestion, adding: “Getting more fibre into our diets can support our gut health, feeding the good bacteria that live there and which send messages to our brain to enhance our mood. They also play an important role in helping serotonin production.” Foods that support our bodies in making serotonin include meat, dairy, eggs, nuts, seeds and fruit. The happy hormone

is also found in some foods. “Bananas contain serotonin, which can help stabilise our mood, feelings of wellbeing and happiness. They’re also high in potassium, which affects mood and mental energy,” Rhiannon offers.

## COMFORT FOOD

When it comes to meals, soup (aka the hug in a bowl) is a time-honoured comfort food for good reason. “Soups are an excellent way to include a few types of plants and are perfect for batch cooking which makes them convenient too,” Eve tells us. “I would also encourage using an organic bone broth as a base for flavour and also because it contains amino acids that support the health of the gut barrier which is important when we are looking to support the gut-brain connection.”

## GOOD BACTERIA

Not a meat eater? Not a problem. Include fermented foods in your diet, which, as Rhiannon explains: “Feed the beneficial bacteria in the gut, which produce short-chain fatty acids to support the communication loop between our brain and gut. This can improve mental clarity and a positive state of mind.”

Eve agrees, adding fermented foods, such as: “Traditional cheese, live natural yoghurt, sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.” So, alongside a plant food packed soup you could have toasted sourdough with sliced Cheddar, she suggests.

"Kefir is a great addition to your diet because not only is it gut-aiding, but you're also adding tryptophan, which is an amino acid that helps produce our happy hormone, serotonin, when paired with a carb," adds Rhiannon. "Kombucha

is a tasty, alternative way to include ferments in your daily diet and reduce overall sugar," she says, and recommends naturally sugar free kombucha drinks [remedydrinks.com](http://remedydrinks.com) which are packed with live cultures and antioxidants.

### HEALTHY FATS

Another important part of our happy food arsenal is omega 3 fats, which, according to studies, plays a role in keeping the brain healthy.

"Omega 3 fatty acids are associated with a reduced likelihood of depression – you can also find it in chia or pumpkin seeds, walnuts, Brazil nuts and almonds, flax and oily fish," affirms Rhiannon.

time while functioning as normal. When it can no longer help eliminate toxins that are absorbed, our blood sugar levels drop. This can cause fatigue, weakness, shakiness and low mood the following day which could heighten feelings of anxiety," she says. "Alcohol consumption affects the brain, even if we fall asleep quicker, it leads to poor sleep quality and can negatively impact rapid eye movement (REM) sleep." So, while a tippie here and there is not overly bad, avoid over-indulging, especially if you're suffering with a low mood in the first place.

Other types of beverages you might want to limit are caffeinated ones! "Keep caffeinated drinks to a minimum where you can," says Dr Phillips. "If you can't go without your regular cup of coffee or tea, aim to reduce how many cups you have and try not to consume caffeine after 12pm. This will prevent caffeine from interfering with your sleep."

Try to keep hydrated with water and herbal teas instead – our brains are more than 70 percent water, after all.

## COGNITION NUTRITION

Extra ways to support mental wellbeing



**Omega 3 Fish Oil**  
(£12.80, [fourfive.com](http://fourfive.com))

Made with sustainably sourced fish oil to help you to maintain healthy brain function. Also good for heart health.



**Bimuno Original**  
(£19.99, [bimuno.com](http://bimuno.com))

Support your gut-brain axis by feeding your good bacteria. Try this prebiotic food supplement powder.



**Biotiful Kefir Protein Choco-lite**  
(£1.85, [Sainsburys](http://Sainsburys))

Richer in live cultures and higher in protein than conventional yoghurt, this makes a nutritious snack, dessert or breakfast.

### WHAT TO AVOID

Now we know what to fill up on, what should we be steering clear of if we want to feel better mentally? Too many sweet treats will likely send you on a sugar rollercoaster of ups and downs and the mood swings that go along with it. Alcohol is also bad news for brain health. Even though it might make you feel initially merry, the after-effects send happiness levels plunging. And hangxiety goes way beyond worrying about what you said or did when drunk. Clinical neuroscientist Dr Elisabeth Philipps, from vitamin supplement brand fourfive ([fourfive.com](http://fourfive.com)) explains the science behind that morning after the night before feeling: "The liver can only process so much alcohol at a

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# RECIPES TO SMILE ABOUT

Comforting dishes to keep you feeling full and happy (and they are low-calorie too) from food writer Latoyah Egerton



## BREAKFAST QUESADILLA

**MAKES 2 PORTIONS**

**READY IN: 15 MINUTES**

**CALORIES: 480 PER QUESADILLA**

- 100g mushrooms, sliced • 2 eggs • ½ tsp dried chilli flakes
- 80g low-fat Cheddar cheese • 2 tortilla wraps • 1 avocado, stoned (pitted) and sliced • Drizzle of sriracha chilli sauce
- Low-calorie cooking spray • Coriander, to serve • Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Place a frying pan over a medium heat and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Add the mushrooms and fry for four minutes, then remove them from the pan and set aside.
- 2 Crack both eggs into a mixing bowl and whisk. Season with salt and pepper and the chilli flakes, then grate the cheddar into the bowl.
- 3 Heat the frying pan you used for the mushrooms and spray with some more low-calorie cooking spray. Add the whisked eggs and use a spatula to fold the eggs, moving the spatula from the outside of the pan, moving into the centre of the pan. Repeat the folding for about three minutes, until the eggs are fluffy and cooked. Remove from the heat and set aside.
- 4 Spray a clean frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and add the tortilla wrap. Cook over a medium heat on one side for two minutes, then flip the tortilla over. Add the mushrooms, avocado, a drizzle of sriracha and the scrambled eggs onto one half of the tortilla, then fold over to close the filling inside. (If you are preparing ahead of time, remove it from the heat and wrap it up at this stage).
- 5 Cook for two minutes, then flip over and cook the other side. Repeat with the second tortilla, then serve sprinkled with a few coriander leaves.



## CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

**MAKES 4 PORTIONS**

**READY IN: 35 MINUTES**

**CALORIES: 200 PER PORTION**

- 1 carrot, finely diced • 1 onion, finely diced • 1 celery stick, finely diced • 1 garlic clove, finely diced • ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp of dried thyme • 850ml chicken stock • 1 x 198g tin of sweetcorn • 2 skinless and boneless chicken breasts • 100g dried egg noodles • Low-calorie cooking spray • Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Spray a large saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and add the carrot, onion, celery and garlic. Cook for six minutes over a medium heat until the vegetables soften.
- 2 Add the smoked paprika and thyme and cook for two minutes. Add the chicken stock and sweetcorn and reduce the heat to a low simmer. Add a pinch of sea salt and pepper and the chicken breasts and make sure they are fully submerged in the stock. Cover and leave to simmer for 20 minutes.
- 3 Remove the chicken breasts from the soup and check that they are fully cooked. Use two forks to pull the chicken breasts apart and shred them up.
- 4 Add the noodles to the soup along with the shredded chicken and cook for another 10 minutes until the noodles are fully cooked.



### For more, read this

*Slimming and Tasty: 100 Delicious, Low-Calorie Recipes and Healthy Fakeaways* by Latoyah Egerton (£20, Greenfinch) is out now. Latoyah is creator of the Sugar Pink Food Blog and you can follow her @sugarpinkfood



# *Change* YOUR MIND

We can train our brains to become more optimistic through making a conscious effort to take note of the positives. Take a few moments every day to write down some things that make you smile – here are some prompts...

*Three things I've done well recently...*

*One thing that made me laugh or smile today...*

*Something I like about myself...*

*Things that I enjoy doing and make me feel good...*

*Three things I am grateful for...*



IMPROVE *your* MOOD

# Time to TAKE CARE

Not enough hours in the day for self-care? Some clever tweaks to your routine can make all the difference to squashing stress and feeling your best

WORDS | *Lauren Wigley*

No matter the lifestyle that we lead, most, if not all of us will experience moments when our mood is low. Partaking in daily self-care habits is a great way to ward off too many lows and safeguard our physical and mental health. From ancient Chinese medicine to wellness-boosting supplements, having some simple self-care hacks in your wellbeing arsenal can help to alleviate low moods and periods of stress, meaning less bumps on the road and more time for enjoyment and self-love.

Yet, finding enough precious minutes in the day is often the biggest obstacle. "Self-care needs to be simple, effective and time-friendly," asserts Katie Brindle, Chinese medicine practitioner and founder of wellness company Hayo'u. Katie offers a 'one-minute to self-care' principle that blends quality tools and precious crystals with easily implemented, actionable practices. To add self-care into her daily life, Katie does three techniques every single day without fail. These are: tapping, body combing in the shower and qi gong. If you are new to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), these might sound intimidating or woo-woo, but they are simple and easy to turn to in moments of stress and are ideal to implement as part of a daily wellness toolkit.

## TAPPING IN

Body tapping with something like the Hayo'u Bamboo Tapper (£38, hayoumethod.com) [pictured, right], which is based on TCM therapy, can help maintain overall health. Katie says it boosts lymphatic drainage, releases muscle tension, and helps circulation and blood flow as well as energy levels. She recommends tapping for just one minute after showering to feel the benefits. It can have a big impact on your mental and physical health.



Post tapping, Katie then uses a body comb in the shower, which is a traditional self-healing treatment.

"Body combing works in a similar fashion to body brushing," she says. "It boosts lymphatic drainage, making it particularly effective for heavy legs, water retention and cellulite."

Katie also recommends qi gong, which translates to 'life force practice'. It helps to improve breathing and moves qi around the body, slows heart rate, tones muscle and supports the immune system. "Half an hour of this gentle breath-focused exercise is the ultimate self-care, and it is suitable for everyone," she enthuses. See [healthqigong.org.uk](http://healthqigong.org.uk) to find out more about the practice and local classes.

## DAILY HABITS

While classes like qi gong, or yoga and tai chi, are excellent for nurturing a healthy head space, an effective self-care routine needn't be time-consuming. Managing our mood can also be found in the little moments. From our skincare to our environment, making little changes to the way we go about our daily lives can have a phenomenal impact on our stress levels.

Christina Lykiardopoulou from ilapothecary (ilapothecary.com) acknowledges the importance of "developing a regular body self-care routine that will keep your body and mind balanced and nourished, and the skin lustrous and youthful." Looking after our skin via routines that nurture us is a great way to take a moment out of the day that is just for ourselves. It can turn a mundane 'chore' into a moment of gratitude and peace, even if it's simply amping up your daily shower.



For example: “Exfoliating your skin on a regular basis is one of the most essential steps in any natural body self-care routine,” suggests Christina. “Through sloughing off those dead skin cells, we are preparing it to be able to absorb more nutrients found in good quality oils, serums and creams that in turn results in glowing skin texture.” Combining action with a soothing scent such as jasmine and ylang ylang in the Quiet Start Body Scrub (£48, [ilapothecary.com](http://ilapothecary.com)), will help to calm



your racing thoughts, ready for a productive day ahead or to help wind down for a restful sleep.

It’s not just your body that benefits from a soothing scrub. New head-care range ARKIVE by Adam Reed is based around finding moments of reconnection in your daily routine by connecting hands to head. Giving yourself a post-shampoo scrub using something like The Crown Scalp Scrub (£14, [arkiveheadcare.com](http://arkiveheadcare.com)) can help to relieve tension, whilst giving you a few moments to breathe away day-to-day stressors, with heady scents and self-massage. Think a morning hug for your head whilst looking after your locks.



## MINDFUL MOMENTS

When you’re time-strapped, incorporating self-care activities while you’re doing other things is a winner. Take opportunities where you can, such as enjoying some moments for mindfulness while on the train, or even waiting for the kettle to boil.

Wellness expert Michelle Roques-O’Neil, founder of Therapie Life ([therapielife.com](http://therapielife.com)) affirms that working with our breathing is a powerful tool to recalibrate and reset. She suggests this simple breathing exercise, which you can do anywhere: “With one hand on your heart and the

other on your belly, breathe in and out through the nose. Into your belly first, so it fills like a balloon and then your chest, hold the breath for a few seconds and then slowly release from the chest then the belly, with a little contraction back towards the spine, rest for a moment then take your next breath. Try a count of four in, four hold and six out, four rest. You can extend the out breath further to about eight counts, but just do what feels comfortable.”

Michelle also advocates the powers of aromatherapy to impact on our mood. She explains that we have more than 4,000 smell receptors in our nose, hot-wired to the feeling centres of the brain, so deep breathing combined with the right scent can truly blow away the blues.

For a full-on aromatherapy experience, Michelle recommends a soak in a bath or foot bath, to soothe and uplift. “Water is a natural conductor and amplifier,” she notes, adding that by using a blend like Cocoon Bath Oil (from £18, [therapielife.com](http://therapielife.com)), it makes the practice even more potent.

Filling your space with aromatherapy scents is another great way to double down on the benefits. Candles and diffusers from brands like Elemental Herbology ([elementalherbology.com](http://elementalherbology.com)) are also packed with heady aromas that keeps your sanctuary feeling serene and your mind calm. **H&W**



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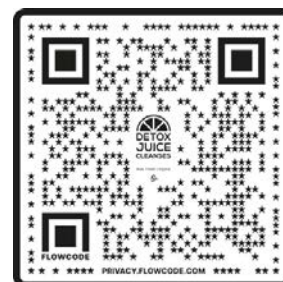
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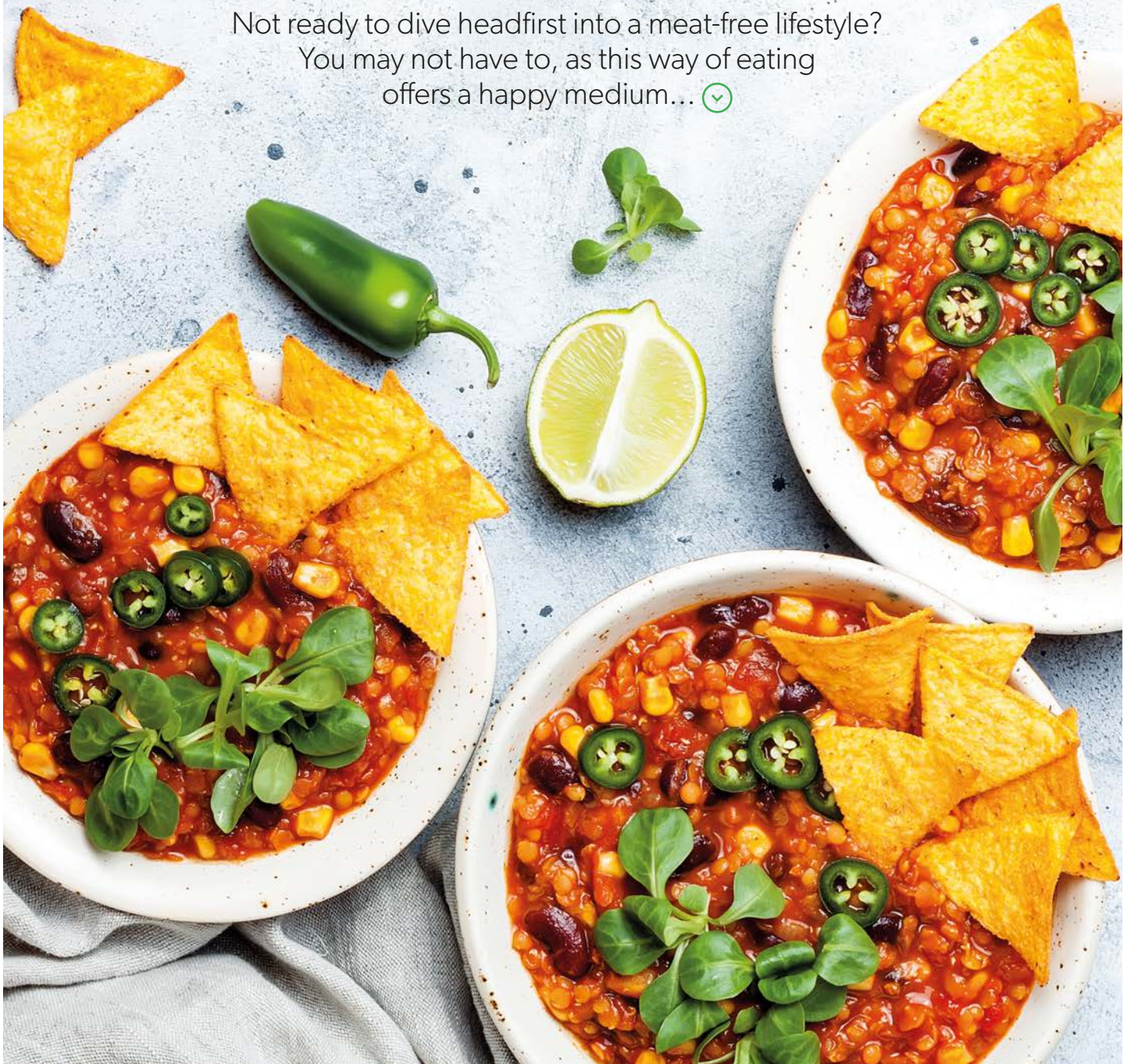
SCAN ME

# EAT WELL

From delicious healthy recipes to the best nutritional advice, we guide you through what should – and shouldn't – be on your plate this month

## HOW TO BE A FUNCTIONAL FLEXITARIAN

Not ready to dive headfirst into a meat-free lifestyle? You may not have to, as this way of eating offers a happy medium... 🍷



**P**rogress – from a nutrition standpoint – looks a bit like this: we’ve busted the myth that fat won’t make you fat, heaps of dieticians now agree that carbs aren’t the enemy and new, ground-breaking research suggests focusing on calories alone might not be the best approach to weight-loss. The latest hot debate to sweep the nutrition world? The healthiest diet to suit everybody, whatever their goal. Spoiler alert: there isn’t one. But one thing experts do agree on is eating more plants of all kinds (fruits, vegetables and yes, even herbs count) will be more beneficial than investing in the latest fad doing the rounds. A flexitarian approach – where most of your diet is plant-based and still eating meat occasionally – could give you a head start. Here’s how to be flexible in a different kind of way...

## PLANT FORWARD

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, the word ‘diet’ doesn’t automatically mean restricting calories or cutting out food groups. What it really translates to is ‘the kind of foods that a person, animal or community habitually eats’ – basically, what you eat on a day-to-day basis.

Now that’s cleared up, we can drill down to the good stuff. Despite a predicted record-breaking Veganuary (the campaign that encourages people worldwide to try being vegan for January and beyond), going cold turkey (sorry) isn’t very realistic for a lot of people, which is why a flexitarian approach may contain some middle ground if you want to cut down on your meat intake.

“Veganism has dominated the annual diet trend hotlists for many years and, in sync with this, there’s been a sudden rise in meat-free products – many of which are highly processed, given rise to the unhealthy vegan phenomenon,” comments Rob Hobson, head of nutrition at Healthspan (healthspan.co.uk). “This is where [being] flexitarian comes into play. Flexitarians understand the importance of eating a plant-based diet, but still consume meat and fish occasionally.”



## LEAD WITH FIBRE

Sounds pretty appealing, right? As well as helping to protect the planet by consuming less red meat, eating a diet that’s rich in plants scores top marks for your health. More good news? You don’t need to have an all-or-nothing approach, affirms Dr Simon Steenson, a nutrition scientist at the British Nutrition Foundation (bhf.org.uk). “Research shows that having a more plant-rich diet can benefit our health and also lower the environmental impact of what we eat, but that doesn’t mean you need to be 100 percent plant-based or cut out any food groups. Instead, you can find ways to get more veg, fruit, wholegrains, beans and other pulses, like chickpeas and lentils, into your diet.”

Small changes might look like switching from white to wholemeal or higher fibre versions of bread, pasta, wraps pittas or chapattis – all of which have a higher fibre content than its white counterparts. “Fibre not only helps keep your gut healthy, but can help reduce the risk of bowel cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease,” adds Dr Steenson.

If you want to focus on getting more fruits and vegetables into your diet, try adding a sliced apple or banana to your breakfast cereal in the morning or throwing in any extra fresh, frozen or canned veg when making your favourite dish at home. Simple, really.

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Protein is a key macronutrient in a balanced diet (carbohydrates and fat are the other two) and to thrive on a flexitarian diet, you need to be mindful of a few things: “Animal protein provides all essential amino acids, meaning we must get them through diet,” explains Daisy Connor, a nutritional therapist at City Survivor supplements (citysurvivor.co.uk). “But for vegetarian meals, you need to combine varied beans, lentils, rice, tofu and vegetables in order to get these amino acids.” Ergo, it’s a bit more leg work this way, but certainly not impossible.

“Getting enough protein is key, as it’s one of the main building blocks of your body,” says Arina Kuzmina (@arinakuzmina), a certified integrative food coach and







*“Research shows that having a more plant-rich diet can benefit our health”*

## DAISY'S FLEXITARIAN STARTER PACK



### Shop sustainably

“Buy smaller amounts of meat and dairy but if you do, choose local, organic and grass-fed produce.”



### Make veg the star of the show

“Base the majority of main meals on vegetarian protein sources such as beans, lentils and soy and regularly combine with organic dairy to boost the protein content. For example, adding organic yoghurt to lentil curry and rice.”



### Consider plant protein

“Always make sure you have protein in a meal. Instead of sugary cereal, could you have organic eggs for breakfast or organic yoghurt alongside fruit and cereal?”

nutritionist (IIN). “Every single cell in your body is made of amino acids and needs protein to function properly and renew. Moreover, even red blood cells contain a protein compound that allows them to carry oxygen through the bloodstream. This is one of the reasons I recommend giving flexitarian diet a go, as it focuses on eating more vegetables and fruits, and still ensures you’re getting all of the nine essential amino acids that are crucial for your body to function properly.”

### WHAT SUPP?

In an ideal world, we’d all be getting the vitamins and minerals we need from our diet alone – and one we can lack in when turning to vegetarianism (and veganism)

is B12. “Some people may eat animal products every so often, whereas for others, they might be more prevalent in their diet,” says registered nutritionist Jenna Hope ([jennahopenutrition.com](http://jennahopenutrition.com)). “If you’re consuming a predominantly vegan diet, you may want to consider supplementing with vitamin B12 which can be challenging to get from plant-based foods.”

More quick wins for your dins? “Adding beans and pulses to soups, stews and salads can be a great way to increase your plant proteins and fibre quota.” Additionally, opting for eggs a few times per week or meat and fish a few times a month can also help to reduce the risk of a low protein intake. Now that’s food for thought.

# YOUR FIVE-DAY FLEXITARIAN MEAL PLAN



Qualified nutritionist and founder of the Urban Kitchen, Toral Shah has given her take on what a healthy flexitarian diet might look like. "A carefully-planned flexitarian diet not only ensures that your energy and nutrient requirements are met, but can also help reduce risk of certain illnesses, as well as protecting our planet."

This meal plan meets nutritional recommendations by providing essential nutrients, while containing lower levels of sugar, refined and processed foods and saturated fat. Toral also mentions that we should include the right amount of iron in our diets for overall health and wellbeing too. Her recommendation? The liquid iron supplement from Blueiron – the only supplement formulated with Nordic blueberries, avoiding the unpleasant taste and side-effects often associated with other iron products. Its patented micro-encapsulated iron means it's easily absorbed and gentle on your stomach, and it's also suitable for vegetarians and vegans. Head to [blueiron.co.uk](http://blueiron.co.uk) for more information.

### Each day contains:

- At least six to seven portions of fruit and vegetables.
- A variety of plant-based proteins including beans, legumes and tofu.
- A small amount of animal products including eggs, salmon, chicken and dairy to provide protein, vitamins and minerals. **H&W**



## DIVERSIFY YOUR DISHES

DAY/ MEAL	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
1	Homemade baked beans on wholegrain sourdough.	Coconut, lemongrass and wild rice Thai soup.	Indian spiced salmon with cumin and chilli cauliflower, quinoa and kale salad.
2	Black forest chia pudding.	Harissa puy lentils with sprouting broccoli.	Rainbow winter slaw with grilled halloumi.
3	Swiss bircher muesli with mixed berries.	Roast pumpkin, spiced chickpeas and pomegranate salad.	Udon noodle salad with spicy tofu, radish and broccoli.
4	Vegetable frittata.	Jerusalem artichoke, radicchio and apple salad with goat's cheese.	Black bean chilli.
5	Vegetable fritters.	Minestrone soup.	Mediterranean chicken traybake.

# THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Discover the health-boosting benefits of curcumin with the experts at Bioglan

Though it may sound like a spice in itself, curcumin is the yellow pigment and active ingredient found in turmeric – giving it its bright orange colour. Turmeric has been used for thousands of years for both culinary and medicinal purposes in many different countries and is associated with several health benefits. However, the curcumin in turmeric has poor bioavailability, meaning it has trouble being absorbed by the body to have any significant benefit. Fortunately, though, there are ways you can increase the absorption of curcumin. Andrew Petrou, training manager and registered osteopath at Bioglan tells us more.

## HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF CURCUMIN?

“One way to improve the absorption of curcumin so that your body can make use of it in the best possible way is to combine it with other ingredients,” Andrew says.



Piperine, for example, the main active component in black pepper, can help to increase the bioavailability of curcumin by up to 2,000 percent.

But, whilst adding pepper to your curry could help to a small extent, the levels of curcumin in turmeric are still fairly low. “To enjoy the true benefits curcumin has to offer it’s best to take a concentrated curcumin supplement such as Bioglan Active Curcumin which contains 12,640mg of turmeric per tablet and a patented black pepper extract to aid absorption. One a day is all it takes!” says Andrew.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CURCUMIN?

“The main benefit curcumin has to offer is its powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Inflammation is at the core of many chronic diseases and conditions including arthritis, Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease, obesity, depression and cancer. Curcumin acts as a natural anti-inflammatory and has been shown to help suppress inflammation throughout the body,” says Andrew.



“Curcumin can be especially beneficial to those living an active lifestyle as it can help combat joint inflammation, especially when combined with other nutrients such as copper to support connective tissues and vitamin D for healthy bones and muscles – a combination which can be found in the Bioglan Active Curcumin tablets,” he says.

## A TASTY WAY TO TAKE CURCUMIN

“If you’re looking for a more exciting way to add curcumin to your diet, Bioglan has also launched Active Curcumin Gummies. Soft and orange flavoured, these gummies make it even easier to build curcumin into our daily routine,” Andrew adds.

Each gummy contains 50mg of Curisol, a trademarked standardised turmeric extract that is micro-encapsulated to enhance the curcumin absorption compared to regular extract. They also contain vitamin C and zinc for immune support and vitamin D for bone and muscle health.

Bioglan Active Curcumin is available at Holland & Barrett, Boots, Amazon and Ocado.

# 3

## WAYS WITH RICE

---

A staple in dishes all over the world, this grain can be enjoyed as a side or play a starring role on your plate



## PEA AND BROAD BEAN RISOTTO SOUP

MAKES: 4

READY IN: 20 MINUTES

V VG DF GF

• 1 tbsp olive oil • ½ large leek, finely sliced • ½ small white onion • 2 garlic cloves, finely diced • 100g arborio rice • 1 litre vegetable stock • 250g frozen peas • 150g broad beans • Large handful fresh parsley

1 Heat the olive oil in a large pan on a medium heat and sauté your leek and onion until soft, then add the garlic for a further 1-2 minutes.

2 Add your arborio rice and gently toast for a few minutes. Pour in two thirds of your stock, cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 15 minutes. Add both the broad beans and peas, followed by a handful of chopped parsley.

3 Cover with a lid and simmer for a further 5-7 minutes. If you would like croutons with the soup, roughly chop bread into chunks, toss in olive oil and seasoning and bake in the oven at around 190C/370F/Gas 5 for 10 minutes.

4 Once your soup is ready, dish up, top with the parsley and croutons if using, and season to taste.

[riceassociation.org.uk](http://riceassociation.org.uk)

## VEGAN BURRITO

SERVES: 1

TAKES: 8 MINUTES

V VG DF GF

• 45g cooked brown rice (you can use packet rice) • 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil • 45g black beans or kidney beans, drained and rinsed • 3 tbsp tinned sweetcorn • ½ tsp smoked paprika • ½ tsp ground cumin • Pinch of salt and pepper • 1 large flour tortilla • 1 spring onion, finely chopped • 1 tbsp coriander, finely chopped • ¼ small avocado, sliced • 3 cherry chopped tomatoes, chopped or 1 tbsp salsa • 1 tbsp Cocos Organic Coconut Milk Yoghurt Alternative • Squeeze of lime



## ONE POT SAUSAGE AND VEGETABLE RICE

SERVES: 4

TAKES: 20 MINUTES

DF GF

• 30ml olive oil • 1 onion, diced • 2 garlic cloves, chopped • 4 sausages • 1 tbsp fennel seeds (optional) • 2 tbsp tomato purée • 250g basmati rice • 1 chicken stock cube • 625ml hot water • 250g peas, frozen • 250g sweetcorn, tinned or frozen • ½ red pepper • 1 lemon • 10g fresh parsley, chopped

1 Heat the olive oil and fry the diced onion and fennel seeds, if using, for a few minutes before adding the garlic then squeeze in one-inch chunks of sausage meat. Season pan with salt, pepper, add the tomato purée and rice and mix together.

**“This is my kid’s cheat paella; a great recipe to use up any leftovers you may have and pack it out with plenty of vegetables. This uses sausages but they can be swapped for prawns – added for the last couple of minutes of cooking, or chunky vegetables like courgettes or mushrooms, fried in place of the sausage meat.”**

Theo Michaels

2 Add the chicken stock and stir until fully mixed together, adding more water if the rice isn’t fully submerged. Slice the red pepper and place on top of the rice.

3 Bring pan to a simmer, then cover with lid and reduce heat to low for about 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to rest with lid on for 5 minutes.

4 Garnish with chopped parsley, squeeze the juice of half a lemon over the top and a little drizzle of olive oil and serve.

Recipe by Theo Michaels for Fruit Bowl, [fruit-bowl.com](http://fruit-bowl.com)



1 Add the cooked rice, olive oil, beans, sweetcorn, spices, salt and pepper to a bowl. Warm in the microwave for 2 minutes or heat in pan.

2 Place the tortilla in the microwave for 30 seconds to 1 minute to warm or use a frying pan.

3 Top the tortilla with rice mix, spring onion, coriander, avocado, tomatoes or salsa, Cocos Organic Coconut Milk Yoghurt Alternative and a squeeze of lime.

4 Roll up, slice in half and enjoy.

[coco-organics.co.uk](http://coco-organics.co.uk)

# Grab & GO

Break out of that food rut with Nathan Anthony's delicious and easy home-style recipes that can all be made in your slow cooker while you get on with your day

## GARLIC PARMESAN CHICKEN WITH POTATOES

SERVES: 4

READY IN: 4 HOURS

GF

*"I LOVE the combination of potatoes and garlic. Add some Cajun-spiced chicken thighs and a buttery Parmesan sauce and I'm in heaven with every bite. The thought of the chicken falling off the bone into those garlicky juices is making me salivate as I'm writing..."*

• 8-10 chicken thighs • 1 tbsp Cajun seasoning • 500g baby potatoes, cut into small cubes (skin on) • 70g Parmesan cheese, grated, plus extra to garnish • 6 garlic cloves, crushed • 150g low-fat butter • 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary • 1 tsp dried oregano • handful of fresh parsley, plus extra to garnish • 1 slice of lemon • 1 tbsp cornflour, mixed to a paste with 1 tbsp water (optional) • Salt and pepper, to taste

1 Season the chicken thighs with salt, pepper and the Cajun seasoning. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a high heat on the hob, then place the chicken in the pan and sear for about two minutes, until browned all over.

2 Place the potatoes in the slow cooker and sprinkle with salt, pepper, half of the Parmesan and the garlic. Dot with the butter, add the rosemary sprigs and arrange the chicken thighs on top. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan, the oregano and parsley. Throw in a slice of lemon and cook on high for four hours. If you would like the sauce to be thicker, stir in the cornflour paste.

3 Garnish with the extra Parmesan and parsley and serve. I love this with some steamed green beans on the side.





"I DON'T OFTEN  
BROWN MEAT  
BEFORE ADDING  
IT TO THE SLOW  
COOKER, BUT  
WHEN I DO, A  
GOOD NONSTICK  
FRYING PAN  
WORKS  
WONDERS"



## THAI BASIL BEEF

SERVES: 4

READY IN: 5 HOURS

GF

*"I adore this recipe, which was inspired by the local Thai takeaway we had growing up. The smell alone transports me back to my childhood so it holds such sentimental value. That's the beauty of food – it can trigger wonderful memories. The flavour here is sensational, like a very rich satay. It's got to be one of my all-time favourite fakeaways."*

- 500g beef steaks, thinly sliced
- 5 garlic cloves, crushed • 1 tsp chilli flakes • 1 tsp ancho chilli flakes
- 1 tbsp dried basil or Thai holy basil paste • 1 tbsp Thai fish sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar • 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp orange juice • 1 heaped tbsp cornflour, mixed to a paste

- with 1 tbsp water • 3 tbsp honey
- 1 red pepper, sliced handful of mushrooms, halved • 250ml chicken stock • Salt and pepper, to taste

1 Place all the ingredients in the slow cooker, stir and season to taste. Cook on high for 2½-3 hours or low for five hours. If you would like the sauce to be thicker, stir in another teaspoon of cornflour mixed to a paste with a little water. I serve this dish with boiled rice, or chips cooked in my airfryer. Adding 200g of rice will add 260 calories.

### KITCHEN SCALES

These are available cheaply online but are invaluable when following a recipe, particularly if you're keeping an eye on the calories in your meal. When measuring pasta and rice for the slow cooker, it's good to get the measurements exact.



## CREAMY CHICKEN, CHORIZO AND SUNDRIED TOMATO PASTA

SERVES: 4

READY IN: 3 HOURS 15 MINUTES

*"My most popular recipe ever, this has been viewed more than 20 million times and gone viral every time I have shared it. I hope you love it as much as I do. It is higher in calories than most of my recipes but the taste is worth it. However, you could reduce the calories by using soft cream cheese instead of cream."*

- 100g chorizo, sliced • 3 chicken breasts, cut into chunks • 2 tbsp sundried tomato pesto handful of sundried tomatoes, chopped • 5 garlic cloves, sliced • 1 tsp dried basil
- 650ml hot chicken stock • 350g dried penne pasta • 250ml double cream • 200g spinach • Salt and pepper, to taste • Grated Parmesan cheese, to garnish

1 If you have time, heat a non-stick frying pan over a high heat on the hob, then place the chorizo in the pan and sear until just browned all over. If you're in a hurry, just skip this step.

2 Place the chorizo, chicken, pesto, sundried tomatoes, garlic, basil and 150ml of the chicken stock in the slow cooker, stir and season to taste. Cook on high for 2½ hours. Add the pasta and remaining stock and cook for another 45 minutes, stirring after 30 minutes.

3 Stir in the cream and spinach – the spinach will wilt really quickly into the sauce. Sprinkle the pasta with grated Parmesan.



### For more, read this

Extracted from *Bored of Lunch: The Healthy Slow Cooker Book* by Nathan Anthony (Ebury Press, £18.99). Photography by Clare Wilkinson.



# HOW TO SAY NO TO YO-YO DIETING



Shift your mindset and ditch fast-fix fads for a healthy approach to weight loss

When you've set your mind to lose weight, promises of fast results can sound very enticing, but, according to the experts at nutrition app, Nutracek, if you want to keep the weight off, it's important to take an approach that helps you to understand why you gained weight in the first place.

Emma White MSc, Nutritionist for the Nutracek Calorie Counter app explains: "This approach teaches you to know exactly what to change to keep it off for good. I see people fall into the trap of fast fixes, but the results from fad diets are generally short-lived, and the weight piles back on – and some!

"My recommendation is to ditch complicated 'diets' and simply track what you eat. Keeping a food diary helps you understand your body's calorie requirements, and also teaches you how your food choices contribute to your daily nutrition needs," Emma says.

## VICTORIA'S STORY

Victoria lost 4st 5lbs with the help of the Nutracek app. Now, nearly four years on, she has successfully kept off the weight she lost. Here, Victoria tells us her journey.



"I have always had to manage my weight. I've been yo-yo dieting for about 15 years but the older I got, the harder I found it to lose the weight. I tended to reach my goal, get extremely excited and then suddenly let it slip and be back where I started," Victoria says.

"In December 2018, I had my baby boy. During the pregnancy I experienced a blood clot in my left leg which meant I couldn't be very active. I put on considerable weight throughout my pregnancy and so it was essential for me to get fit and healthy for my family after having my baby," she says.

"I found Nutracek and after using the trial period I loved it! This time around I found it a lot easier as I put less pressure on myself to lose the weight and instead embraced it as a new way of life.

"I created a more realistic and sustainable plan which I knew I could achieve and approached it with a positive mindset. With a young baby, I knew that going to the gym or creating extreme weight loss regimes would not work for me, so instead I decided to do this gradually and go for a long-term result," Victoria says.

"I love being able to use Nutracek and the food diary as a way to visually see what I'm eating – it's a fabulous method for better understanding my eating habits.

"The tracking helps me to know the calories and nutrition within all foods – something I was not previously as aware of.

"It has helped me to become more intentional when selecting certain food and meals. For me, it's this awareness that is the key to helping me maintain my weight, along with the amazing support from my family," Victoria says. "It's now a habit; I always check on the app when buying food and deciding whether it's something I'd like to try."

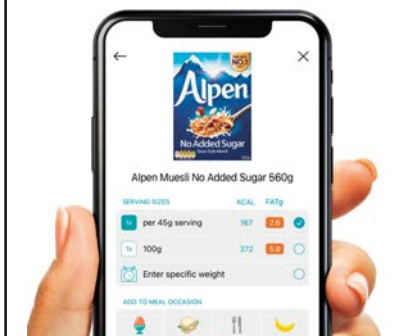
## VICTORIA'S TOP TIPS FOR USING A FOOD DIARY:

- Try it for a week – it's amazing to see what you're eating and to understand your nutrition and calorie intake.
- Set yourself different goals with the food diary, for example if you need to drink more water, use the diary as a way to manage and maintain this.
- Be honest about what you're eating – even if are having a day where you've eaten more chocolate than usual – keep track, as it's important to have a true picture of your week.
- Reward yourself – give yourself little treats such as a trip to a spa or pamper day as a reward for maintaining or having a great month of tracking.



## USE THE NUTRACHECK APP

Nutracheck tracks your calorie and nutrient intake in a food diary. Simply scan the barcode on a product to update your diary.



## 7-DAY FREE TRIAL

Download the Nutracek Calorie Counter app via the App Store or Google play. Or visit [nutracheck.co.uk](https://www.nutracheck.co.uk)



# FIND FOODIE FREEDOM

If you're tired of sacrificing your favourite foods to beat the bloat and discomfort of food intolerances, a digestive enzyme supplement could be the answer



## “I CAN BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND FREE WHEN EATING OUT”

**Kieron J:** I was sceptical when I first saw the product advertised but I thought, why not give it a go. I had a holiday coming up and going out to dinner can be awkward and embarrassing (always having to be *that* person asking if they have gluten-free options). Taking this tablet is a god-send. I know it's not a long-term solution and it won't mean I'll eat gluten foods all the time, but it allows me to be more flexible when eating out and socialising.

## “AN ABSOLUTE LIFESAVER”

**Hayley C:** I took EatEnjoy Glutalytic on a two-week trip to Japan. I ate gluten three times a day, every single day for two weeks and I had no reactions at all. EatEnjoy enzymes are an absolute lifesaver.



## “MAKES LIFE A LITTLE EASIER”

**EatEnjoy customer:** These were bought for my husband, who is very sensitive to gluten. He's a chef and loves eating (bread and pizza being his favourites). He first tried EatEnjoy out on a 16-inch pizza, go big or go home he said! He ate the whole thing. He didn't get any bloating, chronic gas or instantaneous toilet needing! Life-changing! Would he recommend them? Yes, because it opens up lots of possibilities and makes life a little easier and offers more choice for him.

FOMO sucks. We've all been there – that feeling of having to miss out is never a nice one, but when it comes to missing out on your favourite foods because of an intolerance? That's a hard pill to swallow.

According to supplement brand EatEnjoy, a whopping 70 percent of us are missing the foods we're intolerant or sensitive to – with 40 percent of us desperate to tuck into our favourite foods again without discomfort, and a further 30 percent of us saying we've learnt to go without, or found alternatives to eat.



At the same time, 21 percent of us are “just putting up with it” – we're sitting back and accepting we'll feel pretty awful post-meal. Plus, only eight percent have found a solution that works.

The only upside to these worrying statistics? This means we're not alone. There's a whole community of people out

there searching for ways to beat the bloat and stop missing out on the foods they love. Some of whom have discovered the possibilities of trying a digestive enzyme supplement.

## Digestive enzymes 101

Digestive enzymes break down food-derived fats, carbohydrates, and proteins into smaller substances that our bodies can use. Although the body produces its own digestive enzymes, these may not be enough to completely break down cooked or processed foods.

During cooking and processing, the natural enzymes present in raw foods are destroyed. The good news is that there is a way to top-up your enzymes and help to optimise the digestion process – by taking a digestive enzyme supplement like EatEnjoy.

## Is it right for me?

When trying to take control of your food intolerance, trying EatEnjoy digestive enzymes could be that first step to beating the bloat and making food FOMO a thing of the past. But if you're wondering whether they're right for you (or if they even work), take a look at these real-life testimonials from intolerance sufferers who have been able to enjoy their favourite foods again.

Try EatEnjoy for yourself and find foodie freedom. Available at: Superdrug, Holland & Barrett, Tesco and online at [eatenjoy.co.uk](https://eatenjoy.co.uk)  
@EatEnjoyUK

Source: Censuswide, 2018 UK adults who have an intolerance to gluten, dairy or lactose - or digestion problems in general, such as IBS (excl. anyone with coeliac disease or a gluten / milk allergy.) August 2022.

# digest this

THE LATEST FOOD NEWS FOR YOU



SENIOR CONTENT WRITER  
DANIELLA GRAY

WHAT'S TRENDING  
THIS MONTH...

## Mediterranean meze

*Whether you're hosting in a hurry or need to assemble an at-home lunch, dips do the hard work when it comes to flavour. Our hero product? Oydsea's sweet roasted red pepper and aubergine dip goes with just about anything, from toast and crudites to sandwich spreads and grains. Unlock the taste of the Med with every dollop. £2.75, oydsea.com*



## KEEP IT SWEET

Thought strawberries were just for Wimbledon season? Think again. New findings from Love Fresh Berries have revealed that these little red gems could be a soother for menopause symptoms, making them a handy addition all year round. Packed full of vitamin C and high in phytoestrogens, the small yet mighty fruit has been shown to reduce unpleasant hot flushes and control blood pressure when consumed regularly. Got 10 minutes to spare? To make Love Fresh Berries' strawberry quinoa salad, you'll need a handful of spinach, 90g quinoa, 4 large strawberries, sliced, 2 tbsp almonds, ¼ red onion, thinly sliced, ½ avocado, sliced, and 6 large strawberries, 1 tbsp olive oil and 2 tbsp white balsamic or apple cider vinegar for the dressing. Cook the quinoa according to the packet instructions. Blend the dressing ingredients in a blender until smooth and season with salt and pepper to taste. Once the quinoa is cooked, drain it and add to a bowl with the other ingredients. Drizzle with the dressing and enjoy!

IF YOU HAVE  
**10**  
MINUTES

## MAKE FRIENDS WITH FATS

IF YOU HAVE  
**5**  
MINUTES

Contrary to popular belief, fats aren't the saboteur of a healthy diet. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are the good type (versus the not-so-good trans fats you'll most likely find in processed foods like ready meals and takeaways). For your fix, a winning combo has to be Linwoods' Milled Flax with chia seeds, apple and cinnamon (£4.49, [linwoodshealthfoods.com](http://linwoodshealthfoods.com)). Pop a spoonful into some yoghurt or top a curry at dinner time.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 25%

of women understand what mindful eating is. Not part of that percentage? Mindful eating is a practice all about focusing the senses and mind on the meal in front of you – and the experience of eating it.

## SUPERMARKET PSYCHOLOGY

With the average UK food bill estimated to rise by £454 a year, we could all do with a helping hand on how to save more at the checkout. One of the easiest ways to eat well without blowing your budget is to seek out supermarket own-brand products (taste tests have revealed that there's very little difference, FYI). "Most supermarkets place more expensive brands at eye level to encourage customers to get the more expensive items," says Richard Jackson, a budgeting expert from Housetastic ([housetastic.co.uk](http://housetastic.co.uk)). To help you become a savvy shopper, Richard recommends sticking to a list and spending more time looking at the bottom shelves, where the cheaper items may sit. "When looking for products on your list, keep an eye across all the shelves to find cheaper but similar products, and any good promotions or deals which may otherwise have been missed."



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[instagram.com/healthwellbeinguk](https://www.instagram.com/healthwellbeinguk)

TASTY  
EXPLORATIONS



Feel the power of Dr Rupy's dishes that are big on flavour and low on effort



## SPICY HALLOUMI BAKE

*“This is spicy, wholesome, warm and inviting, all in a dish. The beautiful spices of ras el hanout work super-well in this simple traybake and you can easily substitute different vegetables for the squash and greens. A moreish dish packed with flavour that everyone will enjoy.”*

**SERVES: 4**

**READY IN: 55 MINUTES**

V

GF

- ½ butternut squash (300g), scrubbed and unpeeled, deseeded and cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 courgette (250g), cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 red pepper (200g), deseeded and roughly chopped
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 tsp ras el hanout or baharat spice mix
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 3 tbsp olive oil, plus an extra 1 tbsp to drizzle
- 150g spinach, finely chopped
- 350ml passata
- 1 x 400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 200g halloumi, sliced 1cm thick

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/ Gas 6.

2 Put the squash, courgette, red pepper and the spices into a large roasting tin. Pour over the 3 tablespoons oil and season,

then toss well to coat. Roast for 25 minutes, turning the vegetables halfway through the cooking time.

3 Remove the roasting tin from the oven and increase the temperature to 220C/428F/Gas 9. Scrape up any crusty bits from the bottom of the roasting tin for extra flavour, then fold in the spinach. Tip in the passata and kidney beans and combine with the rest of the ingredients.

4 Layer the halloumi on top, drizzle with the extra tablespoon oil and return to the oven for a further 15 minutes until the halloumi is melted and charred in areas.



## WHITE BEAN PRAWN SAGANAKI

*“This dish will blow you away. The sauce is simple to make, but the flavours are intense, sweet and spicy. The caraway and nigella seeds lend an undertone of earthy flavours with the hum of garlic and kick of red chilli to counter. The greens and beans pack this with more vegetables, but the sauce is full of the good stuff too. You can easily make this vegetarian by simply substituting the prawns with more beans that have plenty of protein.”*

**SERVES: 4**

**READY IN: 45 MINUTES**

GF

- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil • 240g white onion, diced • 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped • 2 red chillies, finely chopped • 2 tsp caraway seeds
- 2 tsp nigella seeds • 2 tsp dried oregano • 500g tomatoes, roughly chopped • 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 tbsp honey • 50g feta, crumbled • 200g chard or spinach leaves, roughly chopped • 20g basil, roughly chopped (reserve some leaves to garnish)
- 1 x 400g can giant white beans or butter beans (or any other white bean), drained and rinsed
- 200g raw jumbo prawns, shelled and deveined

**1** Preheat the grill to high.

**2** Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole over a medium heat, add the onion and cook for 5 minutes until soft and translucent, then add the garlic, chilli and seasoning and cook for 2 minutes to colour and infuse their flavour.

**3** Toss in the caraway and nigella seeds with the oregano and stir into the onions for 1

minute before adding the tomatoes, tomato purée, honey and feta. Cover and cook for 12 minutes until the tomatoes have fully broken down and the feta has melted into the sauce. Add a splash of water if it sticks to the bottom of the pan.

**4** Uncover the pan and stir so that all the ingredients combine with the sauce, then add the green leaves and basil, reserving a few basil leaves to garnish, and stir for 2 to 3 minutes or until the greens have wilted.

**5** Add the beans to the sauce and place the prawns on top. Simmer for 2 minutes then transfer to the grill for 4 minutes to finish cooking the prawns and caramelize the top of the dish.

**6** Garnish with the reserved basil leaves and serve.

## STICKY TANGY GREEN BEANS

*“This sticky dressing is divine. I’m sure you will find many uses for it in your kitchen, but my favourite way is to simply drizzle it over crisp sugar snap peas and delicious green beans blanched in hot water.”*

**SERVES: 4 (AS A SIDE)**

**READY IN: 35 MINUTES**

V	VG
DF	GF

- 300g sugar snap peas, finely sliced
- 300g green beans, roughly chopped into 3cm pieces
- 300g cooked brown lentils • 1 small red pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
- 10g coriander, leaves and stalks finely chopped
- 10g mint, leaves only, finely chopped

### For the dressing

- 2 tsp tamarind paste
- 4 tbsp date molasses or coconut sugar
- 4 tbsp black vinegar or sherry vinegar
- 4 tbsp tamari or soy sauce
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- Juice of 1 lime

1 Mix the dressing ingredients in a pan over a medium heat and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for 8 minutes or until reduced to a thick, sticky mixture that

thickly coats the back of a spoon.

2 Meanwhile, blanch the sugar snaps and green beans in a large pan of boiling water for 3 minutes, then drain thoroughly.

3 Toss onto a large platter with the lentils and red pepper, drizzle the sticky dressing over the top and carefully toss through with tongs. Scatter over the herbs and serve.



### For more, read this

Extracted from *COOKS* by Dr Rupy Aujla (Ebury Press, £22).  
Photography by David Loftus.



Turn to  
page 107 for  
more advice  
from Dr Rupy

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ACTIVE

# OWN IT



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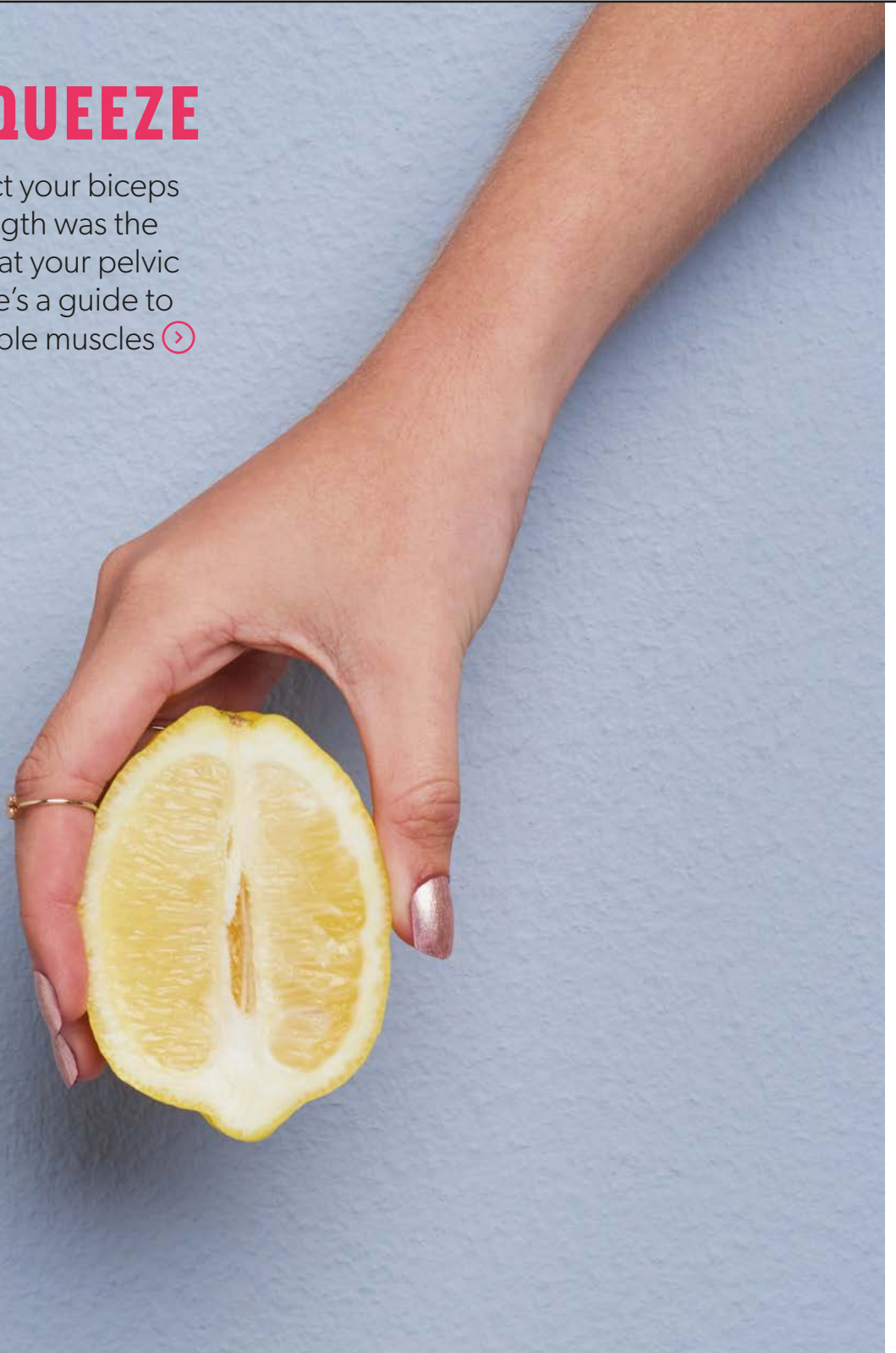


# MOVE WELL

Whether it's a running sesh, a yoga class or simply playing with your kids – here's the latest news and views on how to move more this month

## THE BIG SQUEEZE

You wouldn't neglect your biceps if upper body strength was the end goal, so why treat your pelvic floor the same? Here's a guide to engaging those invisible muscles [➔](#)



## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Maybe you've just had a baby or perhaps you're noticing hormonal changes (thanks, menopause). Weakness in your pelvic floor can occur at either of these life stages – and any in between – but first thing's first: what actually is your pelvic floor? "The pelvic floor is a hammock-like structure that sits at the base of your pelvis," explains head of women's health physiotherapy at Ten Health & Fitness, Leanne O'Brien (ten.co.uk). "It's quite unique from other muscles because it has six different functions: bladder and bowel control, assisting with orgasms, supporting internal organs and rotating your baby's head during labour." Consequences of not giving yours the attention it needs might look like urinary or faecal incontinence, issues with sexual function, lower back or pelvic pain or difficulty emptying your bladder or bowel, Leanne adds.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

Having a weak pelvic floor can impact intimate time with your partner. For women who have given birth, their pelvic floor may have weakened from the increased weight of a foetus, placenta and increased blood supply or long labour, causing organs to move slightly, falling into the 'sling' a little bit more. This is called prolapse and can be uncomfortable or worrying, impacting your ability to enjoy sex. "There's a huge amount of fear associated with pelvic health or dysfunction, and this stops people trying to find pleasure," states Cecile Gasnault, director at sexual wellness brand Smile Makers (smilemakerscollection.com).

To break the stigma, Cecile suggests becoming familiar with how everything looks and feels down there before, during and after pregnancy, so then you can know if anything has changed postpartum. "Seek help and guidance, the sooner the better, because the longer something is dysfunctional, the more fear there is associated with it. The more that you talk about these topics openly, the more you can help and guide each other to have enjoyable sexual experiences."

## HOLD TIGHT

Whatever life stage you're currently going through, you've likely been told that the answer is practicing Kegels (tensing and relaxing the muscles in your pelvic floor) to help strengthen your pelvic floor, right? Not so fast. Kegels have been around for donkey's years – and women's health has progressed massively since the exercises were first published in a paper by American gynaecologist, Arnold Kegel as a first-line of defence against incontinence, back in 1948.

"Thanks to a vast number of studies done in recent years, we're steadily moving away from the idea that isolated squeezes alone are all we need to train the pelvic floor to



be dynamic," comments pre- and post-natal specialist, Lulu Adams (luluadams.co).

When you think about a weak pelvic floor, you probably think of that hammock-like structure being too loose, but Lulu says that the muscles can actually get too tight, and the same symptoms begin to manifest if your pelvic floor is lacking strength: "Adding more tension is probably not the best approach with one that's too tight, so it makes sense that we take an individualised approach to restoring function." The take away? Kegels can be beneficial, but are a small piece of the puzzle to strengthening your pelvic floor.

## MAKE YOUR MOVE

Aside from Kegels, there are so many other things you can do that'll benefit your pelvic floor. To help you visualise what yours looks like, founder of The Bump Plan, Hollie Grant (thebumpplan.com), has a handy way of breaking it down: "Your pelvic floor is made up of both fast and slow twitch muscles. You can think of the slow twitch muscles as your long shift workers – they have good endurance, but aren't always the quickest or strongest in an emergency. The fast twitch muscles, on the other hand, are your



## ASIDE FROM KEGELS, THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO THAT'LL BENEFIT YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

back-up army. They jump in when there's an emergency and increased demand on the pelvic floor, such as a sneeze, but don't stay around for long. The slow twitch muscles respond well to 10-second holds and the fast twitch muscles are strengthened with quick flicks or pulses. Ideally, aim for 10 sets of 10-second holds and 10 sets of 10 flicks, two to three times a day."

Lulu recommends paying close attention to your ribs and hips too. "Think of your body being like a tube of toothpaste. If you're constantly squeezing at the middle of that tube (crunching those ribs down),

there'll be a lot of pressure pushing down on your pelvic floor," she says. Whether you're a new mother or spend a lot of time working at a desk, a lot of us are guilty of adopting a pretzel-like position, where we're hunched over, throwing our pelvic floors off balance to our ribs and hips.

"Working on finding a nice stacked position, where hips are directly under the ribcage, can help your diaphragm and pelvic floor muscles work together as they're designed to. Releasing tension in the glutes with a trigger point ball can also be helpful, and noticing if you tend

to 'clench' your butt throughout the day is another useful tool. Let your glutes go and see if you can stand up tall and bring the hips back in space so they're under the ribcage," Lulu suggests.

Finally? "It can take up to three months to notice a change in pelvic floor strength and symptoms," states Leanne. Still concerned that something is not quite right? "It's always advisable to seek a full pelvic floor assessment from a pelvic health physiotherapist to give you a tailored programme, which are far more effective than generic strengthening." **H&W**

# FIND IT IN FIVE

Hollie recommends these moves to activate your pelvic floor

• **Holds:** To build endurance of your pelvic floor and target the slow twitch endurance muscles, try them in seated, four-point kneeling position, lying on your back or – the hardest – in a standing position. Inhale, and as you exhale, imagine tightening and squeezing the anus, vagina and urethra, and lifting them upwards to lift the pelvic organs. Try to maintain the hold while breathing and then release when ready. It's just as important to release the pelvic floor as it is to contract it, so don't forget to release between each hold. You're aiming for a hold of eight to 10 seconds maximum for 10 reps, but don't worry if it's less than this.

• **Pulses:** To build strength and target the fast twitch (the back-up army) muscles, aim for a rapid, short lift of your pelvic floor, with a release between each. Aim for 10 pulses. Use the same technique as with the holds, but they'll be much shorter and faster.

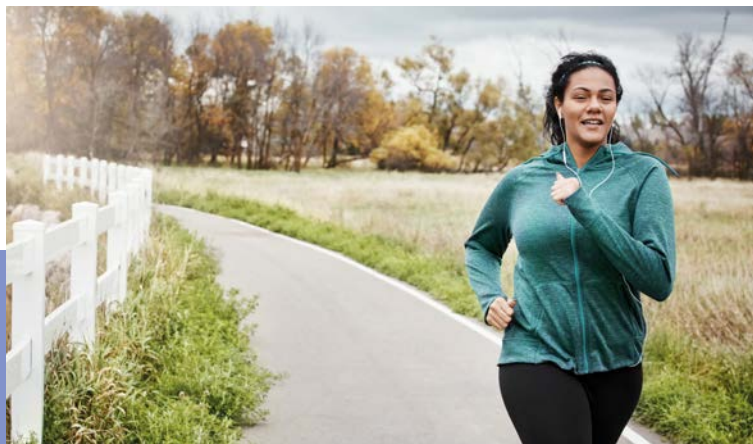
• **The knack:** Start in a standing position with your feet hip-width apart and parallel. As you inhale, drop down into a squat position, imagining you're about to sit down on the toilet. Once here, exhale to lift your pelvic floor and push yourself back to standing. You're essentially lifting the pelvic floor, before lifting yourself. Repeat for 10-12 reps.

• **Zips:** Start in a four-point kneeling position with a neutral spine (not overly rounded or extended). Visualise a zip that runs from the tailbone, up past the pubic bone and belly button and up to the sternum (the middle of your ribcage). Start with this imaginary zip open, so your tummy and pelvic floor are relaxed. Inhale, and as you exhale, imagine zipping yourself up from the tailbone to the sternum. Another way of visualising this is tightening the anus, vagina and then urethra, and drawing the tummy in slightly. Inhale to 'unzip' and allow the tummy to soften and release. You're essentially contracting your pelvic floor and your transverse muscle, then allowing them to release. You may even see your tummy move as you do this. Repeat for 10-12 reps.

• **Glute bridges:** Start by lying on your back with a neutral pelvis, feet hip-width apart and knees bent. Inhale to prepare and as you exhale, press your feet into the floor and start to lift the hips up towards the ceiling until you have a diagonal line running from your knees to your chest. Your pelvis should still feel relatively neutral, so don't go so high that it's sticking out. Inhale to stay up and then exhale to slowly lower the pelvis back down to the ground. Repeat for 10-12 reps.

# your fitness

TIPS AND TRICKS TO KEEP YOU ACTIVE



## IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

...incorporate stamina training into your workout regime. Not familiar? “Once your stamina increases, fatigue when exercising will continue to go down for long-term optimal performance,” says personal trainer and Core Balance ambassador, Nick Jones ([corebalancefitness.co.uk](http://corebalancefitness.co.uk)). Enjoy weight training? Do the same number of reps, but increase the weight by one or two kgs. For a cardio-based session, try adding 10 percent more miles or time each week. For instance, if you consistently run 20 miles a week, add two more the following week. See? Not so complicated, after all.

## MASTER THE MOVE

Personal trainer Hayley Madigan (@hayleymadiganfitness) keeps these two moves up her sleeve to relieve IBS symptoms:

### BIRD DOG

“Starting on all fours on the mat, engage your core and suck your naval into your spine, then take your right elbow and left knee and drive them in towards each other, then fully extend both arm and leg out. Repeat on both sides.”



### GLUTE BRIDGE

“Start by lying on the mat with your knees bent. Keep your rib cage and tailbone tucked under and while driving through the heels, lift your glutes up and squeeze at the top of the movement.”



## ASK THE EXPERTS

**Q:** *What do I need to know before my first hot yoga class?*

**Nick Higgins, co-founder of Hotpod Yoga ([hotpodyoga.com](http://hotpodyoga.com)), says:**

“Hot yoga is a very different experience to a traditional class, but comes with a whole range of benefits. It can take a few classes for your body to get used to the heat, but after that, you’ll discover that it really helps with flexibility and provides an extra cardio workout too. Hotpod Yoga offers classes heated to 37°C, so be prepared to sweat! A towel over your mat is a must to keep from slipping; you can find special towels for hot yoga with extra grip. During the class, take things at your own pace and rest in child’s pose whenever you need. Finally, keep a water bottle nearby to ensure you’re well hydrated before and after class.”

**You may have noticed that we featured a flow from Hotpod’s signature class, illustrated by instructor Lizzy Jarvis, in the February issue. We would like to clarify that Lizzy is the founder of Hotpod Yoga Eastbourne, one of Hotpod’s many franchise studios.**



## Tech talk

We’ve become pretty friendly with home workouts now, making it easier to try new things without prying eyes from your fellow class goers. An app that’s causing a stir? Pilates on Tap (POT). Unlike other platforms, POT doesn’t have pre-recorded workouts and instead, short videos showcasing each exercise are threaded together to create a seamless class, targeting the goals for you. When you first open the app, you’ll be asked what you’d like to improve, followed by the area you’d like to focus on, such as your abs, back, glutes, hips and shoulders. The algorithm will then create an entirely bespoke plan just for you.

**Visit [pilatesontap.co.uk](http://pilatesontap.co.uk) for more information.**

# WOMEN'S HEALTH *Essentials* TO TAKE CARE OF YOU

Caring for those around us is a strength many women naturally possess. But often when we spend too much of our energy on other people, we can neglect our own needs. To help prioritise your wellbeing, these women's health products are designed to support you to not just survive, but thrive in all stages of womanhood



## IGENNUS ADVANCED WOMEN'S MULTIVITAMIN

Formulated by nutritionists, this advanced women's multivitamin contains nutrients typically lacking in everyday diets, including iron, B-vitamins, vitamin D and zinc in absorbable forms, enhanced with sustained release. It contains no synthetic fillers and is made using vegan, non-GMO and hypoallergenic ingredients. £13.99 for a 30-day supply, [igennus.com](https://www.igennus.com)



## BIOGLAN BEAUTY COLLAGEN

Harnessing the power of marine collagen with a blend of carefully selected vitamins and minerals, like biotin and selenium, the Bioglan Beauty Collagen range helps support you from within, giving you healthier hair, firmer skin and stronger nails. With four different formats (powder, tablets, gummies and effervescent), there's an option for everyone. Available online at Boots, Amazon and Look Fantastic or instore at Holland & Barrett and Asda. From £9.35, [bioglan.co.uk](https://www.bioglan.co.uk)



## FFØR HAIRCARE

Diet, hormones, and even environmental factors like pollution can affect the condition of your hair. FFØR's Re:Fresh Colour Bond Mask is developed with peptide-infused bond-building technology to help build strength from the inside and reinforce and protect the hair's surface all whilst giving your colour a boost, to leave hair healthy, shiny and strong. £25.50, [fforhair.com](http://fforhair.com)



## ORGANYC COTTON PERIOD PADS

Irritation during your period? Organyc is clinically proven to protect you and your sensitive skin. These heavy flow period pads are made with 100 percent certified organic cotton including a highly absorbent core, making them hypoallergenic and breathable as well as reliable. They are anatomically designed with protective wings to fit to the contours of your body. The Organyc period pads are kind to skin and reduce irritation so you can have a happy period. £4.99, [organyc.uk](http://organyc.uk)



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As busy people our bodies need the correct support to maintain optimum good health and wellbeing. Paradox Omega 3, 6 and 9 provides the right balance to achieve your daily omegas and powerful polyphenol antioxidants to support heart, brain, vision, joints and immune system. Available pharmacies and health stores including Holland & Barrett. £9.99, [paradoxomegaoils.com](http://paradoxomegaoils.com)



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## SAVY WELLNESS DAILY HERO

Designed by scientists, Savy Wellness Daily Hero is the high-performance supplement drink powder targeting all your beauty and wellness needs in one daily dose. Simple, effective and strong, every sachet contains the equivalent of a multivitamin with vitamin B complex, vitamin D, vitamin C, 7g marine collagen and a KSM-66 Ashwagandha adaptogen blend. £49, get 15 percent off with code 'SAVYWH' at [savywellness.com](http://savywellness.com)

## L'ORGANIQ VITAMIN BOOST FACIAL SERUM

Packed with vitamin A, also known as retinol, a powerful antioxidant combined with vitamins C and E to help boost skin tone and texture, this natural daily serum improves discoloration, shields the skin from damaging free radicals and is perfect for use under moisturiser. £25, available at [superdrug.com](http://superdrug.com)



A woman with dark hair is lying on a light-colored exercise mat on a dark blue background. She is smiling and looking upwards. Her right hand is holding a white smartphone. She is wearing white earbuds. The overall mood is positive and active.

# On Track

Playlist from 2019 falling flat? Discover how the right music could help your workout end on a high note

**I**t's been on your mind all day. You know you'll feel better once it's over. Your bag is packed and ready to go. You've finally summoned up the energy to make it to the gym, only to realise you've forgotten your headphones. Music really does move you, whether it makes you want to burst into song (see: the classic All By Myself scene from *Bridget Jones's Diary*) or helping to push you in the last km of your run. It's no surprise then, that research by Brunel University's School of Sport and Education found that carefully-selected music can significantly increase a person's physical endurance and make the experience of cardiovascular exercise, like your weekly spin class, far more positive. Here's how to create the perfect playlist to sail through your next workout.



### PUMP IT UP

Everyone from professionals to amateurs will understand that music can play an important role in exercise. You'll often see athletes of all kinds with their headphones getting 'psyched up' for a big game or competition, and similarly, those who exercise on a no-pressure basis can relate to finding that extra power to dig deep when nearing the end of a workout.

Sport researcher Costas Karageorghis dubbed music sport's 'legal drug' thanks to the notable effect it can have on athletes' performance. His research highlights that music can reduce an athlete's perception of effort by up to 10 percent and, in turn, increase performance by as much as 20 percent.

It's the properties of music – rhythm, tempo, pitch and volume – that creates these

effects, explains Marianne Rizkallah, a music therapist for music licensing company PPL PRS ([pplprs.co.uk](http://pplprs.co.uk)). So, how do you curate a playlist that's going to help you capitalise on your chosen sounds? Cue the music.

### THE BEAT GOES ON

Everyone who's tried a spin or aerobics class will be familiar with the instructor's command to 'move to the beat' which, Marianne says is significant: "For gym-goers, the tempo of the music listened to during a workout can make a significant difference. For example, in a spin class, warming up at a rate of 60 revolutions per minute (rpm) while listening to a song at 120 beats per minute (bpm) – the tempo of many dance tunes – means you can perform one cycle per two beats of music, providing a regulating system for your brain to hook onto." Essentially, if you increase or decrease the rpm of your bike, or the bpm of your music, this will impact how fast – or slow – you go.

It's difficult to get motivated by a song that you've never heard before, so the best music to listen to while training is by an artist, or within a genre, that you know and love, states Marianne. "Plus, it's important to choose a tempo that suits your activity. The beat you run to will probably not be the same speed as the



## MUSIC TO YOUR EARS



### Marshall Major IV headphones, £129, [marshallheadphones.com](https://marshallheadphones.com)

Perfect for audiophiles, Marshall's ergonomic design means that when deep diving into music, the 10th hour is as comfortable as the first. AirPods constantly dying on you? These have more than 80 hours of wireless playtime, so you'll never be out of juice.



### JBL Live Pro 2 Earbuds, £129, [jbl.com](https://jbl.com)

These earbuds cancel out any external noise. Whether it's music, a podcast or Zoom call, you can rest-assured the best performance anywhere life takes you. With up to 40 hours of playback time, you can enjoy long stints at the gym, outside on a walk or settling in at home for your favourite show.



### Bang & Olufsen Beoplay EX, £349, [bang-olufsen.com](https://bang-olufsen.com)

Beoplay EX is the most versatile true wireless earphone model from Bang & Olufsen with astounding sound and a fully waterproof design. The housing of the earphone placed inside the ear is smaller than ever before, and ensures a comfortable and stable fit that can be worn for hours, so you can keep on running without being distracted.



beat you lift weights to, so consider switching up your playlists and choose tracks you think you can keep on the beat with."

### LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Then there's also that feeling when you think you can't keep peddling on the spin bike or manage another rep, but suddenly the beat kicks in, and you're able to dig a little deeper. To help fitness fanatics get in the zone, Apple Music has launched its Fitness DJ Mix series that's broken down into four subcategories, including Run, Ride, Gym and Yoga, with each mix specifically created with the workout style in mind.

"Music is this primal tool that gives you that extra boost of energy during your workouts," says Valentino Khan, a DJ and producer. "It's a pretty crazy idea, but it's so obvious. For most people, it's almost a requirement to any fitness regimen." Valentino

has assembled the first-ever Fitness Mix for the gym, which is a nearly hour-long set to guide you through weight training, HIIT workout or any other equally challenging fitness routine.

"I wanted to keep the energy high, while still selecting tracks that were pleasant to listen to and play in any setting. It's a bit of a crescendo, with the higher-energy tracks towards the later stages of the mix. At the same time, I wanted to give people a great ending that they can ride out to." Amid this mix of house and hip-hop, a couple of key tracks Valentino included are his own *Your Body* x Nitti Gritti and "a crazy flip of Drake's, *Nonstop*," he says. "It feels like a great cooldown song that builds back up into another round of intensity."

### SLOW IT DOWN

As you gear up to exercise using music, you can also listen to music at a slower tempo to

## MUSIC THAT MOVES ME

Want an insight into what Joe Wicks, The Body Coach, plugs into his ears? Access granted. As part of Apple Music's mixes, he's revealed the tunes he uses in his day-to-day fitness and wellness routines. "Music is a huge part of my life and always has been," says Joe. "As you'll see from my selection of tracks, I have such a broad taste in music and what I listen to on any given day usually changes depending on how I feel. One thing's for sure, you can't beat a great playlist to help get you motivated during a workout." Add these tracks to your library for a boost.



**"THE BEAT YOU RUN TO WILL PROBABLY NOT BE THE SAME SPEED AS THE BEAT YOU LIFT WEIGHTS TO... SO CHOOSE TRACKS YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP ON THE BEAT WITH"**

cool down post-workout. While it hasn't been as explicitly researched as other areas of music in sport, a study has shown that your heart rate can match the bpm of the track you're listening to. Therefore, your heart rate can rise and slow down according to what's playing.

"To complete your cool-down, play music that motivates you. Ideally, this'll be connected to positive memories and associations," Marianne explains. "It's wise to pick tracks with a slower beat than those enjoyed during a workout, so the music carries you through to a relaxed end to your exercise regime."

Your mind will be able to use this time to decompress so you can tackle the day ahead with a clean slate or enjoy a chilled evening on the sofa, so it's win-win. Mood-enhancing, relaxing, motivating – whatever you need during your workout, the right music is bound to get you to your destination. **H&W**

### THE TRACK LIST

George Ezra	Green Green Grass
Calvin Harris, Dua Lipa	One Kiss
Eminem	Lose Yourself (Soundtrack Version)
Dua Lipa	Physical
The Killers	Somebody Told Me
Bruce Springsteen	Born to Run
Harry Styles	As It Was
George Ezra	Shotgun
Ellie Goulding	Something In the Way You Move
Dermot Kennedy	Better Days
Fred again..	Delilah (pull me out of this)
Ed Sheeran	Bad Habits
Kanye West	Stronger
George Ezra	Anyone For You (Tiger Lily)
Eminem	Love the Way You Lie (feat. Rihanna)
Justin Bieber	What Do You Mean?
Calvin Harris	Outside (feat. Ellie Goulding)
Bastille	Pompeii
Fred again.. & The Blessed Madonna	Marea (We've Lost Dancing)
Dua Lipa	Don't Start Now
Meduza	Paradise (feat. Dermot Kennedy)
Bruce Springsteen	Born In the U.S.A.
Robyn	Dancing On My Own
The Killers	Mr. Brightside
Bob Marley & The Wailers	Could You Be Loved
Dr. Dre	Forgot About Dre (feat. Eminem)
George Ezra	Paradise



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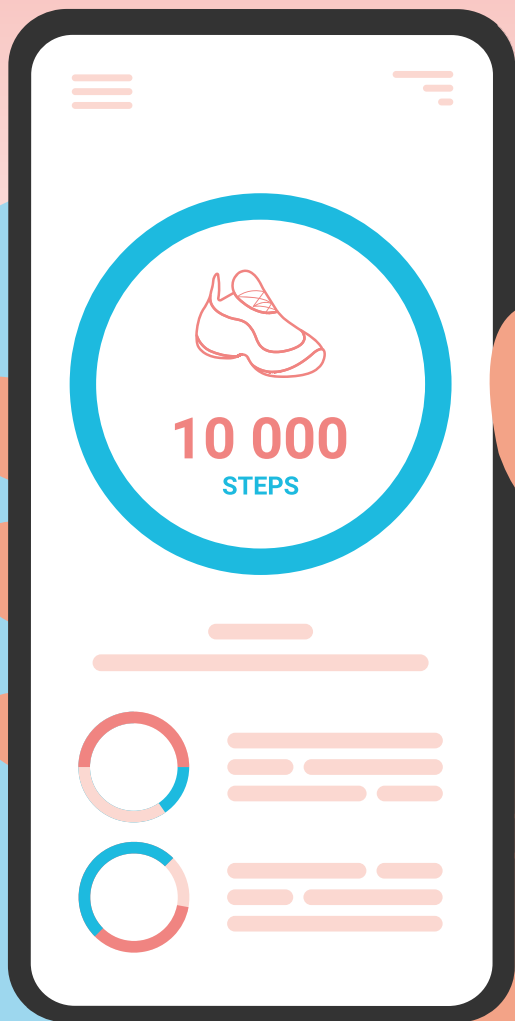
THE UNO



# LET'S GET WALKING

Join us in our campaign #walktowellbeing and take control of your health one step at a time

Hands up who normally does around 10,000 steps a day? Apparently, quite a few of us. We are a nation of walkers, according to research by Garmin. The 2022 Garmin Connect Fitness Report revealed the UK population, on average, notched up enough steps to walk from Lands' End to John O'Groats twice over in 2022. What's more, the research showed that as a nation us Brits are one of the top movers, averaging a whopping 3.3 million steps in the last year. In fact, the UK made it into the top five countries for daily step count, taking an average of 9,191 daily steps – that's equivalent to 2,556k! Go us!



# STEP IT UP

Whether you're just starting out on your walking journey or are looking for a way to ramp up your regular hikes, signing up for an event or challenge is a great motivator. We speak to four inspiring women about their experiences of doing just that

**"DOING THINGS OUTSIDE MY COMFORT ZONE MAKES ME FEEL ALIVE"**

**Naomi Holbrook, a 47-year-old health and wellbeing expert from Hove, is planning to hike up Mont Blanc later this year with friends. It's her first challenge like it, and she's looking forward to reaching the summit...**

"I wasn't an active child or adult; in fact for a long time, I hated any form of exercise due to an ongoing back condition. This caused chronic pain for years and when I was in my early 30s, I was unable to walk further than about 200m without huge discomfort. In 2009 this resulted in me undergoing major spinal surgery to replace a degenerated disc and reinforce my spine.

Post-surgery, I started walking and exercising. Having previously battled years of depression and anxiety, walking soon became a big part of my daily life. I realised that being in nature and outdoors had a positive impact on my mental health, and made me feel better even on my low days.

Since then I have walked every day, whether along the seafront in Hove where I live or up on the South Downs, and I always pack my trainers or walking shoes when I go away.

In the years since my operation, I have completed a number of running and obstacle-based races, but a few months ago I felt the need for a new physical and mental challenge. A friend walked up Mont Blanc in September and when he returned, I told him I would love to join his group if they went again. Three weeks later I received a message asking if I'd be up for it in 2023 and it was a no-brainer.

It's a big (and not to mention fairly scary) test for my first walking challenge but I know from experience that doing things outside of our comfort zone is when we feel most alive and I love to stretch myself both mentally and physically. Opportunities like this don't come around every day so I



grabbed it with both hands!

A team of six of us will be heading up there at the end of August with our own experienced guide. Mont Blanc is Europe's finest and highest alpine hike and will involve us hiking around a 170km circuit over seven to 10 days. The expedition will be made up of days where we are ascending more than 1,000m carrying a weighted load, and the final stretch to the summit of Mont Blanc will be Dome du Gouter. This involves 4,810m crossing through France, Italy and Switzerland. With a few months to go, I am getting some form of exercise in five to six days a week: additional strength training at home and walking, jogging and running with a weighted pack to increase my overall cardiovascular fitness. I also plan to meet up with the expedition team for some walking weekends to get some 'real life' mountain hikes in before the big event. I can't wait!"





## “HAVING A SPECIFIC GOAL IS HELPING ME COPE WITH GRIEF”

**47-year-old Claire Lyons’ young son died in 2019 and she’s found purpose in being part of the Rebel Badge Club, which encourages members to set themselves challenges and receive badges when they achieve them. This year, she’s hoping to gain her walking badge, and is hiking with her husband and three daughters too...**

“The Rebel Badge Club is a series of merit badges and monthly challenges and it’s been helping me enormously with traumatic grief – setting small goals to keep me functioning. It sparked my family’s imagination too and we now complete Pawprint Family challenges together.

For January the challenge was to exercise every day, and as I had already planned to start the year focusing on the walking badge, it seemed to tie in nicely. There is also a walking challenge badge for the whole family and we liked the idea of it. So at the beginning of 2023, I dug out an old Fitbit and set a very small daily goal, and since then I have been slowly increasing it.

As a mental health lecturer for many years, I’m well aware of the benefits of



fresh air and being in nature, but knowing something and actually following that advice are two different things! I used to walk a lot and I love being outdoors, but since my son died just getting out of bed each morning has taken a lot of energy and resolve. Since signing up to The Rebel Badge Club, though, I’ve found I’m very motivated by stickers, so this is working for me.

The Rebel Badge Book Walker Badge has three clauses and is self-awarded. I set a target of my own for the first month, and now am increasing it over two further months. The Pawprint Family Walking

Challenge is more involved, including crafts, games and food. We have set a family goal for that one, which extends my personal goal, and we can then continue that indefinitely with regular km-based badges.

So far, I’m enjoying the challenge and I’m feeling more focused now I’ve set a specific goal, rather than a vague ‘I should walk more’ idea. I think it will get harder to fit in and motivate myself to do as the distances per week increase, but I’m hopeful that I’ll stick to it. I’ve only walked locally on flat roads and paths, but we have some more wild walks planned as a family that I may regret!

Mentally, I’m finding it hugely beneficial. Space to think, hum and cry were all previously lacking in my life and walking offers me this. Fresh air is so good for wellbeing and I didn’t get any, except for the school run, which is actually a very triggering time for me each day. Now, I feel more positive, and know I’ve started something that will really benefit my overall health. I just needed that little colourful badge to push me along!”

For more about Claire’s experience of grief visit [clairelyons.co.uk](http://clairelyons.co.uk)

Annie jumping with team from BBC *Take a Hike* Series



© Cardiff Productions, Steve Kingston

## "I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A 'GO FOR IT' ATTITUDE"

**You might have seen Annie Stirk, a 71-year-old model, grandmother and keen walker from North Yorkshire, on BBC2 earlier this year. She took part in the competitive hiking series *Take a Hike* and found herself engaging in all sorts of walking (and other adventurous) challenges along the way...**

"I love walking – for me, there's nothing better than the feeling of being outdoors and the sense of freedom and relaxation it brings. I have especially loved the opportunity that retirement has given me to just go with the flow and enjoy the time to walk. Getting involved in the series for BBC2 was one of those 'out of the blue' moments. An email popped into my inbox one day from a casting researcher. She said they were looking for contestants for the second series of *Take a Hike* and asked if I enjoyed walking, and if I wanted to talk. Then followed lots of phone calls, emails and casting videos to see if I was right for what they were looking for. *Take A Hike* is a competitive reality show, so the producers were keen to know that I had a competitive streak!

When confirmation came that they'd like me to be involved I was thrilled as I loved the thought of a challenge. Opportunities like this are rare and life-affirming and I have always had a 'go for it' attitude. I love meeting new people and trying something new – it's good for the soul. The premise of

the show is that the five walkers show the viewers – and the other walkers – the wonder of their favourite hikes, from windswept coastal paths to invigorating mountain climbs and magical woodlands, in an effort to have their route crowned the best.

If I'm honest, I was quietly worried if I would be up to it physically. I have aches and pains, a dodgy back and am not great up hills so I was worried that I might not be able to keep up. It's a half-an-hour show but the filming days were really long (sometimes 12 hours!) and we were out the whole time.

Each day also involved a challenge which did test me, but I was determined not to pull out of them. There was no pressure from the producer and I could have just said no, but the opportunity to abseil, climb up a waterfall and do some wild swimming in the freezing North Sea was too hard to resist.

Yes, I was nervous, but we were so well supported there was really nothing to lose. The prize was a real burst of adrenaline and a fantastic sense of achievement like no other. Mentally, I did prepare myself. I thought about it a lot and talked to my family about my fears, but I knew I would find the emotional strength to do it. I am a passionate advocate of the mantra 'just do it' and I would like to encourage other women of a similar age to take opportunities and push the comfort zone boundaries."





## “THE FITTER WE GOT, THE MORE ADVENTUROUS WE BECAME”



**Rewind three years and Karen Tinsley, 45, wouldn't necessarily have described herself as a walker. But now, along with her friends, she's climbed Scafell Pike, Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) and the three peaks in Yorkshire, and last year she even took on the highest summit in the Atlas Mountains...**

“Back in January 2020, I set myself a new year's resolution to be more active and walk 1,000 miles. Because I was only just building up my fitness levels, my goal got off to a slow start and I'd only achieved around 120 miles before the pandemic hit and we entered lockdown. I wasn't sure if I was going to manage my target, but I was still keen to try.

Once lockdown rules relaxed, I met up with some of the members from my Slimming World group for local walks and soon our partners joined us too. I'd post my walks on my Facebook page and after a couple of weeks my cousin messaged to see if we'd be interested in taking part in a hike up Mount Toubkal in Morocco (the highest peak in the

Atlas Mountains) for Reuben's Retreat – a charity that supports families of complexly poorly children and families that have lost a child. I researched it and with regular training it seemed achievable, so I shared the idea with my friends to see if anyone was interested. They didn't need much encouraging – 11 of us signed up for the trek that was scheduled for September 2021.

With our challenge in mind, we steadily ramped up our walking, taking on longer and hillier routes in the Peak District. The fitter we got, the more adventurous we became. We had weekends away climbing Scafell Pike in the Lake District and Snowdon [now known as Yr Wyddfa] in Wales, where we took a steep route up via Y Gribin Ridge and the Watkin Path to push ourselves. And, in the summer of 2021 we took on the Yorkshire three peaks, which was really tough, and a timed trekathon event in the Scottish Highlands. This was 26.2 miles around Glencoe mountains and I'm proud to say we did this in under 11 hours, on a blisteringly hot day too!

Sadly, because of Covid restrictions, our trip to Morocco was postponed for a year but we continued to meet at weekends and

pound the hills in the Peak District to keep our stamina and fitness up.

Before we knew it, September 2022 was upon us and we boarded our flights to Morocco. There were 28 of us in total, all raising money for Reuben's Retreat. There were varying fitness levels within the team and as the trek progressed we naturally split into smaller groups, regrouping at the stops. It was really tough – especially as the weather wasn't kind to us – and on the last leg before the summit, I was struggling to breathe with the altitude and was exhausted. As the mountain is more than 4k high, oxygen levels are only 60 percent of that at sea level. Sadly, I didn't make it right to the peak, but everyone who did commented on how strenuous the climb was. Still, I'm incredibly proud of what I achieved and collectively all the climbers raised £30,000 for Reuben's Retreat.

I'm still in touch with the other people from the hike and plans are being made to meet up again in the future. My friends and I still meet up regularly for walks too and I'm now a firm advocate for the power of walking.”



## BE PREPARED

*Thinking about signing up for an event or challenge yourself? Ryan Atkin, the founder and lead coach at Real World Results (realworldresults.co.uk), shares his advice:*

**1** Start training early (months in advance) and gradually increase the distance and difficulty of your walks over time. This will help you build up your strength and endurance in a tolerable way.

**2** Invest in a good pair of walking shoes or boots that provide adequate support and cushioning. In general, look for shoes that provide good arch support, have a sturdy, slip-resistant sole, and offer a comfortable, secure fit. And, don't make the rookie error of not wearing them in beforehand if you have an event.

**3** Pack plenty of water and snacks, and make sure to stay hydrated and nourished during your walks. This will help keep your energy levels up and prevent fatigue.

**4** Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and the environment. Layering is a good way to stay comfortable and adjust to changing temperatures if needed.

**5** Be aware of your surroundings at all times and pay attention to potential hazards, such as slippery surfaces or uneven ground. Walk at a pace that is comfortable and take breaks as needed.

# SPRING INTO ACTION IN SKECHERS SLIP-INS

Extra daylight means more chance to get outside, so the *H&W* team were delighted to try out Skechers' Slip-Ins range – hands-free footwear to get you out of the door in no time! Here's how we got on...



**LIZ FROST, CONTENT CREATOR**

*"What a difference"*

My day usually starts with the school run, half a mile each way with my eight-year-old son. I love the moment the blossom appears on the trees along our route. I noticeably move faster, with bigger strides and have more energy. I usually grab whichever footwear is nearest the door when we leave, but slipping into my **Skechers Ultra Flex 3.0 Smooth Step Slip-Ins** (£95) has made me realise what a difference footwear can make. The Heel Pillow design means no bending and wrangling of laces or buckles and no worrying about blisters or rubbing. They literally feel like walking on air – and look pretty stylish too!



**LAURA COPPOCK,  
SENIOR CONTENT CREATOR**

*"Simply slide on and go"*

As a dog owner, one of my favourite things about going for a walk every day is being out in nature and feeling the seasons change. And I try to make the most of each of them – I'm a firm believer in the saying that there's no such thing as bad weather as long as you dress for it. In winter I wrap up with a warm coat, hat, scarf, gloves and waterproof boots to protect myself from the elements. Having said that, I do look forward to my favourite season, spring, and being able to simply slide on some trainers and go. My **Skechers GoWalk 6 Valentina Slip-Ins** (£100) are the epitome of this; you don't even need to use your hands to put them on! I'm out of the door in no time, which means more precious minutes to enjoy my daily dose of nature.



**DANIELLA GRAY, SENIOR CONTENT WRITER**

*"Cloud-comfortable"*

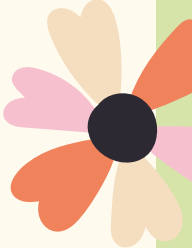
When it feels like it hasn't stopped raining for 64 days straight, I'm determined not to let the wet weather get in the way of my steps. Sandals and other open-toe shoes are obviously out of the question for a short walk (roll on spring), so as someone who's always in a rush, I'll take any time-saving hack I can get if it means I'm out the door, stat. Although I was sure they would flap at my heels at first, I'm pleased to report that the **Skechers Max Cushioning Smooth Slip-Ins** (£120) do exactly as they say on the tin. They're cloud-comfortable and there aren't any laces to faff around with if you're short on time. Once I was on my way, my feet felt snug and supported.

**RAE PASSFIELD, COMMERCIAL CONTENT CREATOR**



*"Get up and go"*

I don't know about you, but for me, the hardest part about winter in the UK is the short days and seemingly endless dreary sky. That's why as soon as I notice the days start to feel even a tiny bit brighter and longer, I get an instant spring in my step. It comes as no surprise then, that wearing my **Skechers Ultra Flex 3.0 Brilliant Slip-Ins** (£90) gives me that extra boost to get up and go for an early morning walk, just as the sun is starting to peek over the rooftops of my local village. Not only are they super-comfortable, but they look great with my leggings and the simple step-in design makes enjoying those precious extra minutes of sunlight easier than ever.



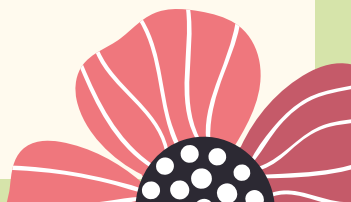
**HOLLY TREACY, EDITOR**

*"Cool, convenient and comfortable"*

There's something about the turn of a new season that sparks hope and optimism for the days ahead, especially when it comes to spring. And, for me, if I want to grab a quick lunchtime walk, or head out for a casual weekend stroll, donning my trainers can feel a bit OTT. Enter, the **Skechers Slip-Ins: GO WALK Flex - Relish** (£80) which are perfect for slipping on for a cool, convenient and comfortable walk. Plus, the ULTRA GO cushioning and Heel Pillow features mean you don't have to compromise on fit and form. I personally love the versatility of this shoe; from nature walks and nursery drop-offs, to pottering in the garden, these are my new go-to when I'm heading out the door.



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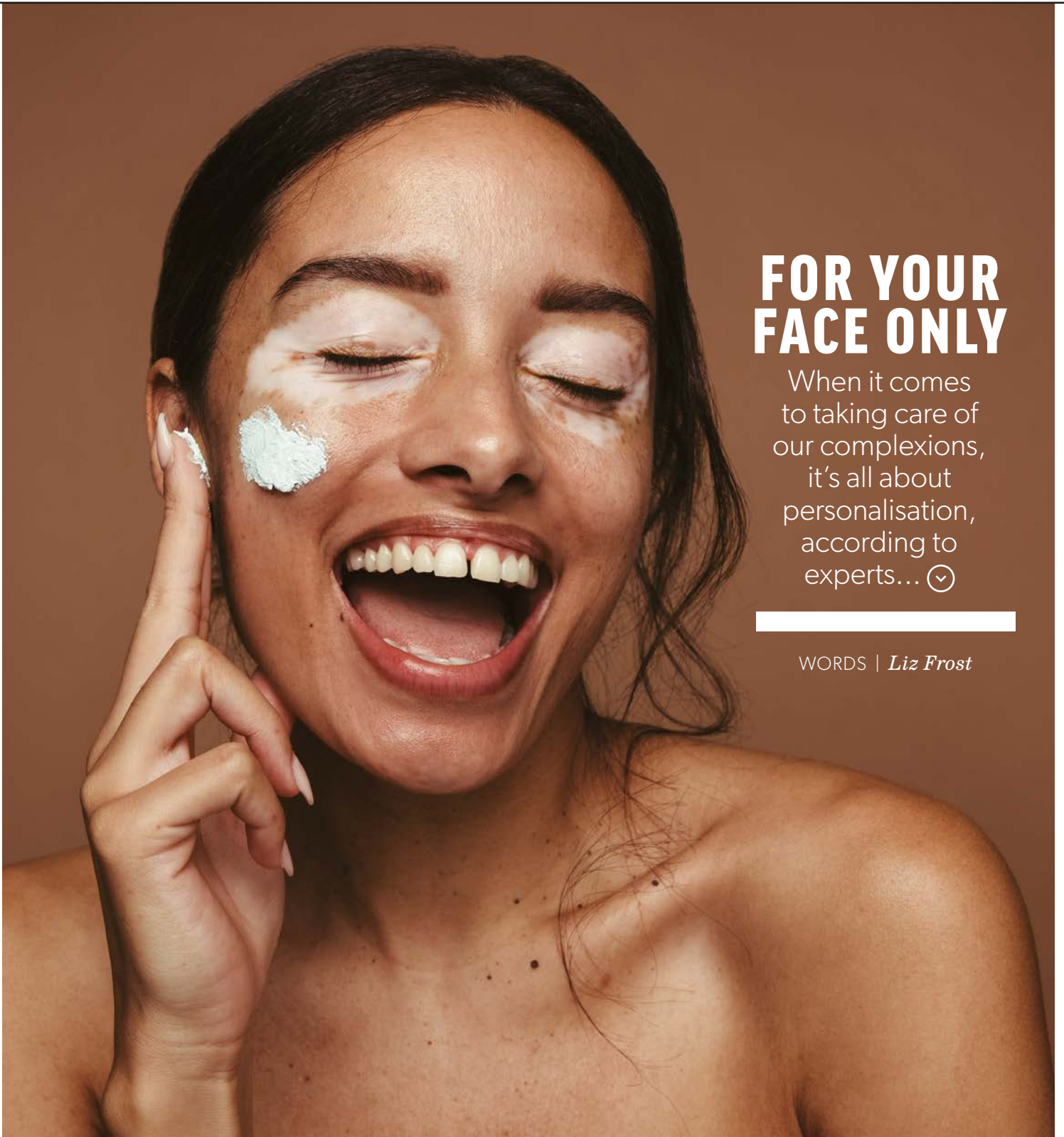
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# LOOK WELL

From the best activewear for a workout at the gym to top make-up, hair and beauty tips, we've got all the style advice you need right here



## FOR YOUR FACE ONLY

When it comes to taking care of our complexions, it's all about personalisation, according to experts... 

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WORDS | *Liz Frost*

**H**ow well do you know your skin? You might notice you have an oily T-zone, or suffer from dry cheeks in the winter, but how much of this knowledge translates to the skincare you add to your basket? According to experts, not tailoring your skincare products to your skin-type could be causing your skin more harm than good. “When applying a one-size-fits-all approach to skincare, this can have a negative impact on the skin, as different skincare needs require different ingredients and textures,” says Face The Future skin advisor, Amber Dixon (facethefuture.co.uk). “For example, salicylic acid is great for a congested, breakout-prone skin. However, if you were to use this in excess on a dehydrated skin, it could cause dryness or flaking. Similarly, a sensitive skin-type would benefit from a non-foaming, gentle, creamy cleanser, whereas an acne-prone skin generally requires something more deep-cleansing to decongest.” In addition, using the wrong skincare product can cause a series of skin reactions, and sometimes compromise the skin’s barrier, causing redness, pimples and other issues to arise.

However, as founder of Oleo Skincare Olivia Chapman explains, the notion that simply avoiding certain ingredients will resolve all skin concerns for all skin types, is not valid. “There are many factors at play with each of us,” she says. “While there are similarities – and certainly things that we believe are important for all of us (like avoiding fragrance and common irritants in skincare); there is definitely not a blanket-skincare regimen for all skin types. Not only do different people require different things; our skin can require a different approach at different times.”

So how do we discover which skin type we really have, and choose the right products for us? Enter customisable skincare, which works through expert consultations, either in-person, via video-call or email. “Having a skincare consultation allows us to really understand the specific skin concern or type and what we need to recommend to help treat the skin,” says Amber. It also allows us to find out if there would be any contraindications, for example, any allergies, which is important when recommending products, especially medical-based skincare with highly active ingredients.”

Whilst some clinics offer remote consultations, a face-to-face appointment is the best way to get to the root of your skin’s needs, and choosing the right expert is all-important. “Customisable skincare should only be provided by an expert, who has analysed your skin and lifestyle,” adds celebrity facialist Pietro Simone (pietrosimone.com). “This is because a routine needs to be produced and

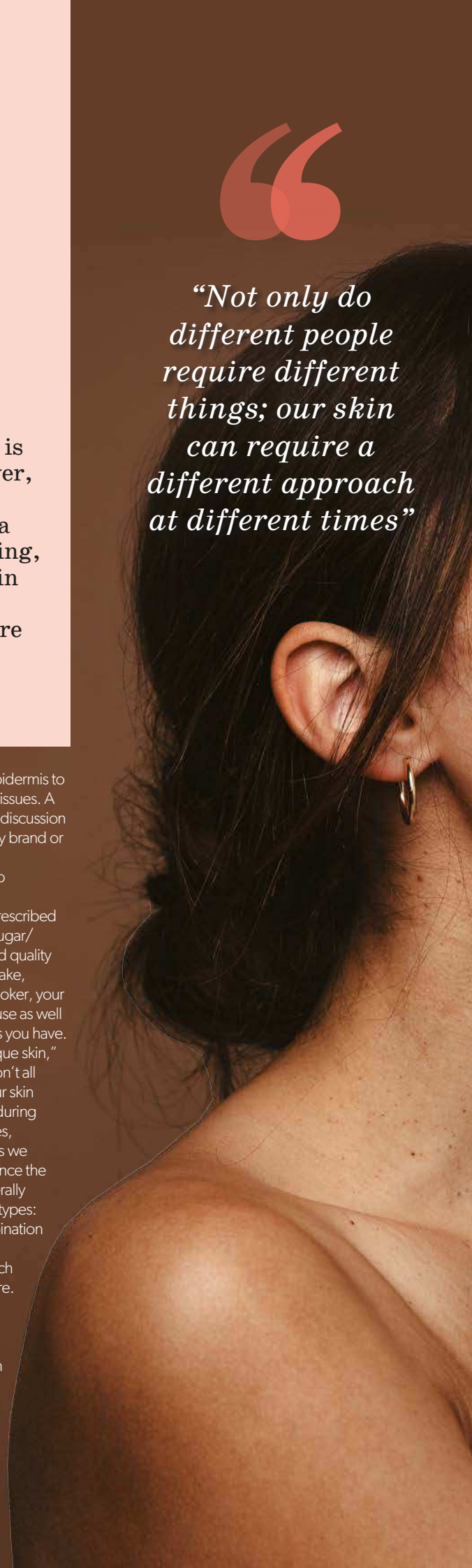
followed to effectively impact your epidermis to resolve small, medium or bigger skin issues. A full consultation followed by an open discussion is a ‘must have’ before investing in any brand or skincare line.”

Your consultation should take into consideration your age, gender, any underlying medical conditions and prescribed medication. Your stress levels, diet/sugar/alcohol consumption, the amount and quality of sleep you have each night, fluid intake, known allergies, whether you’re a smoker, your ethnicity, the products you currently use as well as your budget and any skin concerns you have.

“Each one of us has our own unique skin,” adds Olivia. “As with anything, we don’t all fit neatly within one skin-type since our skin is an organ and undergoes changes during hormonal cycles, at different life stages, because of our lifestyle choices and as we age. But as a rule, we tend to experience the characteristics of one skin-type. Generally speaking, there are five different skin types: normal, dry, oily, sensitive, and combination skin. Each of the skin types exhibits distinctive traits, which means that each type requires different methods of care. Knowing and understanding your skin-type is important so you can provide the correct care to keep it looking and feeling healthy.” Read on for our expert’s guide to some of the common broad skin types and the best types of skincare routine to consider.



*“Not only do different people require different things; our skin can require a different approach at different times”*



# KNOW YOUR SKIN TYPE

Olivia Chapman explains the five major skin types

**Normal skin** contains a good balance of sebum (the skin's natural oil). Having normal skin means that your skin is well-balanced – there are no obvious oily or dry areas – and that it doesn't have any persistent issues like acne or redness. Pore size is not an issue. Normal skin is actually not very common. Most of us have multiple issues to contend with: dryness, oiliness, sensitivity, dehydration... However, if you do have normal skin, it is the easiest skin to take care of. Without any major skincare concerns, the goal is to find products that keep your skin well-balanced.

**Oily skin** is prone to excessive production of sebum, the skin will appear shiny and show larger pores. Blackheads and spots may be present. A gentle foaming wash, toner and light facial moisturiser are needed to treat oily skin. Do not use ingredients that make the skin too dry. This will cause the skin to produce more sebum and you'll find yourself back to square one with oilier skin.

**Dry skin** has a lower production of sebum and an impaired skin barrier. The skin will feel tight and can look dull. To cleanse dry skin, opt for cleansing milk, cream or balm and use a rich water-in-oil moisturising cream to lock in moisture. Avoid foaming products that can make the problem worse.

**Combination skin** is a mixture of skin types and these days is probably the most common skin type. It usually presents a slightly greasier T-zone (your forehead and nose) and dehydrated or dry cheeks. Caring for combination skin can be tricky. You will probably need products that cleanse and moisturise several different skin types.

**Sensitive skin** can be genetic or lifestyle-led. Sometimes your skin reacts excessively to the slightest attack. It can sting, feel tight, and turns red, flaky and itchy. In this case, you need to choose products with very few ingredients. It is becoming increasingly common and is more prevalent in women than men. This is partly because men have a thicker epidermis, which is a better barrier to allergens and irritants. Another cause can be the overuse of numerous products by women.

## SKIN ISSUES

There is a myriad of skin complaints that you might be unfortunate to experience. These can occur as a temporary situation that might be caused by lifestyle factors, or a more long-term condition as a result of illness or an inherited disease. If you suspect that you have a more serious skin condition, see a skin specialist or doctor to confirm the diagnosis and suggest treatment. Read on for some of the more common conditions.

**Eczema** is itchy, inflamed and crusty skin that is sometimes sore to the touch or swollen. Sufferers usually have over-reactive inflammatory responses to environmental factors and products such as

detergents. You can gain some relief from using rich moisturisers.

**Rosacea** is an auto-inflammatory skin condition that has numerous symptoms and different levels of diagnosis. Symptoms include flushing, swelling, burning and stinging. It can be triggered by alcohol consumption, stress and extreme temperatures. It usually needs to be treated by a doctor or dermatologist.

**Acne** presents as a combination of blackheads, whiteheads and spots usually on the face and neck. It is usually associated with puberty, but can affect any age. There is no magical cure for acne and it is a case of finding what works for the individual.



GREAT FOR SENSITIVE SKIN

Environ Skin EssentiA Vita-Antioxidant AVST Gel, £50, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)

Fierce Future Texture toner, £35, [fenwick.co.uk](http://fenwick.co.uk)



CeraVe hydrating cream-to-foam cleanser, £12.50, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)



GREAT FOR OILY SKIN

iS Clinical Cleansing Complex £36, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)



# Skincare SAVIOURS

Bespoke beauty buys you'll want to add to your basket

GREAT FOR DRY SKIN



Medik8 Pore Minimising Tonic, £42, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)

Environ Youth EssentiA (C-Quence) Vita Peptide Toner, £48, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)



SkinCeuticals Daily Moisture £58.99, [Facethefuture.co.uk](http://Facethefuture.co.uk)

GREAT FOR DRY SKIN

Oleo's Dry Skin Facial Oil (£25)



GREAT FOR OILY SKIN



The Body Shop Tea Tree Skin Clearing Mattifying Toner, £10, [thebodyshop.com](http://thebodyshop.com)

GREAT FOR SENSITIVE SKIN



Avene Tolérance Control Soothing Skin Recovery Cream, £19.15, [boots.com](http://boots.com)



PIERCE Dewy Reboot serum, £85, [fenwick.co.uk](http://fenwick.co.uk)



Oskia Floral Water, £58, [facethefuture.co.uk](http://facethefuture.co.uk)



# SUPER CHARGE YOUR SKINCARE

Curious about collagen? Here's everything you need to know about this powerful protein

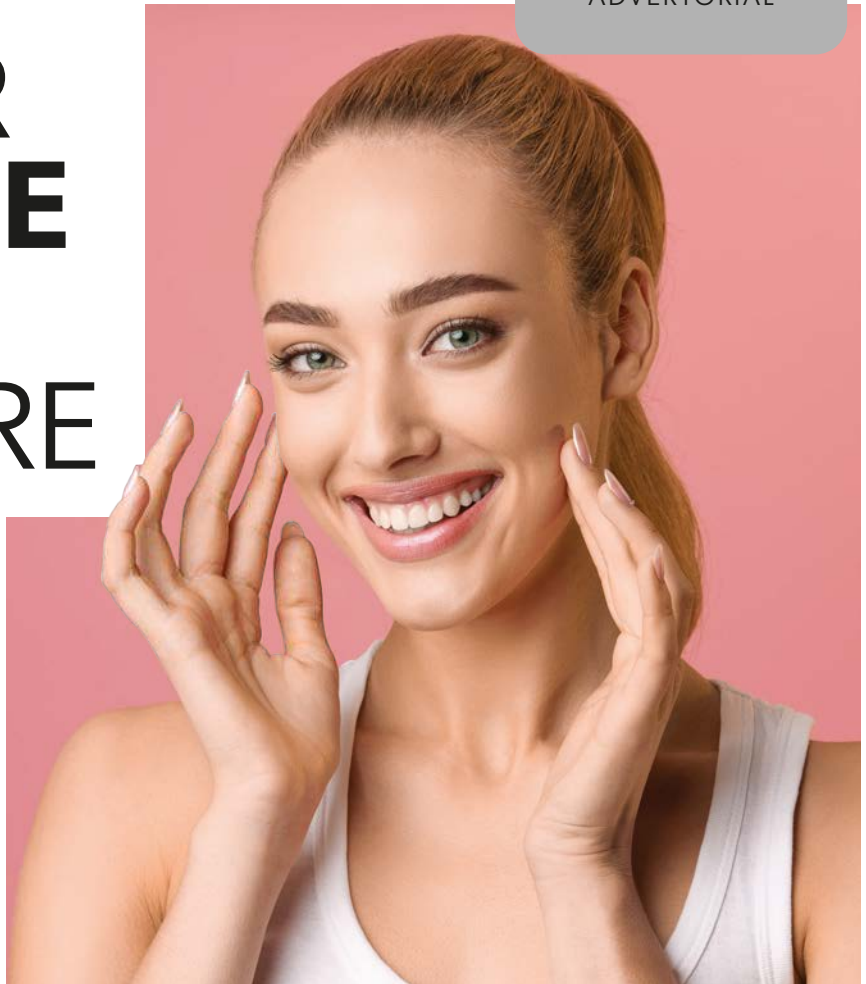
It's the skincare ingredient everyone is talking about. But do you know what collagen really is, or how it works to support your body? If you're stuck wondering whether bovine or marine collagen is better or what's the difference between the two, supplement brand Bioglan is here to reveal all.

## WHAT IS COLLAGEN?

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body and is found in our bones, tendons, muscles, skin and blood. It makes up three quarters of our skin and one third of the thousands of proteins in the body.

We start losing around 1.5 percent of collagen a year in our early 20s and, as we age, our body's natural ability to produce collagen begins to slow, meaning these collagen structures begin to break down.

As a result, this is when we start to see the first visible signs of ageing – our skin loses some of its natural elasticity, hydration, firmness and radiance.



## BOOST YOUR LEVELS

The good news is that you can give your body a helping hand in its production of collagen with supplementation. Different types of collagen have different roles in the body but for healthy hair and skin elasticity you want to boost levels of type I collagen.

Hydrolysed marine collagen is sourced from fish and can be supplemented to increase your levels of type I collagen in your body. Marine collagen also has a higher bio-availability, so is better absorbed in the body than other types of collagen supplement, such as bovine.

## BIOGLAN BEAUTY COLLAGEN

The Bioglan Beauty Collagen range harnesses the power of marine collagen with a blend of carefully selected vitamins and minerals to support healthy hair, firmer skin and stronger nails. It comes in four different formats to suit your lifestyle.

### Bioglan Beauty Collagen Powder

Bioglan's best-selling beauty collagen powder is a high-strength supplement with five grams of collagen per serve, specially formulated with readily absorbed collagen and hyaluronic acid to maintain healthy looking hair, skin and nails. With no taste, strong smell or flavour, it can be added to recipes, smoothies or drinks.

### Bioglan Beauty Collagen Tablets

Bioglan Beauty Collagen tablets are a collagen boosting tablet, containing type I collagen with added hyaluronic acid and resveratrol to help support the maintenance of healthy-looking hair, skin and nails.

### Bioglan Beauty Collagen Effervescent

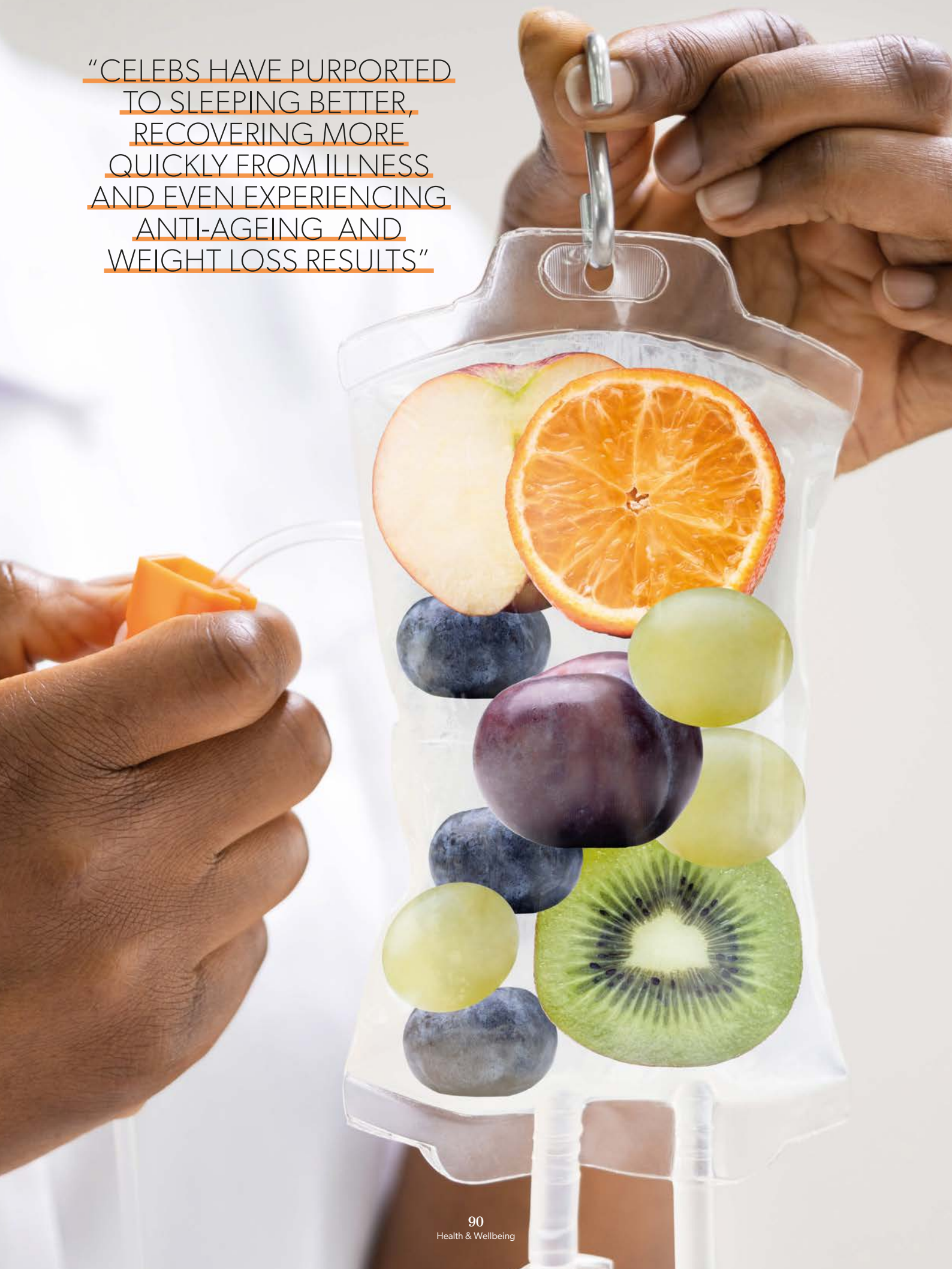
A delicious berry-flavoured collagen boosting drink, each serving of Bioglan Beauty Collagen Effervescent contains 1,000mg of marine collagen plus essential vitamins and minerals such as biotin, vitamin C and selenium, all to help maintain healthy-looking hair, skin and nails. Simply add it to water for a hydrating collagen drink.

### Bioglan Beauty Collagen Gummies

Bioglan Collagen Gummies are a simple solution to getting your daily collagen dose in delicious strawberry-flavoured gummies. With 1,000mg of marine collagen in each serving with additional biotin, vitamin C and selenium, these gummies are the tastiest on-the-go collagen top-up.

Bioglan Beauty Collagen is available online at Boots, Amazon and Look Fantastic or in-store at Holland & Barrett and Asda.

“CELEBS HAVE PURPORTED  
TO SLEEPING BETTER,  
RECOVERING MORE  
QUICKLY FROM ILLNESS  
AND EVEN EXPERIENCING  
ANTI-AGEING AND  
WEIGHT LOSS RESULTS”



# DRIP-FED

## *wellbeing*

Vitamin IV drips are all the rage among the Hollywood elite, but would you consider hooking yourself up? Read on to find out more...

**U**ntil recently, being hooked up to an IV drip was the mainstay for hospitals and emergencies, but now celebs such as Madonna, Rihanna and Chrissy Teigen are hooking themselves up to vitamin IV drips for the ultimate wellbeing boost, and the trend shows no sign of slowing down. If this is all new to you, a vitamin IV drip is essentially a bag of high-dose vitamins, minerals and fluids which are delivered via a small tube that's inserted into your vein. The idea is that the IV drip ensures a speedy delivery, giving you an almost instantaneous dose of wellbeing.

Celebs have purported to sleeping better, recovering more quickly from illness and even experiencing anti-ageing and weight loss results, however how safe is it really? And do the benefits outweigh the risks?

According to Dr Nawaz from the Beverley Hills Wellness and Aesthetic Clinic ([bhwa.com](http://bhwa.com)) vitamin drips are the fastest way possible to get essential nutrients into your body. "They can help treat certain conditions and promote better cardiovascular health," he says. "They are an effective and efficient way to get immune-boosting antioxidants and provide the body with natural energy."

### SUPER ABSORPTION

The IV method of delivery means you get more bang for your buck when it comes to absorption, too. "When taking nutrients via food or drink, a high proportion can be lost through digestion or excretion but by taking them on board intravenously, nothing is lost," says Dr Joshua Berkowitz, founder and medical director of IVBOOST ([ivboost.uk](http://ivboost.uk)). Not only that, but "A skilled practitioner can design a bespoke drip to meet the

individual's exact needs, fine-tuning the contents to suit them personally."

Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? Well, what about the risks? Surely there's a good reason drips were confined to hospitals. According to cosmetic doctor, Dr Sophie Shoter ([illuminateskinclinic.co.uk](http://illuminateskinclinic.co.uk)) some micronutrients can be toxic if taken excessively. "This includes all fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D, E and K," she says. "Supplements such as magnesium can also cause problems when taken in excess, and most worryingly of these are cardiac (heart) abnormalities. The key thing here is to be targeted in your supplementation. Consider expert advice, have some blood tests done, take supplements which mitigate any lifestyle issues, health problems or concerns you have. But don't just supplement blindly."

So, with average costs from £85 to well into the hundreds, does our body need a drip for wellbeing?

"Yes and no," says Dr Berkowitz, "If you're already in perfectly good health, the need for a drip is less than for someone who is not in good health. It all depends on your starting point: the further away you are from

ideal health, the more the answer is 'yes' and the closer you are to ideal health, the answer is optional."

Still fancy giving it a go? There are few things to consider before taking the leap.

In addition to pregnant or breastfeeding women, "If you have kidney disease or heart conditions then vitamin drips are not suitable," warns Dr Nerwaz. "Patients with high blood pressure should manage this condition and lower their blood pressure before they can be eligible."

### EXPERTS KNOW BEST

As IV infusions become a more popular wellbeing procedure, there's an innate temptation to start dictating the contents of the infusions, but Dr Berkowitz warns against this. "People should not start to choose or dictate the contents of the infusions even if they believe they are well informed," he says. "Patients should remain patients and allow their medical professionals to advise them. Infusions are an invasive medical intervention and are not risk-free. Every individual should seek trusted appropriate medical advice before receiving any infusion therapy."

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

You should always seek out a CQC registered clinic who specialise in these – that is the only environment in which IV drips should now be offered. "You will know that if you visit a premises like this that they will have emergency drugs and equipment together with experienced and knowledgeable medical professionals to act in the case of emergency," adds Dr Shoter. "There are certain components of some intravenous infusions which are prescription only – such as the saline bag many IVs are given in, and Vitamin D. But that doesn't stop some rogue practitioners having a prescriber to allow them to supply

it. Whoever administers intravenous drips needs to be able to interpret a medical history and interpret information about a patient's health in order to determine that this would be safe for them to have. They also need to be able to treat anaphylaxis and cardiac arrest – true medical emergencies. A CQC registered clinic will have emergency drugs, trained medics and a defibrillator to deal with any of these problems should they arise.”

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Ultimately, putting anything directly into body and bloodstream directly carries a risk. “Care must be taken about what is in the bag, including which fluid is used, in order that all the ingredients are of the highest quality and get on with each other,” Dr Berkowitz says. “IV drips carry a risk of infection, bruising, damage to the blood vessel, fluid overload and inappropriate rate and volume of the drip: all these things need to be taken into account and adjusted to suit the individual, their particular health, nutrient deficiencies and need for IV therapy.”

So, should you give it a try? “A one off can give a quick boost to someone who needs it,” says Dr Shotter, “but really a course of drips is what is essential for improvements in health. If these are done in a targeted way they can provide dramatic and tangible improvements to health and wellbeing. They shouldn't be used as a crutch to fix all lifestyle problems and dietary deficiencies, but should be seen as an adjunct to these that can help health and positive ageing.” **HOW**

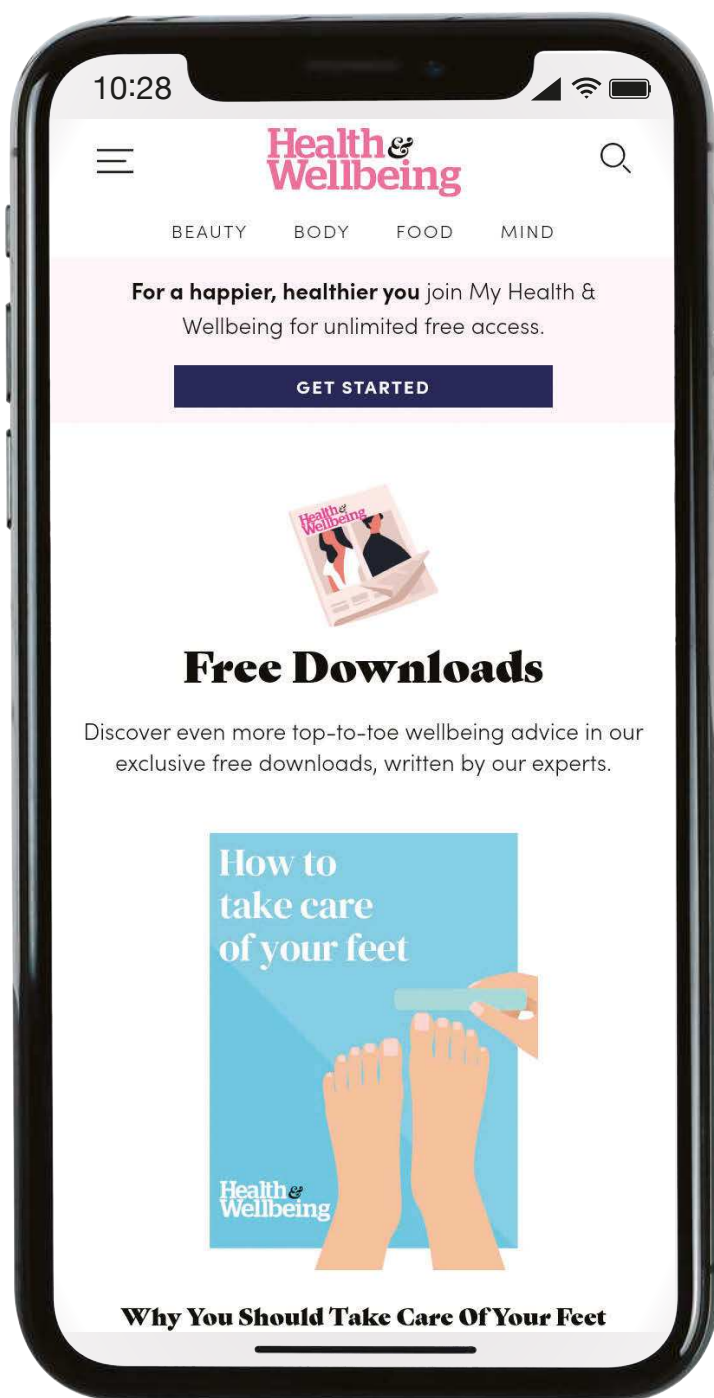
## BE SAFE

Always find an accredited practitioner and follow any guidelines provided before having an IV drip.



# Health & Wellbeing

## AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



Discover even more top-to-toe wellbeing advice in our exclusive free downloads

### YOUR GUIDE TO GOING VEGGIE

Whether you're looking to cut out or cut down on meat in your diet, this handy guidebook will help you take the first step.

### 6 EASY WAYS TO FEEL BODY CONFIDENT

It's time to let go of the idea of the 'perfect' body and start embracing all the wonderful parts of you that make you, you!

### HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR FEET

It's time to look after your tootsies for overall health and wellbeing. Plus, stretching could be key for keeping your lower body supple.

### + WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I WALK FOR 20 MINUTES A DAY?

Head to [healthwellbeing.com](https://healthwellbeing.com) and click on 'downloads' to find these printable, expert-approved guides and more! Plus, become a member, for free, to unlock all of our exclusive content, including delicious recipes, wellness tips and celeb secrets.



# Nominate to WIN!

Tell us your health and fitness heroes for a chance to win a hotel stay in Thailand or a Champneys Spa Day. Here's how to get involved...

**F**rom skincare saviours to home fitness heroes, we want to know which products, brands and names are inspiring you to live well, as we create the shortlist of the best of the best in the Health & Wellbeing Awards 2023. Following your nominations, you'll get the chance to vote to crown your winners later in the year. As a thank you for taking part, you'll be automatically entered into our draw for these incredible prizes!

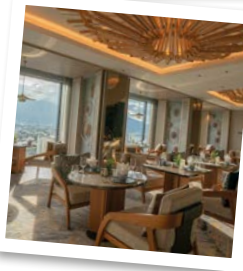
TWO PRIZES TO WIN

**1st PRIZE!**  
B&B STAY AT MELIÁ CHIANG MAI, THAILAND



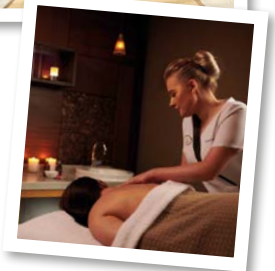
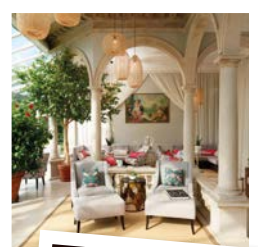
### B&B STAY AT MELIÁ CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Enjoy a four-night stay for two people at the Meliá Chiang Mai Hotel in northern Thailand. Towering over Chiang Mai's River Ping and bustling Night Bazaar in Thailand's mountainous north, Meliá Chiang Mai opened its doors in April 2022. Enjoy Meliá's signature YHI Spa, with seven treatment rooms, a fully-equipped fitness centre and swimming pool. The jewel in the crown is the 360-degree rooftop bar, Mai The Sky Bar – the highest in the city – on the 22nd floor. Mai The Sky Bar offers spectacular views of the River Ping to the city's east and famed Doi Suthep Temple on the mountaintop to the west. [melia.com/en/hotels/thailand/chiang-mai](http://melia.com/en/hotels/thailand/chiang-mai) Flights not included. T&Cs apply.



### PAMPER SPA DAY FOR TWO AT CHAMPNEYS

A Champneys spa day gives you the chance to escape the outside world and immerse yourself in total relaxation. Slip on the famous white robe and flip flops and explore everything this iconic spa has to offer. From elegant countryside surroundings and delicious cuisine, to top-of-the-range spa facilities and expert-led fitness classes. Your day also includes a 50-minute Champneys treatment by one of the expert spa therapists, to leave you feeling as good as new. With a world of relaxation at arm's length, you'll leave feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. [champneys.com](http://champneys.com) T&Cs apply.



**2nd PRIZE!**  
PAMPER SPA DAY FOR TWO AT CHAMPNEYS



### HERE'S WHAT TO DO

- 1 Head to [healthwellbeing.com/awards](http://healthwellbeing.com/awards) to vote for your favourite brands, places and people across the categories.
- 2 You'll be automatically entered to win some amazing prizes – yes, it's that simple!
- 3 We'll contact the two winners when the awards close in August 2023. Then, don't miss the winners announced in our October issue!

Make your nominations at [healthwellbeing.com/awards](http://healthwellbeing.com/awards)

# your style

## TIPS TO UPDATE YOUR LOOK

### SHOW YOUR BROWS SOME LOVE

#### STEP 1

"When doing brows at home, remember to consider what best compliments your face shape, you want to follow the natural arch of your brow at all times – especially when aiming for a 'natural' brow look," says (@sarahamelia\_fogg), celebrity make-up artist and founder of cruelty-free brand, Brows by Sarah (brows-by-sarah.com). "Always remember to keep the bulb of the brow super-soft, getting stronger towards the tail, this will result in the most natural looking brow."

#### STEP 2

"If you find that your brows are looking a bit sparse, take the time to fill in the gaps for a full and fluffy look. Use a strong clear gel that lifts, fixes and sculpts brows and a brow mascara with the colour that suits you best," Sarah says. "Try Wow Brow, £39, brows-by-sarah.com (a 3-in-1 brow product with a regrowth property that instantly adds colour to your brow hair whilst adding immediate definition with the built-in brow sculpt.) Always follow the direction your brows naturally take as you fill in any hairs."

#### STEP 3

"When using the wand or a clear gel, focus mostly on the area that needs defining the most – keep the front of the brow fluffy and not too full of product. Try Fluff It Up, £39.99, brows-by-sarah.com"

## IN OUR WASH BAGS

### Razzle Dazzle Duo-Bristle Lush Brush

Pop this miracle-worker in your handbag for a quick fix for your hair. It gently detangles while maintaining the volume and leaving your hair as smooth and desirable as ever. The Duo-Bristle technology is the perfect ratio and density of natural to soft nylon bristles. Rid your hair of tangles, boost volume and keep it glossy, £18, razzldazzl.com



## BEAUTY ON A BUDGET

Give your skin and hair a spruce up this spring for big beauty benefits

### Q+A Grapefruit Cleansing Balm, £9, qandaskin.com

Melt away make-up and soothe your skin with this blend of cocoa butter and squalane. Gentle on skin yet tough on waterproof and stubborn make-up, leaving you with a flawless glow.



### The Elements Skin Balancing Cream, £9, the-elements.co.uk

Perfect for stressed-out skin. The antioxidant formula of this skin-balancing cream helps to rejuvenate, reduce signs of hyperpigmentation, and protect your skin from environmental stressors. Gentle on sensitive skins.



★★★★★  
PREMIUM QUALITY



# Clean Ethical Skincare

## Plant based & Rich in Nutrients

FAIRTRADE ORGANICS  
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*The complete organic skincare range with all ingredients natural, organic and fairtrade from sustainable and ethical sources*



### Active Monolaurin® with Vitamin D

**Skin Rescue Treatment**

Only contains natural and organic ingredients to reduce redness, itching or inflamed skin, acne, eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis. Active Monolaurin with vitamin D helps to stop infection, deeply hydrates, and nourishes affected skin improving your skin health.



### Organic Rose Oil with Cacti Magic™

**Rejuvenate Your Skin**

Anti-ageing balm with a powerful concentration of natural antioxidants including organic rose oil, cacti magic, coenzyme Q10 and alfa-lipoic acid to preserve and replenish the skin moisture, rejuvenate the skin and combat signs of ageing.



### Organic Fresh Coconut tlc® with Vit C

**For Dehydrated Skin**

Ultra-concentrated intensive hydration balm with vitamin C leaves the skin hydrated, revitalised and protected. A deeply hydrating and nourishing balm naturally softens the look of fine lines and wrinkles leaving your skin supple and silky smooth with a healthy, radiant complexion.

For more information visit [www.tiana-organics.com](http://www.tiana-organics.com) or email [info@tiana-organics.com](mailto:info@tiana-organics.com)



# WORK IT OUT

Freshen up your workout without breaking the bank! Primark's latest collection uses recycled materials, but doesn't skimp on style

Seam-free Shorts £4.50,  
Blue Seamfree Longsleeve  
Sport Top £7

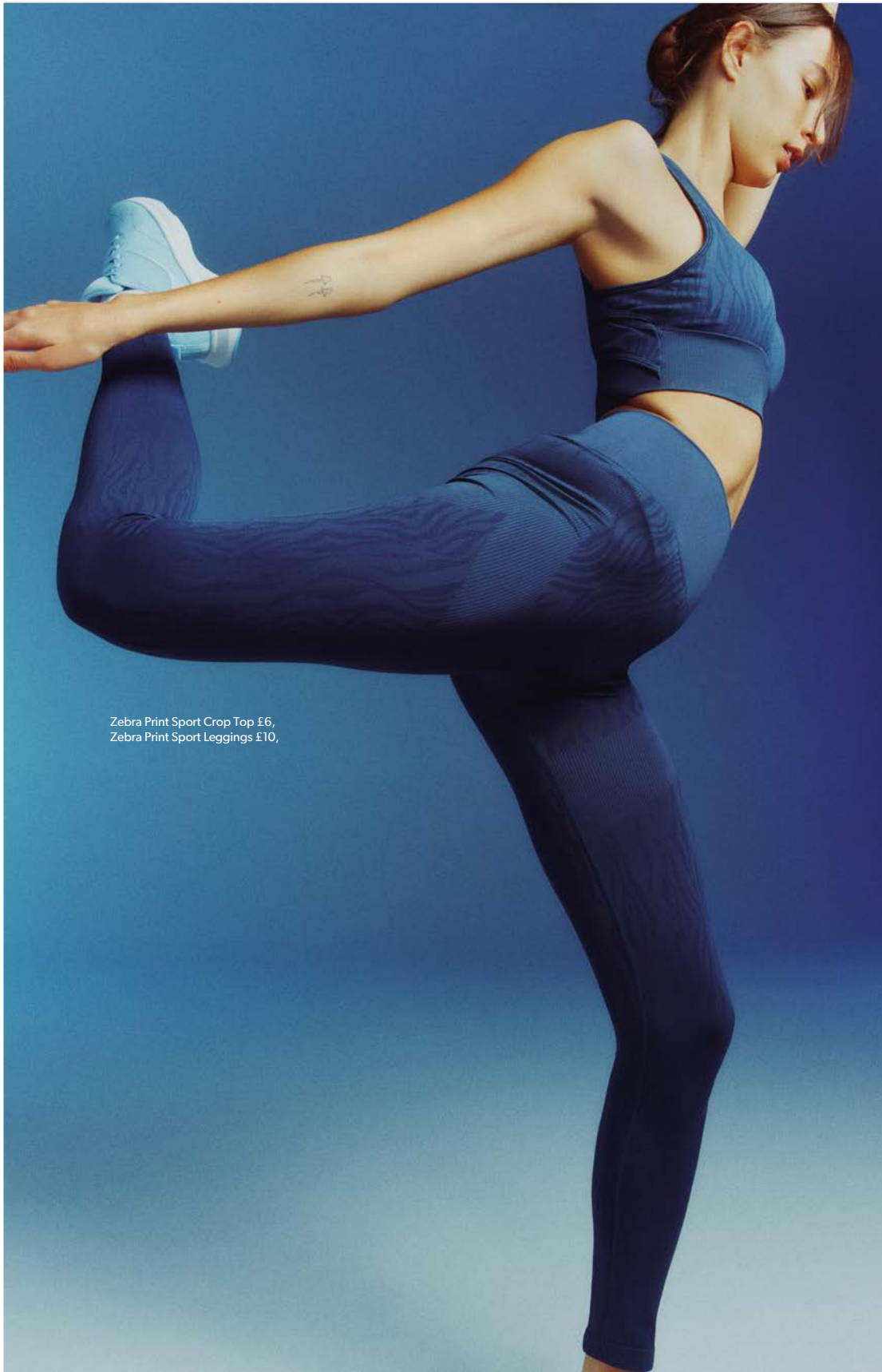




Tie Dye Sport Leggings £8,  
Tie Dye Sport Crop Top £6

Blue Sport Zip Crop £7,  
Blue Sport Leggings £11



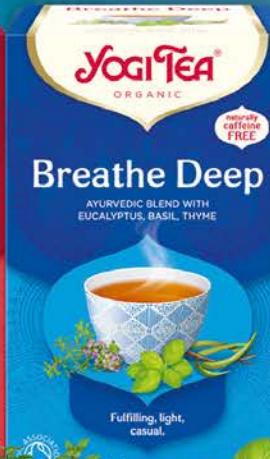
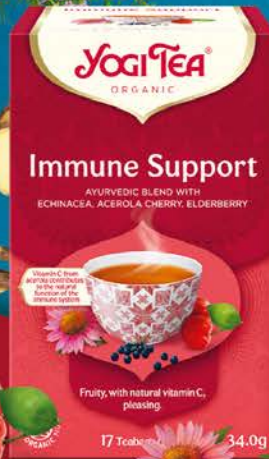


Zebra Print Sport Crop Top £6,  
Zebra Print Sport Leggings £10,

All available from Primark

# YOGI TEA®

ORGANIC



## START THE NEW YEAR WITH YOGI TEA®!

THE ORIGINAL ORGANIC & AYURVEDIC TEA BRAND FOR OVER 50 YEARS



Strength from within.  
Try our unique variety  
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a way of life.  
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Daily inspiration in  
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wisdom on each tea tag.



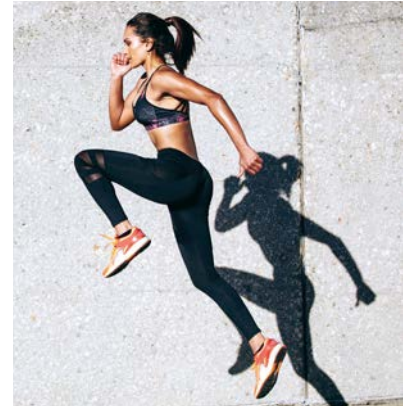
We exist to inspire.  
Support a wide variety of  
meaningful projects,  
connected to sustainability  
and human well-being, with  
each purchase.

# Stay in touch with

# Health & Wellbeing

Sign up to our free newsletter today and get a weekly digest of *Health & Wellbeing* emailed directly to you every Friday!

[healthwellbeing.com/newsletter](https://healthwellbeing.com/newsletter)



## Healthy Start

Healthy Start will bring you a selection of...

- Easy workouts and training tips from top personal trainers
- Delicious, healthy recipes and meal ideas your whole family will enjoy
- Exclusive interviews with inspiring celebrities
- Reviews for products we think you'll love
- Tips and tricks to help you rest and reset over the weekend



### Stay connected to Health & Wellbeing

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 [@healthwellbeinguk](https://pinterest.com/healthwellbeinguk)



# TRAVEL WELL

Pack your bags because holiday destinations are back on the agenda. Whether you need to press pause on a weekend staycation or tap into your inner explorer further afield, wellness travel is something you'll definitely want to get on board with.

## RESET, RETREAT, REPEAT

Looking to improve your emotional healing? A retreat could be the first step to a calmer, more positive mindset. We reveal our five favourites... >

WORDS | *Kayleigh Rattle*





**DON'T MISS...**  
 ...nature on your doorstep,  
 including monkeys, toucans,  
 birds and butterflies.

lotusloveyoga.co.uk

## RESET WITH YOGA IN COSTA RICA

Set within acres of rainforest, and boasting views of the Caribbean Sea from its mountain-top location, Samasati is the ideal setting to reset and recharge with yoga. During your six-day stay, you'll sleep in wooden guest houses known as casitas, complete with hammocks and tropical gardens, and offering views of the mountains and sea. Your days will kickstart with Vinyasa and Dharma yoga, while in the afternoons, you'll unwind with Yin yoga and meditation practice. Love the sound of Samasati's surroundings? You'll have the chance to get involved with guided forest and waterfall treks, forest bathing and wildlife watching, as well paddleboarding on the beach and cacao ceremonies. In terms of sustenance, food is served with a side of breath-taking views. Expect freshly-baked breads, locally-inspired cuisine and desserts made with local cacao. Yum! Find out more at [lotusloveyoga.co.uk](http://lotusloveyoga.co.uk)



Given the frenetic pace of modern life, the cost-of-living crisis and endless demands on our time, it's no wonder many of us will be feeling somewhat emotionally fraught and exhausted and, as such, committed to improving our mental wellbeing.

While some of us may opt to introduce incremental changes to improve our mental health, whether that's decreasing screen time to adding a daily walk into our routines, others may look to reset and recharge completely by removing themselves from the stresses and strains of daily life – and retreats can provide a welcome refuge for this deep healing.

From sleep consultations programmes to mindfulness bootcamps, we've rounded up some of the top retreats across the world that focus on nurturing the mind, body and soul, so all you need to do is press 'book'. Simple!



The Now Project

**DON'T MISS...**  
 ...evening gong and sound  
 baths - they're the perfect  
 way to find inner peace.

## CALM YOUR MIND IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Not all retreats require you to hop on a plane. If you're hoping to relax closer to home, check out The Now Project, which offers weekend mindfulness and meditation retreats for anyone aged 18-90 in the heart of Buckinghamshire. Set within a converted stables nestled amongst picturesque countryside and woodland, the retreats focus on creating a sustained state of mindfulness for the duration of the weekend, with the Friday evening kicking off with home-cooked vegetarian food followed by yoga nidra, a gong bath and games around a campfire. Suitable for mindfulness beginners as well as regular practitioners, the weekend comprises a number of exercises and practices including qi gong, mindfulness walks and emotional clearing meditations. Search [lovelifelivenow.com](http://lovelifelivenow.com) for more information on its upcoming retreats.



**DON'T MISS...**

...the chance to explore the nearby mediaeval Portuguese villages of Linhares and Piodão.

**RECOVER FROM BURNOUT IN PORTUGAL**

Sun, sea, sand and self-care; if you're looking for a mental and physical reset, it really doesn't get better than New Life Portugal. Set within the striking Serra Da Estrela mountain range, this wellness centre combines meditation, yoga, counselling, coaching, fitness and nature. Ideal for those suffering with stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, grief, loneliness or compulsive behaviours, the retreat aims to fuel personal growth and self-development, whether that's through a 28-night, 14-night or seven-night option. The retreats make the most of the unique setting, with a choice of activities that explore the breath-taking surroundings including mindful walks, forest bathing, swimming, kayaking and birdwatching. Accommodation is light, bright, modern and airy – and boasts sensational views, while the food is local and seasonal, with plenty of homemade fare. Guests are limited to 49 people a week, which gives your stay a close, community feel. New Life also offers a retreat in Thailand, if you're looking to venture further afield, too. Visit [newlifeportugal.com](http://newlifeportugal.com) for more information.

[newlifeportugal.com](http://newlifeportugal.com)

**IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP IN IBIZA**

We all know the importance of a good night's sleep, yet it can be one of the first things to fly out of the window if we're stressed, anxious or depressed. Thankfully, Six Senses Ibiza has created a selection of three-night, five-night and seven-night programmes that concentrate specifically on helping us to nod off.

Located to the north of this gorgeous Balearic Island, just 35 minutes from the airport, this retreat comprises a combination of yoga nidra, meditation, relaxing treatments, wellness therapies, low intensity training and advice from an in-house sleep doctor. On top of helping to strengthen your immune system in stunning surroundings, you'll also benefit from having your sleeping patterns tracked and analysed, as well as experiencing lauded wellness techniques such as cryotherapy. Head to [sixsenses.com](http://sixsenses.com) to find out more.

Six Senses Ibiza

**DON'T MISS...**

...the seafront yoga deck for the ultimate zen spot.



Emotional Healing Retreats

**DON'T MISS...**

...the chance to switch off in incredible surroundings.

**NURTURE YOUR EMOTIONS IN NEW MEXICO**

Emotional Healing Retreats, based just outside of downtown Santa Fe, offers a combination of sound meditation, inner child work, shadow work, energy release exercises and yoga to help you heal and process emotions old or new. There are a range of retreats in different locations to choose from, including a private emotional healing retreat in New Mexico, which combines meditation, hypnotherapy, equine therapy and breathwork. As well as the personal retreats in Santa Fe, small group healing retreats take place across America, offering the chance to build connections with yourself as well as others. Led by husband-and-wife team Jana and Lance, the retreats provide a nurturing place for guests to heal. If you choose to head to Santa Fe, the Healing Barn is a wonderfully cosy and calm place to sleep and unwind. You won't want to miss the sunsets and sunrises, and there's an outdoor bath where you can enjoy both. Discover more at [emotionalhealingretreat.com](http://emotionalhealingretreat.com)

# Support your body's *defence*

## Floradix® Immune Support



- Contains vitamins and minerals to support the normal function of the immune system; D, C, B12, B6, selenium and zinc.
- Based on a herbal extract from plants and Echinacea.
- Contains fruit concentrates for a great taste.
- Free from alcohol, preservatives, colourings and artificial flavourings.
- Free from gluten and lactose.
- Suitable for vegetarians & vegans.

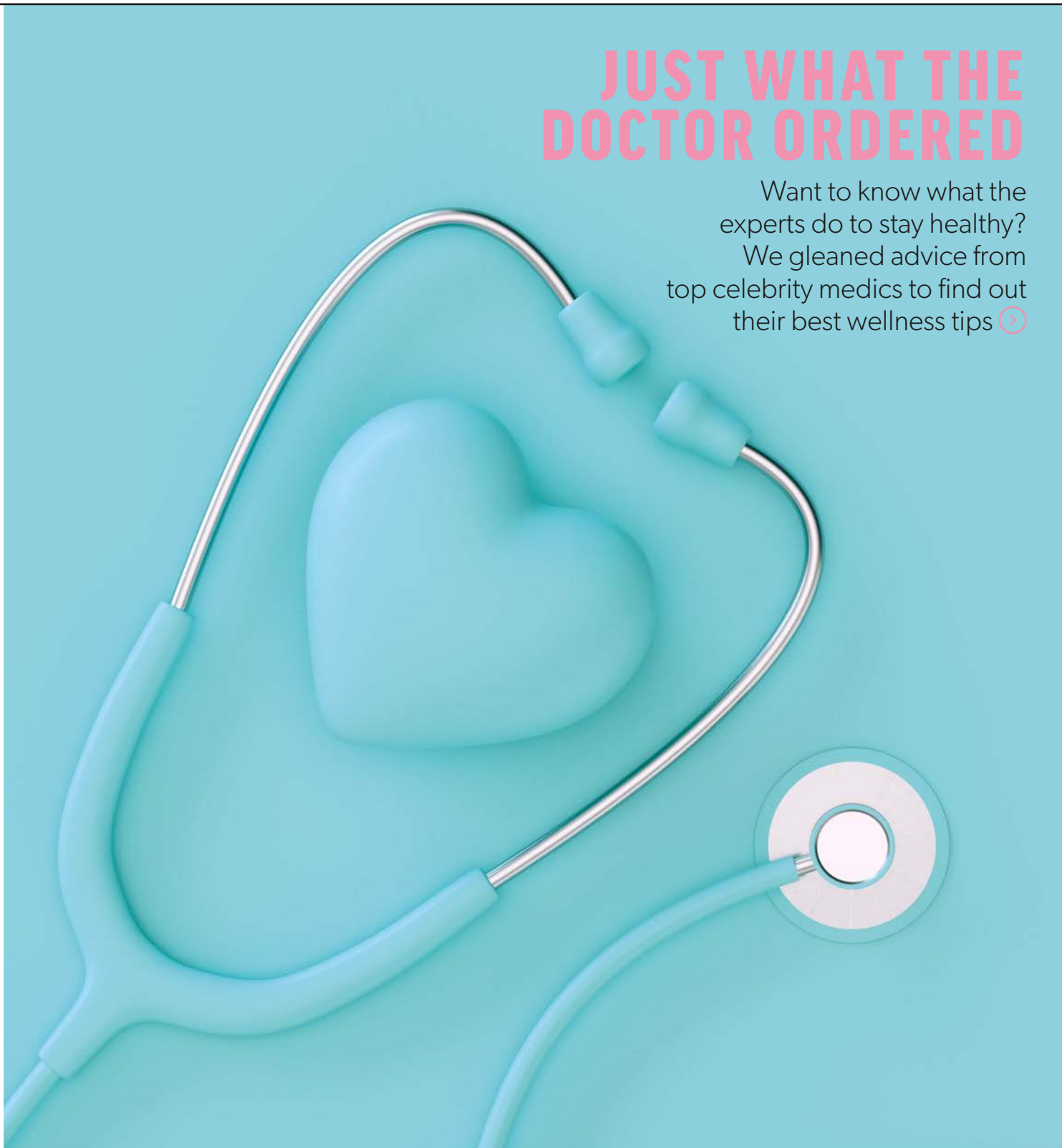
# FEEL WELL

From hormones to heart health, we've rounded up the best expert advice you and your family need to stay in top health this month

## JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

Want to know what the experts do to stay healthy?

We gleaned advice from top celebrity medics to find out their best wellness tips [▶](#)





## DR ZOE WILLIAMS

### “A MAJOR ELEMENT OF WELLBEING IS YOUR BEDTIME”

**NHS GP and resident medic on ITV's *This Morning*, Dr Zoe Williams, explains how the immune system works and why prioritising your sleep is vital:**

“The immune system is incredibly complex and has many components, and the initial response usually reacts pretty fast to try to fight off infection. However, when it doesn't, you can get ill. Usually when you experience symptoms like a fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat – the symptoms are actually due to the immune response, which is trying to get rid of the invading agents.

As great as it would be to develop a silver bullet immunity aid – the reality is there are no quick fixes. Some people

live life with compromised immune systems because of underlying health conditions, or the medicines they need. However, for many of us, there are things we can do to help protect ourselves.

A major element of wellbeing is your bedtime. The stress of our daily lives can mean we might experience prolonged periods of poor sleep, and this can impact our immune systems making us less able to fend off bugs. There's a reason why we take to our beds when we get poorly. When we sleep, researchers say our immune system ramps up to combat the inflammation associated with fighting off infection. Sleep could even impact our immune system's 'memory' when it comes to recognising and reacting to antigens.”

## DR RANJ SINGH

### “DO THINGS THAT ARE FUN, SOCIABLE AND PHYSICAL”

**Dr Ranj Singh, NHS paediatrician, BAFTA-award-winning TV presenter and bestselling author tells us to look after our physical and mental wellbeing through activity as well as rest. He says:**

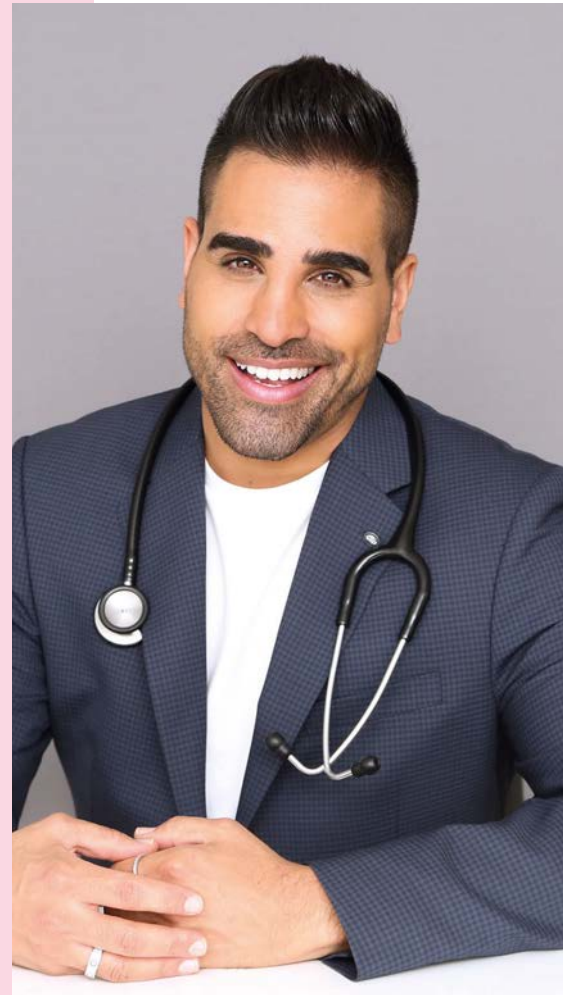
“It's an old saying but a healthy mind really does equal a healthy body. We all need to concentrate on both our physical and mental health to really look after ourselves. Whether that's ensuring we don't indulge in too many sweet treats, making sure we get enough sleep, or that we get out and enjoy some fresh air, we must take time as individuals to make sure we can be the very best of ourselves.

Life is always busy but I really do make an effort to make sure that I have a little time to unwind at the end of every workday. I love being sociable so meeting up with friends is really important to me. I love a good dance, so either doing that

socially, or as part of a class is a great way for me to have fun (and get some exercise in!). Taking breaks now and again to help you recover, reflect and refocus is also really important, so I make sure I make space in the diary for that.

There are three fundamental things we should all be doing to help our brains and bodies: eat, sleep and play. Firstly, think about how you are fueling yourself. Having a varied, balanced and nutritious diet is always going to help. Secondly, try to get good quality sleep. This is essential for both our physical and our mental health (and for our brains especially). Finally, move more and be social. Do things that are fun, sociable and physical. Not only will your body thank you, but your mind will love it too!”

Connect with Dr Ranj @dranj. *Brain Power – A Toolkit to Understand and Train Your Unique Brain* by Dr Ranj Singh (£9.99, Hachette Children's Group) is out now.



*“There are three fundamental things we should all be doing to help our brains and bodies: eat, sleep and play”*

**DR RANGAN  
CHATTERJEE**

## “SPEND FIVE MINUTES RECONNECTING WITH NATURE”

**Trained medical doctor, star of the hit BBC One Series, *Doctor In The House*, podcaster and author, Dr Rangan Chatterjee, takes a holistic approach to health:**

“As humans, we intuitively know how to relax in nature. No one feels stressed on the beach, or looking out at a sunset, or walking in a park with your kids. We generally know we feel better when we’re surrounded by greenery or breathing in fresh air.

I believe that nature is the antidote to the modern world; technology, computers, TV – they all force you to look inward, but nature is expansive and I think that’s something that’s really missing from our busy lives.

There are many different studies showing the physical, psychological and emotional benefits of being in nature, but one of the most interesting results from the research is to do with something called fractal. Fractals are a geometric shape that you only get in nature – like trees, rivers and mountains. They appear in things such as snowflakes and raindrops, so you’ll never find them in anything man made. What happens to the human mind when looking at a fractal? The levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, go down. The University of Brighton looked at this in more detail and asked what happens if you can’t get out in nature – can just looking at a picture of trees have the same affect? The results? Your stress levels still reduce, but not to the same degree.

We as humans are hardwired to thrive in natural environments. That’s why technology companies like Apple and Microsoft always have images of nature as a screensaver option – because it literally reduces our stress levels.

*“Nature is scientifically proven to be a tremendous medicine”*



Nature is scientifically proven to be a tremendous medicine. We can actually move more exercising al fresco than we can when we’re in the gym. What’s more, our perception of how hard an exercise is, is reduced when we’re in nature. I ask my patients: ‘Can you get a daily dose of nature?’ Even if it’s just five minutes. If you’re able to get out for a walk on your lunch break, you will return to work with your stress levels lowered, but you will also come back more productive. The wonderful thing about nature is that it’s a completely free tool and accessible to many of us.

So, try to get just five minutes of nature into your day. Whether that’s sitting in your garden with a cup of tea, staring at the sky or listening to the birds singing – it doesn’t matter – I just ask that you to try it for seven days and see how you feel. You don’t need longer than five minutes – this is enough to make a difference and start feeling better. It’s trying to get the balance between ease and effectiveness and five minutes seems to be the sweet spot for most of us.”

For more quick and easy wellness tips head to [drchatterjee.com](http://drchatterjee.com) or read *Feel Better in 5* (Penguin Life, £16.99).

DR RUPY AUJLA

“GET EXCITED ABOUT FOOD AND EAT WELL”



Passionate about the medicinal effects of eating well, NHS medical doctor, author and host of *Doctor's Kitchen* podcast, Dr Rupy Aujla, has made regular appearances on television shows across the BBC, ITV and alongside Prue Leith in Channel 4's *Cook Clever, Waste Less*. He says:

“I want food to be flavourful, every single day. It's that intersection of flavour and functional benefits that I want to infuse into any recipe I create. When I speak to patients, I work hard to get them excited about food, and I apply that to the recipes you find in *Cooks* (£22, Ebury Press) [Dr Rupy's latest book]. I want that marriage of flavour and functionality. If food doesn't taste good and it's not easy to prepare, no matter how strong your willpower, you won't keep eating it. And the aim of the game is to get people eating well every day, for life.”

You can find Dr Rupy on Instagram and Twitter [@doctors\\_kitchen](#), on Facebook and YouTube at The Doctor's Kitchen and his website [thedoctorskitchen.com](#)

DR MEGAN ROSSI

“NOURISH YOUR GUT WITH SIMPLE LIFESTYLE STRATEGIES”

The Gut Health Doctor, aka Dr Megan Rossi (PhD BHSc RD APD) highlights the importance of a healthy gut for all-round wellbeing:

“The importance of our gut health goes well beyond just our digestion; it can impact our mental health too. There's no escaping the link between our gut and our brain, and with one in four of us experiencing a mental health concern every year, our gut health really is something everyone should be taking into consideration.

Our gut and our brain are in constant, two-way communication, which is referred to as the gut-brain axis. The science behind this connection (particularly how our gut microbes are involved) is relatively new, but the 'gut feeling' phenomenon is something we've all experienced. In fact, long before science connected the two, we were using gut functions to describe our feelings and emotions: 'I've got butterflies in my stomach'; 'You don't have the guts for it'; 'I can't stomach that behaviour'. Now, we even consider IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) a disorder of the gut-brain axis, where the communication between the two is out of whack and results in an overly-sensitive gut.

The latest evidence suggests that tapping into our gut-brain axis could play a pivotal role in our mental health, as research has found people suffering with depression have slightly different gut microbes to those without. The exciting news: trials have shown that by influencing our GM (gut microbiota, the trillions of microbes living in our guts) with simple diet strategies, we can help manage mental health conditions such as depression (alongside medication and therapy, as needed). What's more, by nourishing our GM with simple diet and lifestyle strategies, we may even be able to prevent some cases of depression and anxiety.

So, what can you do to support your mental health through your gut health? There are several strategies you can try straight away and small changes can make a big difference, as I often see with my patients.

Check-in on your happiness levels. Asking yourself how happy you are is such an important question, but one that too few of us take time to consider. In my book *Eat Yourself Healthy*, I share a simple validated questionnaire so you can take a look at your happiness score and explore how gut health nutrition targets can help.



Megan is co-founder of Bio&Me. Check out the range of gut-loving prebiotic granolas, porridges, mueslis and yoghurts at [bioandme.co.uk](#)

Eat a high-fibre diverse diet with a variety of plant-based foods. Try to aim for 30 plant points a week. That's 30 different types of plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, nuts and seeds, herbs and spices. One of my favourite studies (the SMILES trial) showed that a Mediterranean diet, which is very high in fibre and extra virgin olive oil, can be effective in improving depression levels.

Take a break. Many of us find ourselves constantly on the go, but our brains and bodies aren't made to be like this; they become fatigued and this raises stress levels, decreases resilience and impacts our GM. Rest is just as important as activity for our physical, mental and gut health.

De-stress with mindfulness and breathing exercises. Try doing just 15 minutes a day of meditation, or using a mindfulness app, which can make a significant difference. The benefits may not be instant, but studies show a difference in 12 weeks.”

Dr Megan Rossi is a research Fellow at King's College London and author of *Eat Yourself Healthy* (Penguin Life, £16.99). Connect with Megan at [theguthealthdoctor.com](#) or [@theguthealthdoctor](#)

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# H&W SYMPTOM CHECKER

Boost your circulation and improve your overall health with a few simple lifestyle changes

WORDS | *Stacey Carter*



**Y**ou might not realise it, but our circulation (a.k.a our blood flow) plays a huge role in keeping our body in tip-top condition. From maintaining brain health to making sure that we recover properly from intensive workouts, our circulation makes a huge difference in how we feel throughout the day. Luckily, there are a number of different ways we can improve our circulation, from exercising regularly to eating a diet rich in antioxidants and allicin – read on to find out how.

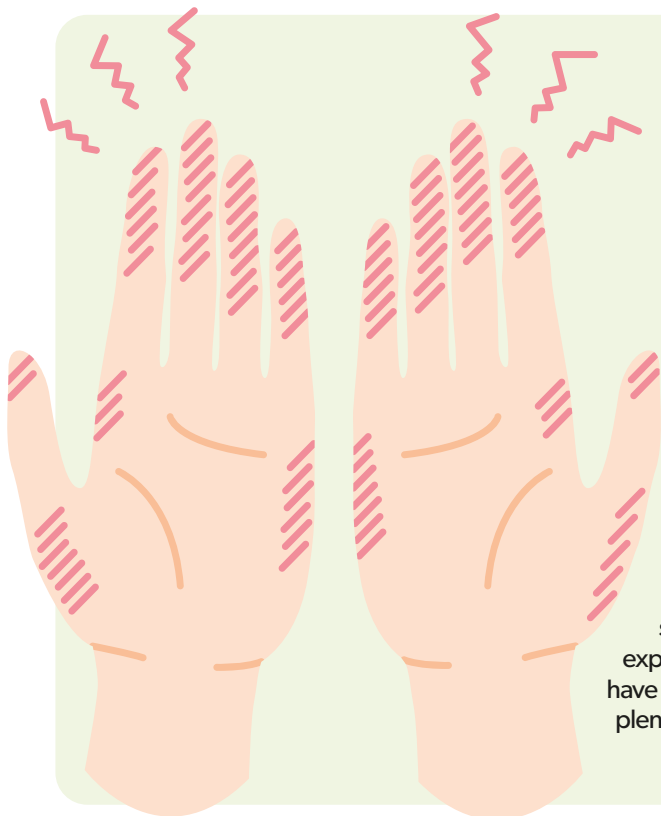
## BETTER BLOOD FLOW

We know that our heart works to pump blood around the body, but how much do you know about your blood flow? “The circulation is made up of the heart and blood vessels which together are known as the cardiovascular system,” says Dr Sarah Brewer ([drsarahbrewer.com](http://drsarahbrewer.com)).


“Arteries carry blood away from the heart and have thick, elastic walls that carry pulsating blood under high pressure. Large arteries branch and divide into a series of smaller arterioles that are less elastic and provide more resistance to blood flow; it is this resistance – against which your heart has to pump – that helps to maintain the blood pressure within your circulation.” Having a healthy blood flow around your body means that oxygen, glucose and other essential nutrients can reach the essential parts of your cognitive and physical health.

## WHAT ARE CHILBLAINS?

Chilblains (perniosis) are itchy, purple areas of inflammation that appear on fingers, toes and even the ears, a day or two after prolonged exposure to cold, damp conditions. “Low temperatures cause blood vessels to go into spasm, reducing blood flow and triggering inflammation, possibly through lack of oxygen and nutrients, although the exact mechanism is not well understood,” says Dr Brewer. “Symptoms typically start in early winter and vanish in spring. A tendency towards chilblains can run in families, with one study from The Netherlands suggesting that if you have a relative who experiences chilblains, you are more likely to develop chilblains than if you have no affected relatives.” To prevent chilblains, stopping smoking, eating plenty of oily fish like salmon, sardines, herrings and mackerel, and taking garlic tablets can all help to increase blood circulation.







## DOES POOR CIRCULATION CAUSE MUSCLE CRAMPS?

“Poor circulation can trigger a painful, excessive contraction of a muscle by decreasing the oxygen supply and interfering with the flushing away of lactic acids and other waste chemicals,” says Dr Brewer. “In older people, this may be associated with hardening and furring up of arteries in the legs. Calcium and magnesium are needed for normal muscle contraction and relaxation, so increasing dietary intakes of calcium (low-fat milk, cheese, yoghurt and other dairy products, and dark green leafy vegetables) and magnesium (nuts, seafood, dairy products and wholegrains) can help, as well as drinking plenty of fluids to maintain hydration. Coenzyme Q10 is needed for energy production in muscle cells, but its production reduces with age, so taking a ubiquinol coenzyme Q10 supplement helps to improve oxygen processing when circulation is poor.”

### THE LINKS BETWEEN POOR CIRCULATION AND VARICOSE VEINS

Varicose veins are enlarged veins that are often blue or dark purple in colour. “Varicose veins form when non-return valves in the long veins of the legs give way, under the effects of gravity (sheer weight of blood they contain),” explains Dr Brewer. “This causes blood to pool in superficial veins, which become tortuous, bulging and dilated. Symptoms of varicose veins include aching and dragging sensations, swelling of the ankles and itching. Varicose eczema can also occur when poor venous blood flow causes the skin on the lower leg to become dry, scaly, flaky, itchy and discoloured. In severe cases, venous ulceration can occur. Support stockings help to keep varicose veins comfortable and other self-help measures include losing any excess weight, walking regularly and avoiding standing still for long in order to boost circulation in the legs.”

### WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO IMPROVE MY BLOOD FLOW?

The key components of healthy circulation are regular exercise, a good healthy diet and hydration. As well as making sure that you’re getting plenty of vitamin E, C and flavonoids, regular movement is key for a healthy blood flow. A study published in the journal *Circulation*, found that a fitness habit can help blood vessels dilate, improving blood flow. Yoga, in particular, is very effective in boosting blood flow and levels of red blood cells, according to a study by the University of Mississippi. Of course, poor blood flow and circulation can be linked to certain health issues such as diabetes and Raynaud’s disease, so it’s important to stay on top of your medical issues. “Always seek medical advice if you have persistent poor circulation, cramping or pain,” adds Dr Brewer. “And, if you are on prescribed medication, always check for interactions before taking any supplements.”



IS IT NORMAL...

# TO HAVE FACIAL HAIR?

Noticed thicker, darker strands on your face? Find out what could be causing it, and what your options are for getting rid of it

## HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Women's appearances are scrutinised so often, and criticised for being too fat or too thin; this or that; not having enough hair (we're thinking about THAT Oscars comment) and having too much of it in the 'wrong' places; and so on. In medical terms, according to the NHS, hirsutism is the name given for excessive hair growth, which for women is considered as thick, dark hair on their face, as well as neck, chest, tummy, lower back, buttocks or thighs. But, remember that it's natural for us all to have some hair in these places. The reality is we all have a certain amount of hair on our faces – whether you have too much of it should really be determined by you alone. You can't please everyone (nor should you try to) so go by whatever you feel comfortable with.



## WHAT TO DO?

The NHS advise you to talk to your GP if excess hair growth is becoming a problem for you, as it could be caused by a medical condition such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), other hormonal conditions, certain medications or in rare cases, a tumour. So, it's worth getting checked out if you're worried, and likewise if the hair growth is affecting your mental health. But what's the most common reasons to find yourself sprouting more than your average peach fuzz on your face? "Sometimes this can be genetic or due to ethnicity," Dr Sohere Roked, GP, functional medicine and hormone doctor ([drsohereroked.co.uk](http://drsohereroked.co.uk)) tells us. "In terms of hormones, excessive testosterone and steroid hormones can be caused by PCOS and can cause excess facial hair."

## HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW?

If you want to get rid of the fuzz, there are a number of options. "If there is an underlying hormone imbalance such as in PCOS, treating this can reduce the facial hair. If a patient has high testosterone levels, I sometimes use a supplement called saw palmetto to try and help to balance this," says Dr Roked. "Also having the hair removed such as with laser,

waxing or hair removal creams can be of use. As someone who has suffered with excessive facial hair due to genetic factors, I found that hair removal often helps, and as our hormones change over time as we get older hair growth often reduces."

There is also a range of at-home treatments to consider, which can be very effective, just make sure you

follow the instructions carefully. If in doubt, go to the professionals who will be able to advise on the best option for you. Dermaplaning – an exfoliating and de-fuzzing treatment which involves an aesthetician gently scraping your face with a scalpel – is another choice (a game changer for some) but it can cause irritation, so do your research.

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# 7 ways TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Whether you're looking to streamline your tasks or want to free up your time, these health hacks can help

**D**espite advancements in tech designed to make our lives feel simpler (we're looking at you, Alexa), sometimes everyday tasks and chores can feel overwhelming. With work deadlines to meet, appointments to book and people to see, finding a spare moment to go on a walk, read a book or roll out your yoga mat can seem impossible at times. If this sounds like you, then our seven ways to simplify your life can help you focus on what's important to you. From reducing your routine to limiting your communication, implementing these simple life hacks can make an enormous difference in your day.

1

## GET A PLANNING SYSTEM AND STICK TO IT

Some of us prefer to organise our thoughts by putting pen to paper, while others prefer online systems. Research from professional organisers, Simply Orderly shows that the average person spends 12 days per year looking for things they can't find and that 55 percent of people think they would save anywhere from 16 to 60 minutes a day if they were more organised. It may sound basic, but writing tasks in your diary, putting dates in the calendar and making sure that others in your life have access to childcare schedules, upcoming holidays et cetera, can help simplify your life in the long run.

2

## DELEGATE

It's no secret that women shoulder the burden of emotional labour, but it's important to recognise when you need help and support. Research from The Bright Horizons report shows that nearly nine in 10 mothers in committed partnerships say they feel solely responsible for organising the family's schedules. This leaves many women feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and unable to make space for their own self-care. Sharing the management of household and family tasks is important, so if this is taking up a huge chunk of your time, leaving you unable to focus on things that truly matter to you, then it's time to have a conversation with your partner, relinquish some control and come up with more efficient solutions. By using this method, you can whittle out what's important and what you can remove from your to-do list.

3

## LIMIT YOUR OPTIONS

If you spend 20 minutes every morning trying to decide what to wear, then it's time to make the decision process feel easier. Minimising your wardrobe, for example, swapping out your winter clothes for your summer ones and making up outfits ahead of time, can all help you spend less time deciding what to wear and more time doing the things that you want to do.





4

### DOUBLE UP YOUR PORTIONS TWICE A WEEK

Sceptical? Hear us out. If you normally cook a dinner for two, then make enough to feed four – that way you'll have dinner already made for the following week (just make sure to pop it in the freezer). Do this twice a week and you'll already have two meals sorted when you're time-strapped, with minimal prep involved.

5

### IF A TASK TAKES 5 MINUTES, DO IT NOW

Unstacking the dishwasher might seem like the last thing you want to do in the morning, but if a task takes as little as five minutes to do, then it's better to get it out of the way. Putting off small chores can lead to tasks backing up and make room for pesky procrastination to take the reins, meaning you might have to spend a whole day (your weekend, most likely) catching up on those household tasks. Less is more, people!

6

### TWEAK YOUR MORNING AND EVENING ROUTINES

According to James Clear, author of the best-selling book *Atomic Habits*, evening and morning routines are great for utilising peaks and troughs in our energy. "If you take a moment to think about it, you'll probably realise that you are better at doing certain tasks at certain times," says James. "For example, my creative energy is highest in the morning, so that's when I do my writing each day. By comparison, I block out my afternoons for interviews, phone calls, and emails. I don't need my creative energy to be high for those tasks, so that's the best time for me to get them done." Thinking about what type of energy you have in the morning and evening, and what task that energy is best suited to, can help you develop more productive routines.

7

### LIMIT YOUR COMMUNICATION

With pinging WhatsApp messages, Instagram notifications and Facebook messages, it can sometimes feel like everybody wants our attention. Putting a limit on your communications so you can focus on individual tasks at a time can help you avoid distractions. For example, only look at your emails from 8am to 9am and limit social media messages to daytime hours rather than the evening. Setting a schedule and sticking to it is key here.



# Period Positivity

Find out why it's time to join the menstrual movement

WORDS | *Victoria Stokes*

**H**ow comfortable do you feel discussing your period? For even the keenest over-sharers among us, menstruation is a topic that often remains strictly off-limits. Even if you're happy to chat about cramps with your closest pals, there have undoubtedly been times in your life when you've felt embarrassed, maybe even ashamed, about having your period around others. Perhaps you always hide a tampon up your sleeve when hot-footing it to the loos at work, or you use a hushed voice anytime you need to ask a mate for a pad.

Maybe you've felt absolutely mortified upon discovering a period stain on your jeans and find yourself cringing anytime you have to discuss your monthly flow with a friend.

The good news? Times are a-changing and in recent years we've seen a (crimson) wave of period positivity.

## WORK OUTS AND SPEAKING OUT

Numerous sports stars, from Scottish middle and long-distance runner Eilish McColgan to tennis player Heather Watson and sprinter Dina Asher-Smith, have spoken candidly about how periods affect their sporting performance. It's a refreshing change to hear women talk so candidly about something we've been experiencing since the dawn of time.

Meanwhile, at Wimbledon, bosses have agreed that female players can now wear

dark-coloured underwear, forgoing the traditional white ensemble, to reduce anxiety around menstruation.

You might not be an athlete competing on the world stage, but you've likely noticed that your relationship with menstruation has changed recently as well. Not only is it less taboo to talk openly about your period, these days you can find multiple ways to care for yourself during your time of the month too.

Gone are the days of period product ads featuring blue liquid. From femtech apps that help us understand our cycles to eco-friendly period products, like menstrual cups and period pants, period care is no longer one-size-fits-all.

All of these developments are creating a more positive conversation around periods. No longer are they a bodily function shrouded in shame and secrecy, but a normal and natural part of our physiology to be shared, explored, and even celebrated.



## DON'T LET YOUR PERIOD KEEP YOU DOWN

**Triple Olympian runner, BT Sports Action Woman of the Year and Spatone ambassador, Eilish McColgan, 32, talks periods and how to keep on top form, no matter the time of the month...**

"I think it's a common misconception that athletes just don't have periods and don't deal with this issue every month – because typically no one speaks about it. But actually, it's affecting a huge number of us! It's just that in the past, everyone shied away from having this conversation. It was a taboo back in the day but conversations are far more open now and so they should be! Having these discussions gives us the best opportunity of finding better solutions for all women. More and more athletes are coming forward with their own stories, which will only help the next generation of young women.

Periods have a huge impact on my performance. I always feel really heavy legged and flat a few days before my period. I suffer from bad stomach cramps, a sore back and being bloated. The stomach cramps are the most debilitating and often I have to take painkillers and sleep it off. Mentally I also just feel drained and more anxious. It's definitely a challenge when my period lands around a big competition!

I keep a training diary and write down my cycle, so that I can track it and see similarities from month to month. It gives me a better understanding of my body and what to expect around specific days. I find that removing strength work around my period gives my legs a chance of being a bit less heavy on race day. I also focus on getting some good food into me – eating whenever I'm hungry. Spatone is always my go-to to support my energy levels – it's nice to be reassured that I'm keeping my iron levels topped up during that time of the month."

## BREAKING THE STIGMA

One woman leading up that change is Afsaneh Parvizi-Wayne, founder of Freda Health, a company that provides natural and organic period care products ([myfreda.com](http://myfreda.com)). "Taboo and stigma equal unmet needs, and if you can't talk about periods, there will always be an invisible barrier to true gender equality and opportunity," she says. "The veil of shame and embarrassment around periods stops girls from attending school and participating in sports, and more importantly, often means putting up with heavy and painful periods."

Afsaneh believes brands like Freda have dragged periods into the 21st century. Changing the language we use when discussing periods, is one of the first changes she implemented. "Modern packaging and positive language make a big difference," she enthuses. "I ditched the words 'sanitary products' or 'feminine hygiene' as it made periods sound unsanitary and unhygienic. If we can have hair care, dental care, and skin care, we can very well have period care!"





Influencers have played a part in showcasing – and normalising – the realities of periods too. Take Steph Gongora, for example, a yoga instructor who uploaded a video of herself training in white leggings stained with period blood. Her video was a reminder that leaks happen. It's inconvenient, it's messy, but it's not the end of the world.

Even period artistry has emerged as a trend. Jasmine Amelia Carter (@jasminaliacarter) is a 'period artist' who has amassed over 25,000 followers on Instagram by sharing the images she's painted with her period blood.

The comment sections on her profile are filled with people praising her for capturing the beauty of menstruation in a world that often labels periods as dirty and disgusting.

Whether it's charities working to eradicate period poverty, brands creating sustainable period care products, or period artists changing the narrative around menstruation, Afsaneh says there are many changemakers to look up to in this space. "Bloody Good Period, the charity we partner with, has done the most amazing job highlighting period poverty and keeping it on everyone's radar," she says.

"Meanwhile, Bloomsbury Football Club, a grassroots sports charity, were the first to give period kits to every one of their female players. Their coaches carry pads and tampons with them at all times and they run educational workshops for players, parents, and their coaches."

### PLAYING YOUR PART

There's no shortage of changemakers in the menstrual movement, but to continue to affect change, the movement needs

## "THE VEIL OF SHAME AND EMBARRASSMENT AROUND PERIODS STOPS GIRLS FROM ATTENDING SCHOOL AND PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, OFTEN MEANS PUTTING UP WITH HEAVY AND PAINFUL PERIODS"

more and more recruits. So, what can you do to further the conversation and make periods less of a taboo topic?

Afsaneh believes forgoing the aforementioned habits – hiding a tampon up your sleeve and asking for period products in hushed tones – is a great place to start. Embracing these small changes sends a powerful message to yourself and others: periods are not something that must remain hidden. It sets the tone for how younger generations will think about periods too.

Likewise, speaking plainly about your period can lessen the stigma. Try replacing those familiar idioms – Aunty Flo, that time of the month, riding the crimson wave et al – with phrases that tell it like it is. No need to dress it up; you can simply say, 'I'm on my period'.

If you're feeling brave, Afsaneh advises encouraging the institutions around you – be it your place of

work, the gym, or your child's school – to provide free period products.

"Every institution has an inclusion policy and providing free period products is the first practical step towards inclusivity," she points out. "Having period products on display in bathrooms can have a really positive impact."

When we collectively commit to changing the way we view and discuss periods, it can have a far-reaching impact. In particular, Afsaneh points out it empowers women to ask for better health care and can act as a catalyst for better research into reproductive health.

While Afsaneh believes there's still a lot of work to be done, she says much progress has already been made.

"The effect can be seen in the younger generation who are starting to feel more comfortable with their own bodies," she notes.

Next time you need to nip to the loos at work during your period with a pad, tampon, or menstrual cup in hand, you can do so with pride. **H&W**

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# health clinic

THE INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

FOR BETTER HEALTH



## PRIME POSITION

It's National Bed Month, and 18th March is also World Sleep Day – a reminder to look at your snoozing habits. Aside from all the lifestyle things you can do to support good sleep, remember the basics when it comes to your bed. Invest in the best mattress for your budget, and don't forget about pillows, which experts recommend we renew every 1-2 years. "When replacing your pillow, think about how you sleep – are you a side sleeper, stomach sleeper or do you sleep on your back?" suggests Lucinda Newbound, Senior Ergonomics Adviser for Back in Action ([backinaction.co.uk](http://backinaction.co.uk)). "Firm, contoured pillows are great for side sleepers. They support your head without putting added pressure on your neck or spine. Anything too soft will not support the natural shape of your spine as you sleep and cause distortion which can result in you waking up feeling achy."

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### *Cheese can help you sleep?*

We thought a late-night cheeseboard is said to give you bad dreams, but in fact, a bit of dairy before bed could actually help you get a decent night's kip. Despite the myths, cheese is actually good for your sleep, as dairy products contain tryptophan which helps us to nod off more easily, say experts from The Sleep Charity. But, a nightly slab of Cheddar probably isn't the healthiest. "A warm, milky drink and calming activities, such as reading or yoga, is a fantastic way to get ready for bed and ensure you're well rested," suggests deputy CEO of The Sleep Charity, Lisa Artis. See [thesleepcharity.org.uk](http://thesleepcharity.org.uk) for more tips.

### WHAT'S TRENDING THIS MONTH...

## Endometriosis awareness

*March is also endometriosis awareness month, to tackle the fact that 54 percent of Brits don't know about the condition, says the charity Endometriosis UK. For those that aren't aware, endometriosis refers to when tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows in other parts of the body, generally on organs in the pelvic cavity such as the ovaries, fallopian tubes and bowel. It can be extremely painful and impact on a woman's education, relationships, mental health, and quality of life. Shockingly, the condition affects 1.5 million British women – that's similar to the number of people affected by diabetes or asthma. Find out more at [endometriosis-uk.org](http://endometriosis-uk.org)*



## HEALTH HEROES THE LATEST TRENDS TO KEEP YOU WELL THIS MONTH



**F&F Twist Front Tee, £12.50, [next.co.uk](http://next.co.uk)**

Treating yourself to some new kit is a good way to help keep up your motivation to work out. If you want to freshen up your activewear look without breaking the bank, F&F has a stylish new range out.



**Sambucol Immuno Forte Liquid, 120ml, £10.39, [boots.com](http://boots.com)**

This supplement is packed with antioxidants, vitamin C and zinc supports your immune system to help guard against viruses, and can effectively help you get better quicker if you do catch one.



**Dr Bronner's Organic Peppermint Hand Hygiene Spray, £5.49, [drbronner.co.uk](http://drbronner.co.uk)**

We all know that hand hygiene prevents illness and infection, but many on-the-go sanitisers smell bad and dry out your hands. Not this one! Highly recommended.



**Dramatically Different Moisturising Lotion+, £35 for 125ml, [clinique.co.uk](http://clinique.co.uk)**

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# MOVE TO SLEEP

Would you consider limbering up for a set of star-jumps before hitting the hay? No? How about a jog around the block? If exercising before bed seems counterintuitive, we're here to help change your mindset... (v)





**W**hile many of us struggle to sleep, the cost-of-living crisis seems to have made our sleeping habits worse. A recent study by Sun Life showed that two-in-five adults (that's 41 percent of us) are struggling to sleep at night due to worrying about money, and those aged 50 plus are worrying the most. But regular exercise can actually have huge benefits on your sleeping habits. Not only that, but light-to-moderate exercise before bed can increase sleep quality by reducing sleep onset (the time it takes to fall asleep) and decreasing the amount of time you wake up during the night. The best news? It doesn't have to cost the earth.

Read on for five cost-effective light exercises that may help you to fall asleep easier from the sleep experts at Bed Kingdom ([bedkingdom.co.uk](http://bedkingdom.co.uk))

## 1. YOGA

Yoga is a gentle, effective way to wind down after a busy day, and practising yoga at night can help you relax before you go to bed so you can sleep better. Yoga can help you practise slow, controlled breathing which stimulates your vagus nerve. This nerve affects your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), which controls your body's rest function, making it easier to switch off. Yoga can also lower your heart rate and improve digestion as well, all qualities for a good night's sleep.

Plus, you don't need to break the bank to practise yoga. All you need is a yoga mat and a clear space in your home, preferably not in your bedroom. You can also find videos to follow on YouTube. Practise for 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime to see improvements in your sleep.

## 2. WALKING

With the cold, dark winter nights creeping up on us, it's tempting to stay indoors and shut out the world. However, going for a walk in the evening can help send you off



*“Try going for a light walk for an hour or two before bed. Bring a flask of chamomile tea along”*



## ‘WALKING HAS MADE SUCH A DIFFERENCE’

**Daniella Gray,**  
Senior content writer



There aren't many of life's hitches that going for a walk won't solve. Need a surge of inspiration? Going for a stroll could give you a creative boost. Contending with some after-dinner bloating? A 15-minute amble could help ease your symptoms. Now, latest research suggests that doing some light exercise, like a walk, can lead to a better night's kip. I, too, find myself having to deal with an expanded stomach after eating (fellow vegans, you'll know what I mean). And so I've been testing this theory to not only help with my inflated tum, but to regulate my internal body clock. Granted, I don't have too much trouble falling asleep (I'm lucky, I know), but I can definitely notice the difference on my sleep quality when I haven't been for my evening walk – even if it's just a few loops around the block. When I find it hard to peel myself off the sofa, I remind myself how rested I'll feel at bedtime after my post-dinner stroll.

to sleep, plus, it's completely free. Walking can reduce stress and improve mental health, meaning it can help clear your mind of any anxieties before you head to sleep. Regular walking can also help to strengthen the immune system and prevent conditions such as high blood pressure. A healthy body means better sleep.

Try going for a light walk for an hour or two before bed. If the cold weather seems unappealing to you, bring a flask of chamomile tea along. The antioxidants will calm the mind and help you sleep better. Check out our Podcast Walk To Wellbeing for some company on your walk.

### 3. CYCLING

Many of us have a bike stuffed away in a garage that we never use. But, like walking, going for a light cycle in the evening can help improve sleep quality and is also completely free.

A light cycle can burn calories and energy, meaning your sleep won't be as disrupted throughout the night. It can also greatly improve lung health, which can help

with any respiratory problems. A quick 20-to-30-minute cycle a day is all you need to see a difference.

If you're able to, getting into an open space, away from the hustle and bustle of a city or a busy residential area can have a huge impact on your mental well-being. Just make sure to wear reflective clothing and install proper bike lights.

### 4. SWIMMING

If you're lucky enough to live near a local swimming pool, try going for a swim in the evenings to see how it can improve your sleep quality. Many swimming pools have membership deals which means the cost is reduced every month.

Swimming at night burns off leftover energy and releases feel-good endorphins that reduce stress and provide a calming effect that helps you fall asleep. Try gentle techniques like breaststroke to burn energy without overdoing it.

Aim for 30 minutes, a couple of nights a week, two-to-three hours before you head to sleep. Having a hot shower after

your swim can also help to relax your body, making it easier to drift off.

### 5. AEROBICS

Ready for those star jumps? Regular aerobic exercise can improve sleep quality and reduce excessive daytime sleepiness for those who suffer from insomnia. Moderate aerobic activities can also decrease the severity of sleep-disordered breathing conditions like obstructive sleep apnoea.

There are hundreds of videos online for you to discover, ranging from 15 minutes to an hour. Just find an open space in your home and practice for up to an hour before sleeping. **H&W**





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# The health HUB



CONNECT WITH THE H&W COMMUNITY FOR MONTHLY CHALLENGES AND MOTIVATION

## BE INSPIRED

### Fancy dipping your toes into wild swimming?

It's no secret that the wellbeing benefits of cold water swimming are huge – from boosting your mental health to providing a full body workout, taking the plunge has never been more popular than it is now. So, to celebrate wild swimming and raise money for charity, Henley Swim, in Temple Island Meadows, Henley-on-Thames, hosts an annual outdoor swim event every summer,



to encourage people to done their cossie and get active. This year, the event has partnered with Macmillan Cancer Support to encourage potential fundraisers to celebrate outdoor swimming while raising money. With a range of different distances, ranging from 200m to 4 miles, this is an event for the whole family – even children under eight are allowed to swim in the supervised lido, giving them a chance to experience wild swimming while learning how to stay safe in the river. Find out more at [henleyswim.com](http://henleyswim.com)

## STAY IN TOUCH!

We're always keen to hear your news and we love seeing how the magazine has inspired you. Get in touch via our social media channels for the chance to be featured in next month's issue!



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## GET INVOLVED: Dates for your diary

### 1 WALKIE TALKIE TOWER CLIMB

4th March 2023

Raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital by taking on 20 Fenchurch Street – affectionately known as the Walkie Talkie building. By climbing up 35 floors and 896 steps, you can raise money for children at Great Ormond Street and celebrate your achievement at the top of the building with a reward. You can run, walk or sprint it, and be sure take in the views when you finish. Head to [gosh.org](http://gosh.org) to find out more.

### 2 RICHMOND PARK HALF MARATHON

26th March 2023

If you didn't manage to enter the London Marathon this year, don't despair. Showcasing the best of what Richmond park has to offer, you can expect lush greenery and scenic views of London's panorama at the Richmond Half Marathon, along with a lively, supportive atmosphere. Finishers will receive a bespoke medal, T-shirt and a goody bag for completing their run. Go to [runthrough.co.uk](http://runthrough.co.uk) to enter.

### 3 THE SPRING ONION

26th March 2023

Love to cycle? Take a ride through the gorgeous Surrey Hills in the Spring Onion 66 mile ride. This endurance ride is a test for both new and experienced cyclists alike, but the aim is to challenge yourself, not compete against others. Soak up the beautiful Surrey countryside on your way around and don't forget to take a celebratory picture at the end. Visit [letsdothis.com](http://letsdothis.com) to find out more.



### DEAR HEALTH & WELLBEING,

"[The Walk to Wellbeing podcast] is funny, witty and motivational – I loved this new discovery and look forward to hearing more episodes!"

**TTTlow on Apple Podcasts**



Photography: Matt Crockett

Five minutes with...

# Cariad Lloyd

The author, improviser and *Griefcast* host on joyful rituals and advice for her younger self

## What was your happiest moment of 2022?

"Finally finishing my book [*You Are Not Alone*]. Although I've been doing *Griefcast* since 2016, I had to really delve into my personal grief which was tough. I was writing the book during the first lockdown and dissecting [the situation] when the rest of the country was suffering, which was an unusual process. I was writing about grief for such a long time, so to have everything I wanted to say contained in a word document was an amazing feeling."

## How do you look after your mental wellbeing?

"I do my best. It was very hard when I was writing the book and doing the podcast because it was just like, everybody's dying, but I had to remind myself that wasn't true and it was just my perspective. I'm a really talkative person, so therapy has been life-changing for me too."

## Would you say exercise factors into your day?

"With two young children, I find it pretty impossible to do any structured exercise, and I've never really liked the gym. I used to feel bad about that, but I've learned to accept that's just not how I like to move. I'm more of a dance-around-the-kitchen-to-banging-80s-music kind of gal."

## What kind of activities do you enjoy as a family?

"I don't know what other people's kids are like, but mine are like dogs and need a lot of fresh air! We'll go out to parks, woods, playgrounds – any green space London has to offer, so getting outside is important for us."

## Who would you say does the cooking in your house?

"Luckily my husband loves to cook! I see him as a sort of 1950s farm wife, so we eat a lot of broths, meat and potatoes, but it's all made from fresh ingredients. I love to bake because I've got a massive sweet tooth too – I've just started making my own Madeleine's – and there's nothing like the joy of baking something for yourself and being able to cut your own slice without anyone stopping you!"

## Is there anything you'd like to do more of?

"Rest. I find it really hard to stop and often roll into the next project so, as Instagram keeps telling me, rest is just as important as the other stuff."

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

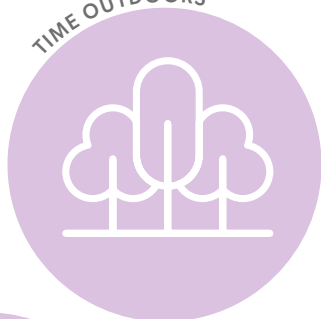
"Hang in there and it's going to be alright. I definitely suffered from that 20s angst, where it felt like nothing was happening; everybody was moving faster than I was; I didn't know what I was doing and I couldn't sort my life out. I was left wondering, what am I going to be, who am I? I would definitely say you'll figure it out, just give it time. It's like a film, you can't work out how it's going to end in the first five minutes, you need to watch a bit more and then you have the answers, so I'd say just keep going and stop worrying." **H&W**

## CARIAD'S FEEL-GOOD HABITS

TEA AND CAKE



TIME OUTDOORS



THERAPY



## For more, read this



**You Are Not Alone** by Cariad Lloyd (£18.99, Bloomsbury Tonic) is out now.

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