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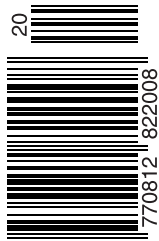
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Maximising menopause
Yoga for tough times

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Meet truthteller Kumi Taguchi | 8 grains you need



From top left: outdoor bath at The Cove, yoga with Om Sweet Om at Narrawallee, glamping under the stars at Paperbark Camp, native ingredients at Bangalay Dining, weaving with Deidre Martin of Bugiya Naway Buradja, ice bath at Life Centre Holistic Health and Wellness, canoeing Kangaroo Valley with Valley Outdoors.



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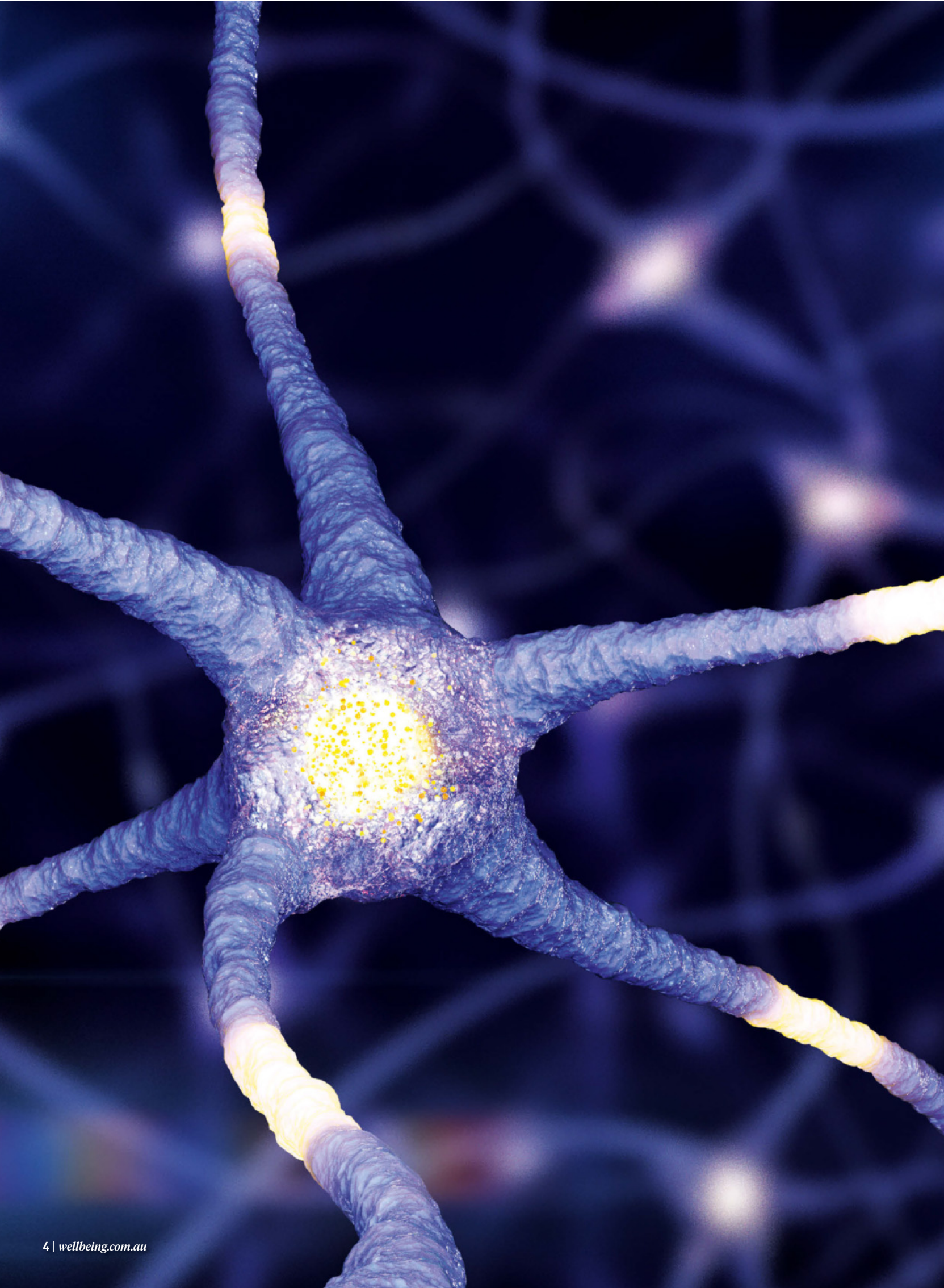
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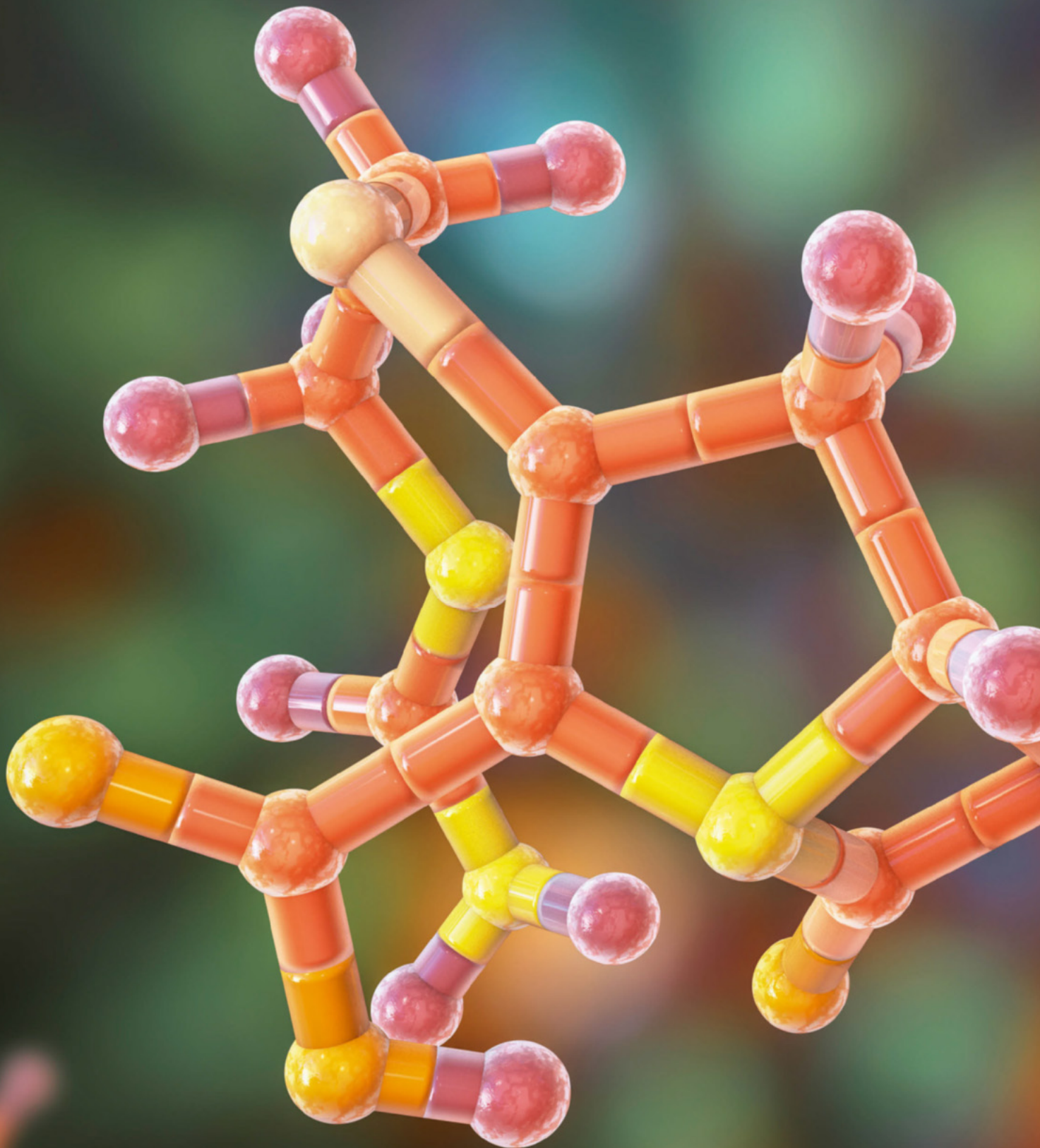


moments of wonder

The thinking universe

*Is the universe really a massive brain? Neurons in the human brain form clusters that are connected by long nerve fibres called axons, which send electrical impulses from one neuron to another. The universe that we know contains around 200 billion galaxies, and under the pull of gravity these galaxies gather into clusters. Between these galaxy clusters are long threads known as “galaxy filaments” that can be hundreds of light years long. Physicists are noting that the universe looks like the network of nerve connections (the “connectome”) in the human brain. In 2020 two Italians, one an astrophysicist and the other a neuroscientist, published a paper in the journal *Frontiers in Physics* titled “The quantitative comparison between the neuronal network and the cosmic web”. They reported a “remarkable similarity” between human brains and the cosmos. Specifically, they found that brain samples below one millimetre and the distribution of matter in the universe at scales up to 300 million light years are structurally similar.*

An important difference between human brains and the universe, of course, is the scale of things. Human brains are about 17cm long while the universe is 90 billion light years in diameter, and that means it takes a long time for signals to cross the universe. Since nothing can travel faster than the speed of light that would mean the universe could only have had about 1000 exchanges of information between its closest galaxy clusters since the Big Bang, and the human brain achieves that in about three minutes. Quantum physics though speculates that different places in the universe could be connected in a “non-local” way by things like portals, so that opposite ends of the universe might be very close to each other and signals might theoretically travel almost instantly. The physics neither proves this nor disproves it, and it allows us to ask one big question: Is it possible that our galaxy is just one neuron in a universal brain, and as we think about the universe is that actually the universe thinking about itself?



moments of wonder

Ancient antibiotics

The discovery of antibiotics dates officially to 1928 when Alexander Fleming returned from holiday to find penicillin growing in his Petri dish. In the late 1940s, Benjamin Minge Duggar is credited with discovering tetracycline, a broad-spectrum antibiotic that is naturally produced by Streptomyces bacteria. While they may not have called it “tetracycline”, we now know that the Nubian civilisation was using this antibiotic around 2000 years ago. The ancient Nubian kingdom was located in what we call Sudan, south of ancient Egypt, and flourished between 550 and 350 BCE. The Nubians left no written records but, like all civilisations, they left bones. In the 1980s archaeologists discovered bones with what appeared to be traces of tetracycline. At the time the archaeologists linked the tetracycline to Nubian beer because the grain used to make the beer contained the soil bacteria Streptomyces. Recently, the bones were sent to an expert who used sophisticated (and dangerous due to potent acids used) techniques to analyse the levels of tetracycline present. The analysis found that the bones were saturated with tetracycline, indicating that they had been taking it for a long time. Additionally, the leg bone and skull of a four-year-old were also full of tetracycline, suggesting that the child was being given high doses to cure an illness. The Nubians may not have known what tetracycline was, but they were certainly using their beer containing it as an antibiotic long before Fleming’s “discovery”.



moments of wonder

Supernovas in your blood




Stars are born within the dust clouds that exist scattered throughout most galaxies. Turbulence within these clouds creates knots with sufficient mass that gas and dust begin to collapse due the gravity they are creating. As the cloud collapses the material heats up forming a dense, hot core that is the base of a star. Stars are fuelled by the nuclear fusion of hydrogen to form helium deep in their interiors. All but the most massive stars live for billions of years, and when the star has fused all of the hydrogen at its core, nuclear reactions cease. The core begins to collapse and becomes hotter. If the star is big enough it may become hot enough to begin consuming helium and start producing heavier elements up to iron. Once iron is created, the star has wrung all of the energy it can out of nuclear fusion and it no longer has any way to support its own mass, and it becomes a supernova. Essentially, a supernova is a catastrophic explosion of a star, and it creates luminosity billions of times brighter than our Sun. This is a nuclear explosion, and the blast of the supernova sends the iron into space. This is the source of all iron in the universe, and it means that the iron which sits in haemoglobin and carries oxygen around your body originated in a supernova. You truly are made of star stuff.



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EMMA WATSON
ACTOR & UN AMBASSADOR



From the editor-in-chief

My eldest daughter is 17.

You can read that sentence as a declaration of virile accomplishment or as a plea for help. I can assure you that it's mostly the latter, with a modicum of hapless spectatorhood thrown in. Teenage girls have always been a potent brew, but add social media into the mix and you have a potion that is at once entrancing and terrifying. Not the least of the concoction is that precisely at their time of opening to burgeoning personal power and exotic influences, the capacity to drive becomes part of the equation. For me, that has in turn opened a question, and finding the answer to that question is like tap-dancing on a landmine.

There are a few pathways Elder Daughter may take once the HSC is accomplished, and many of them will entail her moving away from home. Some of them will require possession of a vehicle. The most likely course appears that she will be bequeathed my current car and I will get another, which is where the rub occurs: what vehicle to buy?

My disposition and beliefs tell me that I must buy an electric vehicle (EV), but it's not that simple. I don't have room to go into the EV debate here, but a very simplified version can be found in a longer version of this editorial at wellbeing.com.au/at-home/editors-letter.html.

In short, the reality is that we are just at the beginning of this switch to living more sustainably and it's a multi-horned beast, the EV-horn just happening to be the one on which I am currently skewered. I'm fully aware that many of the fear-inducing stories about EVs come from sectors with a vested interest in internal combustion engines, but detecting the source of claims is difficult and infinitely time-consuming in a retweeted, cut-and-paste world. We can't just keep polluting this planet with emissions and expect it to sustain us but, having said that, concerns of practicality and financial viability are also real.

Believe me, I want to choose an EV, but is it the best thing to do right now? There are also hybrids to consider, and adding to the dilemma is that I have a time imperative in that my daughter will need a car in the near future. I don't have the luxury of waiting and seeing; I have to make a decision and I have to make it soon, which brings us to the nub of the issue: what do you do when you have to make a decision but you know that you don't have all the information required to make it?

First, it's important not to let incomplete information stop you from doing your best. Decisions require you to gather all of the benefits and costs that you can, evaluate what is under your control and what is not, consider how what you do will impact others and make the best choice that you can. Most importantly, be brave and be prepared to change your mind. It's been said that if the road to hell was paved with a readiness to change your course, then it would not be the road to hell.

Along with my daughter and the rest of the family, we will make that decision soon. It won't be "right", but it will be the best that we can make and we will deal with consequences as we need to. It's not a perfect situation but it is as it should be.

Terry Robson EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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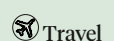
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The winner of our Star Letter will receive an incredible book pack from Penguin Random House featuring *Glucose Revolution* by Jessie Inchauspé, *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown, *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, *Unbounded* by Maria Thattil and *Daisy Jones & The Six* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. With a total prize value of RRP \$170.96, you'll be enjoying a year of good reading. For more, visit penguinrandomhouse.com.



From the editor

Tell me, have the last few years of the pandemic changed how you gather? Have they impacted the way you socialise? They have for me and I'm trying to understand why. The dark days of lockdown and isolation are, thankfully, behind us, but there's a sticky residue lingering in how I now socialise. I've been struggling to maintain my social life and I'm not sure if it's because the pandemic changed how we get together or if it's because I'm now a mum. It's probably both; they are two very extreme life events.

My darling Harry boy was born in 2021, deep in the pocket of the pandemic. Becoming a parent is a factor in why my social life took a hit (read: sleep deprivation, perpetual greasy hair, basic sentence structure failure and total body exhaustion), but perhaps it was also because I, like all of us, was deprived of human connection for two years.

Pre-pandemic and pre-baby, my social calendar was very full. My husband and I would host a dinner party once a fortnight. We'd gather at a friend's house or go out for dinner once or twice a week. We'd have beach days and dog walks with friends. Now, I'm lucky to do just one of those things every week. I miss it, although maybe my social life was a little out of balance back then, tipped too far towards saying "Yes" to everything and not leaving any time for myself. Now, however, I feel a real visceral longing for catch-ups with friends and family.

In journalist Pandora Sykes' podcast *Doing It Right*, she interviews Priya Parker. Parker is a conflict resolution strategist and author of the book, *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*. In her book, she argues that the gatherings in our lives are lacklustre. In the podcast, Sykes and Parker discuss the purpose of gathering and how to do it right.

Given my desire to get my social life back on track, I gave this episode a few listens.

In it, Parker suggests that a party of six tends to work well if you're wanting a dinner of rich conversation in which people are all really participating. The disadvantage of a small group is that it can't hold deep weight. If someone has checked out or is texting under the table, everyone can feel it.

A group of 12 people is great for a vibey dinner party, but it's hard to have one large conversation unless you're good at facilitating, which I am not. A party this size tends to break up into three or four smaller conversations, so you might not deeply connect with everyone.

A big party of 20 to 30 or more people can be buzzy. It can be meaningful and electric but density really matters. At big parties, people are more likely to hang out in a kitchen or an office space — I've certainly had my share of kitchen parties.

Discovering this has helped me to plan my next dinner party — the first in two years. I am starting small; there will be six of us. I feel very fortunate to have close friends. As Lyn, the author of our Star Letter shares to the right, meaningful friendships are hard to come by.

Perhaps this reminder is as much for you as it is for me. When it comes to hosting gatherings, intentionally create your guest list. When it comes to attending gatherings, be present, put yourself out there and let your inner radiance shine and lift the party. When it comes to friendships, put the effort and energy in to keep it ablaze. And, when it comes to picking up the phone and planning a catch-up, follow through — no matter how tired or busy or highly strung you are. And hug. Please hug. We've all got two years of hugs to catch up on.

Kate Holland EDITOR



STAR LETTER!

Lifelong friends

Hi team, I'm 67 and have been a reader of *WellBeing* magazine for a very long time. It is a magnificent magazine with amazing articles and a tonne of interesting and inspiring information. I was reading issue #199 and came upon your article on "The keys to healthy self-esteem". I'm the first to admit that I've struggled with this throughout my life because of the non-interaction of family in my life. Your article suggests/recommends to nurture friendships with others. My question is, how does one do that? I've endeavoured to do that throughout my life and have given it my all, but I can honestly say that I have never had a "best friend" and I yearn for that closeness of friendships. Yes, I have friends but none I could totally rely on to be there for me. I'm also a "giver", which is probably linked to low self-esteem, and I can feel let down at times. How does one go out there and "make friends"? Where does one go to make friends? And how does one keep friends who are in for the long haul and see the goodness in you? I'd love an article on this topic. Thank you, *WellBeing*.

Lyn

A love for WILD

I bought *WILD*, *WellBeing's* little sister magazine as a trusty companion for a road trip through Tasmania. It has been somehow uplifting yet grounding and has left me feeling romanced, enlightened and empowered. Thank you for the time and effort you put into this magazine; it brought me joy and helped me escape from my military lifestyle for a moment. Thank you!

Sarah



The gift of WellBeing

I have been reading *WellBeing* for a long time. In fact, I found a box of issues from around 2007–2009 the other day in our attic! As a yogi for over half my life and a lover of natural therapies, so many of your articles resonate with me. Thank you for everything you do, *WellBeing*.

Heidi



It's in the doing

We're a few months into 2023. We checked in with your new year intentions. Here's a few of our favourite answers.

- ~ I intend to speak kindly to myself about myself.
@princessrlakshman
- ~ Calming down my nervous system by breaking out of the hustle lifestyle and the need to run on adrenaline. Also starting serious self-care steps like regular psychology and rejoining the gym for yoga classes.
@amberlouise.92
- ~ Trying to stay calm and focus on my needs for a change.
@cindym73
- ~ Focusing on me. My mind, my body, my wellbeing, my health and my happiness. It's all about me in 2023.
@bliss1111_
- ~ I'm going to focus on my mental health by prioritising rest, exercise, healthy food and time for me.
@arthurtee



Recent medical findings for a healthier body



Yoga for hypertension

For this study researchers recruited subjects with high blood pressure metabolic syndrome. For three months the subjects were divided into two groups and put through two different exercise programs. Both groups performed 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five times a week, but one group did 15 minutes of stretching before the exercise while the other did 15 minutes of yoga. After three months there was a decrease in resting systolic pressure, diastolic pressure and heart rate in both groups. However, systolic pressure decrease was 2.5 times more in the yoga group than in the stretching. Yoga also reduced resting heart rate and pulse pressure. While yoga has been shown to benefit people with high blood pressure, the exact mechanism is not well known. What this study shows is that the effects of yoga are not due to stretching alone. *Source: Canadian Journal of Cardiology*

Hydration slows ageing

In a new study researchers gathered data from more than 11,000 subjects over 30 years and analysed the link between blood sodium levels and overall health. They found that adults with levels of sodium in their blood that were at the high end of the “normal” range were more likely to show signs of faster biological ageing. This is based on factors such as cardiovascular health, lung function and levels of inflammation. People with sodium levels above 142 mEq/L (milliequivalents per litre) were 15 per cent more likely to be biologically older than their chronological age compared to those in the 137–142 mEq/L range. Those with levels above 144 mEq/L were 50 per cent more likely to show that disparity. The single most common factor that increases blood sodium levels is decreased body water, which why the researchers say that staying well hydrated may slow down the ageing process. *Source: eBioMedicine*

“Gelbots” in your body

“Gelbots” are robots made from water-based gels that will shrink or swell in response to changes in temperature. Without wiring of any kind, just purely based on the swelling and shrinking of the gel, the gelbot could move like an inchworm (or spanworm), and researchers believe they could be used to deliver medicines to various parts of the body. *Source: Science Robotics*

Medifact



Hibiscus for Alzheimer's

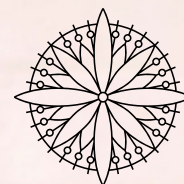
Alzheimer's disease is initiated when amyloid-beta and tau proteins accumulate and form deposits in the brain. Immune cells called microglia engulf such deposits to protect the brain, but ongoing exposure to amyloid-beta will eventually overwhelm the microglia, leading to chronic inflammation and damage to nerve cells. This damage results in cognitive decline and memory loss. In a new study looking for treatments for Alzheimer's without side effects, researchers focused on gossypetin, a flavonoid found in an hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). Mice with Alzheimer's were given gossypetin for three months, and after this time their memory and their cognition were returned to normal. There was also a corresponding decrease in amyloid-beta aggregates. The researchers expect that gossypetin from hibiscus will contribute to a safe and affordable drug for Alzheimer's. In the meantime, hibiscus tea won't hurt. *Source: Alzheimer's Research and Therapy*

Quinoa super-biscuits

Researchers have found that the seed quinoa has the potential to make biscuits healthier and taste better at the same time. For the study the researchers used quinoa flour to make “sugar cookies”, simple biscuits made with sugar, flour, eggs, butter and baking soda, meaning that substituting quinoa flour will not be masked in terms of taste by things like chocolate. Substituting quinoa flour in differing ratios for wheat flour, the researchers found that the biscuit dough had good “spreadability” and that people preferred the taste of sugar cookies made with 10 per cent quinoa flour over those made with 100 per cent wheat flour. Using up to 25 per cent quinoa flour yielded satisfactory results, although at 100 per cent quinoa the biscuits did tend to crumble. The nutty flavour of quinoa plus its protein, fibre and nutrient hit make it a candidate for some healthier baking. *Source: Journal of Food Science*

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Interesting slices of life



When couples work from home

After the COVID-19 pandemic there is an increase in people working from home, and in many cases of dual-earning couples, both members of the couple are working from home. The dynamics of this were the subject of two recent studies. One study involved dual-earner couples with at least one child in mainland China and the other South Korean dual-earner couples with or without children. The results of both surveys showed that when couples work from home both husbands and wives increased how much work they completed around the home and family, but that they experienced increased feelings of inter-role conflict, psychological withdrawal from work and feelings of guilt surrounding work for their employer. There may be cultural biases in these findings, but it is a reminder to employers that employees working from home have new and unexplored dynamics impacting them that need to be allowed for and understood. *Source: Personnel Psychology*

Are villains all bad?

For this research three separate studies took place involving both children aged four to 12 and adults. The studies were aimed at understanding how we make sense of evil acts performed by others, and asked subjects to make judgements of both familiar and newly created fictional villains and heroes. Two of the characters used were Ursula from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and Woody from Pixar's *Toy Story*. The second and third studies focused on what children and adults thought about how a character felt inside and whether their actions reflected their true self. The results showed that both children and adults believe that a villain's true self is much more negative than a hero's inner self, but at the same time that villains can have some inner goodness despite their bad behaviour. It seems we are reluctant to believe that anyone can be all bad. *Source: Cognition*

Celebration is healing

"Perceived social support" is the belief that you have a social network that will be there for you in case of negative future life events, and it is important to psychological wellbeing. A powerful way to boost this sense of social support is to eat and drink together to mark a positive life event. Making an intentional effort to recognise other people's positive achievements is the key. Celebrate others and everyone benefits. *Source: Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*

Did you know?



Reach out to friends

Researchers conducted a series of experiments involving 5900 subjects aimed at seeing how much they appreciated being reached out to by friends. In one study subjects sent a short email, or a note with a small gift, to someone in their social circle that they had not interacted with for a while. The subjects were asked to rate on a seven-point scale how much they thought the recipient would appreciate, feel grateful for and be pleased by the contact. After receiving the contact, the recipients also rated their appreciation. Results showed that people who initiated the contact significantly underestimated the appreciation the recipients felt for their act of reaching out. They also found that the more surprised someone was by the contact, the more greatly they appreciated it. If there is a friend you haven't been in touch with for a while, try reaching out — they will appreciate it more than you know. *Source: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

Deception is unsatisfying

To discover whether people who lie in a negotiation experience "deceiver's guilt" or "deceiver's thrill", researchers recruited almost 1000 people and divided them into almost 500 pairs. Each pair had to negotiate the sale of a used laptop computer. In one group those who were selling were given the opportunity to lie by being told that the laptop had a broken graphics card but the buyer did not know and could not find out. In another group both the seller and the buyer knew about the broken graphics card. Sellers and buyers were offered cash incentives to get the best deal that they could. It emerged that 74 per cent of people given the opportunity to lie did so. However, those who chose to lie felt more guilt and less satisfaction than those where lying was not an option. It seems the truth will set you free after all. *Source: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

Detox your body every day!

If you're feeling exhausted and in need of revitalisation, you should consider a detox or cleanse. With Active Liver™, you have the tool to do this gently and on a daily basis.

Each day, your liver is working hard to remove waste products and toxins from processed foods, unclean air, water and even your own body. But, as you get exposed to increasingly more toxins, the liver struggles to remove them all and can start storing them in your body fat. You may soon notice the effects in your energy levels, your lack of youthful appearance and, surprisingly, on your waistline.

Unjunking your body

A detox, like a water or juice fast, is an excellent way to rid the body of stored toxins, but it is often difficult to abide by, and involves days or even weeks of feeling tired and sick. However, there are other ways.

Detox with one tablet a day

Active Liver™ is a dietary supplement that helps promote a healthy liver, aids digestion and helps you detox on a daily basis – all year round. With just one tablet a day, it gently but effectively uses known herbal extracts to facilitate detoxing of the body – without the side effects.

The liver is an important fat-burning organ. If the liver is sluggish or clogged with waste material, it can start building up around the waistline and even inside the internal organs (which may lead to a fatty liver). Making sure your liver is working well will help you flush fats from the body.



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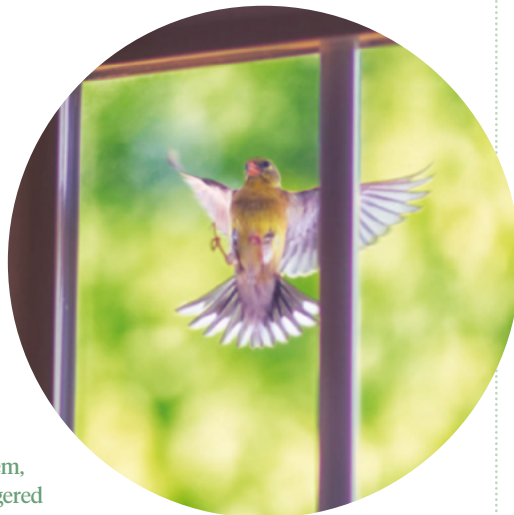


Sustainable diet awareness

Research has shown us that at least 30 per cent of the environmental impacts humans generate come from the food we eat. For a new study, researchers surveyed young British adults. Subjects were asked questions about their understanding of what a sustainable diet is and their willingness to make changes. The UN defines a sustainable diet as one that has a low environmental impact and which contributes to nutrition security and health for current and future generations. However, the survey showed that many subjects did not know what a sustainable diet was and were not considering sustainability at all when making food choices. Yet they were willing to make changes to their diet to reduce climate impact when told it could be done. As a *WellBeing* reader you are aware of the impact of food choices but not everyone will be. It points to a need to promote greater awareness of how eating habits can help the planet. *Source: Appetite*

When bird meets window

A worldwide trend towards new housing developments featuring large glass windows is well under way. Simultaneously, backyard bird feeding has surged during the pandemic as people seek to draw wildlife into the homes they are spending so much more time in. All of this means that birds are being drawn into high-risk settings for collisions with windows, which are a major source of bird mortality and injury. Hoping to understand more about the nature of these collisions with a view to reducing them, researchers analysed audio- and motion-triggered video at home bird feeders of moments leading up to birds colliding with or just missing windows. They found that birds flying at a faster speed and being perpendicular to the window increased chances of a collision. The researchers recommend that feeders or baths be placed close to windows to reduce bird velocity and using “fritted glass” or “art glass” to make the windows more visible. *Source: PeerJ*



Limitless fresh water

One of the stronger projections concerning climate change is that dry regions will get drier and wet areas will get wetter. Water scarcity will be a problem in significant portions of the globe and waste water recycling, cloud seeding and desalination have achieved limited successes. Now, according to researchers from the University of Illinois, a source of fresh water might be right under our noses. When sunlight hits the ocean it produces water vapour, which means that in high-sunlight areas a river of fresh water is sitting above the sea waiting to be harvested. The researchers performed atmospheric and economic analysis of the feasibility of placing structures 210 metres square and 100 metres high to harvest this water vapour. They concluded that capturing moisture over ocean surfaces is viable for many water-stressed regions around the world, especially for large population centres in the subtropics. Climate projections show that ocean vapour levels will increase, meaning that this idea will be viable under climate change. *Source: PLOS One*

Fast-food labels

For a new study more than 5000 subjects were shown a sample menu that was laid out like a fast-food menu. Subjects were asked to choose a single item for dinner. The menus were the same except for the labels applied to the items. One group received a menu with non-red meat items like chicken sandwiches and garden salads labelled “Low climate impact”. Another group received menus that had red meat items such as burgers labelled “High climate impact”. A control group received menus with no climate labels. Compared to the control group, the group that had “High climate impact” labelling on foods chose 23 per cent fewer meat products. Menus with “Low climate impact” labelling led to 10 per cent fewer meat products being chosen. It seems that negatively framed “high impact” labelling is the most effective, but it does suggest that labelling is an important strategy in achieving more climate-friendly eating behaviours. *Source: JAMA Network Open*



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Native violets

The vibrant purples and whites of native violets make them a valued ground cover, but they are also edible and have many healing qualities.

Words DR KAREN BRIDGMAN

Native violets (*Viola hederacea*) are small perennial plants growing over most of Australia with long-flowering purple and white flowers, often with a slight fragrance. They are a classic attractive ground cover. They are very easy to grow, even in moist shade or part shade, to the point where this colourful species is sometimes even considered invasive. The flowers are an excellent food source for butterflies, and the spreading nature of this plant acts as a superior weed suppressant in damp shady areas.

In 2006, botanists divided *V. hederacea* into two groups, and the native violet with more purple than white was renamed *V. banksii* as a subgroup.

Native violets are in the same family as other violets. There is extensive research on the sweet violet (*V. odorata*) and only minimal studies on Australian native violets, but the components of the leaves and flowers have distinct similarities (and therefore benefits) to other members of the viola family. All the blue-, purple- and white-flowered wild violets are considered beneficial.

Parts used

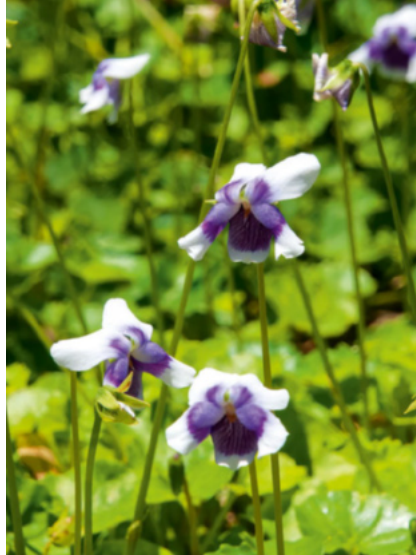
First Nations people ate the flowers and leaves of native violets as foods. Violet leaves are considered to have greater medicinal benefits than the flowers. The roots can also potentially be used medicinally but are not as pleasant as a food. The seeds and seed pods are also eaten.

Violet leaves (including *V. hederacea* and *V. banksii*) have been shown to contain phenolic glycosides, saponins, flavonoids, rutin and quercetin, alkaloids, mucilage, tannins and salicylates, as well as vitamins A and C.

Native violets have been shown to have several different cyclotides including cycloviolacin H4, a new protein compound found in the leaves of *V. hederacea* which has strong haemolytic activity (ie it thins the blood) and a powerful cytotoxic activity that could provide a pathway for stimulating lymphatic activity and reducing various cancers.

Therapeutic uses

Violet leaves taken internally are generally considered anti-inflammatory, demulcent, expectorant, alterative (blood cleanser), lymphagogue (stimulates and detoxifies lymphatics), antirheumatic, antitumour, antimicrobial and antiviral, diuretic, a respiratory remedy and a mild laxative.



Violet leaves are considered to have greater medicinal benefits than the flowers.

Topically they function as a vulnerary, promoting wound healing.

Traditionally, violet leaves were considered cooling and moistening, and both the flowers and the leaves were considered a gentle herb that nourishes, strengthens and soothes.

As medical preparations, violet leaves can be taken as an infusion or tea, a syrup, infused in honey, made into vinegars and used topically in a variety of ways.

Respiratory

With its anti-inflammatory and mucilaginous properties, violet leaf tea can relieve coughs and bronchitis, and is even more effective if sweetened with a good raw honey.

Lymphatic detoxifier

Violet leaves have been traditionally used as a tonic for swollen lymph nodes. They are excellent for relieving lymph glands that are swollen, hot and tender to touch. This traditional use is supported by the research showing that the cycloviolacin H4 in native violet leaves has a potential role in stimulating and potentially detoxifying the lymphatic system.

Digestion

The mucilaginous component of violet leaf tea soothes gut mucosal inflammation, and as mucilage is a soluble fibre it has a role in reducing cholesterol levels. Soluble fibres are also prebiotic and help to restore healthy populations of beneficial bacteria in the gut.

Blood vessel walls

The active flavonoid ingredients of native violet leaves, quercetin and particularly rutin, are traditional remedies to strengthen blood vessel walls, so have been prescribed to reduce haemorrhoids and varicose veins.

Antimicrobial and antiviral

Cyclotides, an active ingredient in native violet leaves, with their sulphur-rich protein structures have strong antibacterial activity against Gram-negative bacterial activity such as *E. coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Research has shown that the cyclotide in *V. hederacea* cycloviolacin H4 also has measurable anti-HIV activity.

Topically


Violet leaf preparations can be used as a wash to relieve the symptoms of inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema or dermatitis. Topically violet leaves can be used as a poultice or compress, made into a cream or salve or used as an infused oil to relieve dry or chafed skin, abrasions and insect bites. The tea can be used both internally and topically for varicose veins and haemorrhoids.

Culinary uses

Native violet flowers are edible and often used to add colour and fragrance to salads or desserts. The flowers can be frozen into ice blocks or they can be crystallised for a spectacular decoration on special desserts, or for baked foods such as cakes and slices.

The leaves are also edible and have a mucilaginous quality with a faint watermelon-peppery taste when eaten. They can be eaten in salads or be made into vinegars and infusions or teas. They can also be made into pesto in sandwiches and wraps. The leaves can be steamed or sautéed or stirred into soups as a nutrient-dense thickener.

The seed pods can be pickled and eaten like capers.

There is no record of toxicity, and native violet leaves and flowers are safe to eat as a food as well as being ingested as a medicine. No adverse reactions with pharmaceuticals have been recorded. One potential contraindication is for those with a rare haemolytic anaemia; in these cases native violet leaves should be avoided.  *References available on request.*

Dr Karen Bridgman is a holistic practitioner at Lotus Health and Lotus Dental in Neutral Bay.



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Mastic gum

Reputed to be the world's first chewing gum, mastic gum is a resin secreted by the mastic tree, traditionally grown on the Greek island of Chios, and it has some powerful healing properties.

Words DR KAREN BRIDGMAN

The mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) is a dense perennial growing to about five metres over 40 to 50 years, with a lifecycle of about 100 years. The resin is secreted in droplets or "tears", being also called the "tears of Chios". When secreted it dries into a brittle, translucent resin that on being chewed softens and becomes a white gum. Initially the flavour is bitter, but on chewing it becomes refreshing and tastes like pine or cedar. The resin production begins in the tree's fifth year, reaching a maximum yield of one kilogram after 12 years. The name mastic is derived from the Greek word "to gnash the teeth", and is the root of the English word "masticate".

Mastic gum has been harvested for at least 2500 years, and the first recorded history of it was by Hippocrates, who used mastic gum as a digestive, for colds and as a breath freshener. The Romans mixed it with honey, pepper and egg to eat, and during the Byzantine Empire the mastic trade was so valuable that it became the monopoly of the emperor. During the Ottoman Empire, mastic gum was worth its weight in gold, and the penalty for stealing it was execution.

From Byzantine times, the ancient villages in the mastic-producing areas on Chios were built like fortresses, out of sight of the sea and surrounded by high walls with no doors at street level and only a single entrance to each settlement, mainly to protect the sap from invaders. The villagers would enter their buildings from the roof by ladders. Today the production of mastic is highly regulated, and there are 22 villages on Chios that have government licences to produce the resin.

Active ingredients

The parts of the mastic tree that are used are the resin or gum, and essential oil extracted from the resin, leaves and fruit. More than 120 chemical compounds have been identified in the resin, including natural polymers, acidic and neutral triterpenes, volatile compounds, quercetin and phenolic compounds, arabinogalactans, proteins and phytosterols.

Therapeutic uses

While there is strong traditional evidence of mastic gum's use in humans, most of the current research is on animals and in vitro. Many more clinical trials need to be conducted.

Anti-inflammatory

Mastic regulates multiple anti-inflammatory pathways, inhibiting the COX-2 and LOX pathways and iNOS, TNF α and IL-6, thus reducing the risk of a range of chronic inflammatory illnesses.

Auto immune disease

Mastic gum improves symptoms of autoimmune disease by inhibiting production of these pro-inflammatory cytokines. Studies conducted on Crohn's disease and asthma in mice have shown positive outcomes.

Mastic gum has been harvested for at least 2500 years, and the first recorded history of it was by Hippocrates, who used mastic gum as a digestive, for colds and as a breath freshener.

Digestion

Mastic gum has significant antibacterial activity, including the eradication of *H. pylori*, thus reducing the risk of gastric and duodenal ulceration. Human trials have been conducted with positive results. Mastic was shown to kill 90 per cent of *H. pylori*, possibly due to the arabinogalactan content. Given to patients for 14 days, the mastic eradicated *H. pylori* in vivo. As antibiotics are only 85 per cent effective, this was an excellent result. However it was not as effective in patients taking anti-reflux medication such as proton-pump inhibitors, as it is more effective in an acid environment.

Mastic gum has also demonstrated beneficial results in patients with Crohn's disease and inflammatory bowel disease.

Cardiovascular

The anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of mastic gum prevents the oxidation of LDL "bad" cholesterol, reducing



the formation of the foam cells that contribute to atherosclerosis. In a study on 133 patients with atherosclerosis, high doses of mastic gum over 18 months showed a significant decrease in total cholesterol levels and LDS, as well as a significant decrease in abnormal liver enzyme levels. It also improves fatty liver.

Regulates insulin and blood glucose

Studies have been conducted on participants with high cholesterol and high glucose levels. Taking mastic gum for eight weeks reduced cholesterol by 13.5mg/dL and fasting blood glucose by 5.1mg/dL, with better results in those who were overweight or obese.

Dental

The antibacterial activity of mastic gum eradicates pathogenic dental bacteria. It effectively inhibits numerous periodontal pathogens without any negative effects on the gums or mucosa, making it an ideal remedy for oral inflammatory conditions. Using mastic gum as a chewing gum cleans the mouth and freshens the breath.

Wound healing

The antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties of mastic gum are very effective in reducing skin inflammation and in wound healing. As a topical application, mastic's anti-inflammatory properties are used to relieve allergic dermatitis.

Using mastic gum

Mastic gum is a favourite food spice in the eastern Mediterranean where it is mainly added to desserts such as ice cream, cakes, sweets and pastries. However, it can be used in savoury dishes with chicken, duck, fish or rabbit and often paired with cardamom. A cookbook of Arabian food was compiled in 1226 by Muhammad bin Hasan al-Baghdadi where it is used in over half the recipes.

While there are few studies on its safety, mastic gum has had a long history of use with no recorded side effects, therefore it is considered to be at low risk of toxicity or side effects. 🍯

References available on request.

Dr Karen Bridgman is a holistic practitioner at Lotus Health and Lotus Dental in Neutral Bay.



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Shower power

Your shower is such an intimate part of your day, but how much thought do you give it? It's time for a little shower reflection because your shower time is an opportunity for creativity on many levels.

Words TERRY ROBSON

Showers are such an integral part of the architecture of our homes and also our daily habits that it is easy to overlook them. In the 21st century we take showering for granted, but it has not always been an accepted thing for humans to do — in fact, there are some dark spots in the shower's relationship with humankind. When you stop to examine the shower, however, you find that not only does it have a fascinating history and relationship with humans, but it also is a tool of significant psychological and environmental power.

The shower story

All around the world people enjoy a good shower, and Australians are almost as prone to be found under a trickling stream as anybody. A global study by Euromonitor found that Australians average eight showers per week, a figure which is matched by the Middle East and only exceeded by Columbia (9 per week) and Brazil (12 per week), leaving one to ponder what it is that the latter two may be washing off. Generally, more women shower daily than men, but only marginally more, and in Australia 81 per cent of men shower daily compared to 90 per cent of women. Showering is so entrenched in our culture that it is hard to conceive of it ever having been any different, but the path of showering to its current ubiquity has been a tortuous one.

The first showers would undoubtedly have been taken under waterfalls, but the first human-made showers took a while longer to manifest. It was during the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilisations the records tell us showers were first taken indoors. This is about 5000 years ago and was the province of the wealthy because it required someone, usually a slave, to pour jugs of water from above. Temple wall paintings show Egyptian queens being bathed in this way, and in places such as Thebes and Amarna we have found stone-lined chambers with sloping floors designed to allow the hand-showered water to run away.

The ancient Greeks also enjoyed a shower as did the Romans, and with

improvements in plumbing and the construction of aqueducts they were able to have jets of cold water cascading from a perforated ceiling while the bather stood beneath. With the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Christianity, with its associated concerns about nakedness arousing sinful lust, public bathing fell out of favour. This may have been the "Dark Ages", but it wasn't a time when all advances ceased. In fact, crusaders brought soap back to Europe from the East at this time. What were lost, though, were the sophisticated sewerage systems of the Romans, and so people reverted to bathing in wooden tubs. They say that there is nothing new under sun, and the corollary truth of that is that nothing ever truly disappears. Showering may have been forgotten for a few centuries, but it remained loitering in the shadows of the human mind.

Taking just two or three minutes off your shower time will save 20 to 30 litres of water and will also reduce energy consumption.

The first shower as we would recognise one was designed and patented by London stovemaker William Feetham in 1767. The contraption designed by Feetham consisted of a basin in which the bather stood, and an overhanging water tank. Jets of cold water fell from holes in the base of the tank and the bather used a hand pump to pump used water from the basin back into the tank and then release the water again. The obvious flaw in Feetham's brilliant device was that the water got dirtier and colder with each pumping. So showers wallowed in the wings a little longer, until the psychiatric profession got hold of them.

Stephanie Cox from the Department of Occupational Science and Therapy at the Auckland University of Technology was lead researcher for a paper titled "Showers: from a violent treatment to an agent of cleansing" published in the journal *History of Psychiatry*.

According to Cox, by the late 18th century physicians were pointing to a "hot brain being the cause of a mad mind". Specifically, they thought that inflamed blood vessels of the brain were the site of insanity. Knowledgeable physicians at this time wanted to specifically cool the brain to treat insanity, and a cold shower was thought the perfect way to do this. Cox reports that an extension of this was that cold shower therapy began to be used in punishment and torture of prisoners. This was a dark phase in the shower's history, and as Cox says, "The shower itself was not benign. While some physicians maintained that the benefit of the shower was in its potentially harmful effects, the occurrence of shower-related deaths led to charges that those using the cold-shock were outdated and ignorant."

As cold-shock showers fell into disfavour, it was the French prison doctor Dr Merry Delabost who was credited with designing the modern shower as we know it. In 1872 Merry Delabost proposed the use of warm water poured over the heads and bodies of prisoners as an efficient way to promote hygiene. He suggested a cubicle-based design using only 25 litres of water per person, but with warm water, allowing multiple prisoners to wash at the same time in under five minutes. It is just a few developmental steps from Merry Delabost's design to the shower cubicle in your bathroom. So here we are, with showers firmly part of our daily routines, but is that a good thing?

Shower vs bath

To decide what we think about showers we have to compare them to baths, because we can all agree that hygiene is desirable and these are the two ways we maintain personal hygiene. So which leaves you cleaner, a bath or a shower? A lot of this comes down to individual technique, but there are some broad conclusions we can draw. There is not a lot of definitive research available, but we can safely conclude that both baths and showers expose you to bacteria. In the case of showers it is from the showerhead and in baths just about everywhere. If we get logical about it, though, showers have to come out ahead in the cleansing stakes. A bath is essentially liquefying the grime from your skin and various orifices, dissolving it into a soup, and then lounging in that microbial broth. By contrast, a shower aided by a lather of paraben-free soap will break up oil, dirt and sweat that is stuck to your skin and take it in a cascade down the plughole.

Healing

Aside from cleansing, both baths and showers do have some healing



properties. Baths can relax you and soothe aching muscles. Adding various essential oils and salts to baths enhances those healing properties.

Showers, too, have their healing touch. Dutch research has shown that having a cold shower daily boosts immunity and reduces days missed from work due to sickness, although admittedly the coldness is an important part of that effect, not just the showering. Hot showers, however, produce steam and warmth that relaxes and detoxifies. Showers also improve circulation, and if you wash your head under the shower the improved circulation that you get to your scalp can also help your hair.

Planetary power in the shower

As we face a climate-challenged world in which water and energy are crucial issues, we can't ignore the environmental impacts of showering versus bathing. Estimates, as estimates will do, vary as to how much water exactly is used by a shower. Many estimates put it at about eight litres per minute, although Sydney Water say it is 10 litres per minute. For ease of the maths and in the interest of overestimating rather than underestimating, we will go with 10 litres per minute. Baths are estimated to contain

about 80 litres of water and, interestingly, the estimated time of the average shower is about eight minutes. That places baths and showers equal in terms of water usage, but it also gives shower-lovers the power to make a difference, because baths need to be filled whereas shower length is up to the user. Taking just two or three minutes off your shower time will save 20 to 30 litres of water and will also reduce energy consumption. It requires energy to move every litre of water you use from a drinking water source to a treatment plant to your home. Indeed, the US Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that just running a tap for five minutes uses as much energy as letting a 60-watt bulb run for 22 hours. Shorter showers for you mean humanity gets to have showers for a lot longer.

The health and environmental impacts of showers are substantial, but they are no more important than the creative potential that showers can unlock.

Creative flow

There is a psychological phenomenon known as the "shower effect", which boils down to the fact that great leaps in thought often occur in the shower. It is why

showering can lead to thoughts like: "What if, instead of making you more alert, caffeine made you more compassionate?" or "What if cockroaches smelt like lavender?"

You probably know this experience yourself, when, during a shower as the water trickles across your shoulders, an unbidden thought finds its way into your mind. This effect is not debated, but what is disputed is why it occurs. To settle some of the questions cognitive scientist Zachary Irving of the University of Virginia has conducted experiments in recent years. Irving's findings suggest that unwaveringly focusing on a task reduces creativity. However, doing something that is a moderately engaging activity leads to more novel thinking and creative ideas. Moderately engaging tasks are those that place some constraints on thought but are not demanding. A shower fits that description perfectly: it is engaging but occupies just enough of your cognitive processes to let your thoughts flow free. 🌀

Terry Robson is a writer, broadcaster, television presenter, speaker, author and journalist. He is Editor-in-Chief of WellBeing Magazine. Connect with Terry at terryrobson.com.



Clare Ainsworth Herschell

Spend 10 minutes with our Paradigm Shifters, the people who are shaping the ideas that will take us into the future. Meet philanthropist, climate changemaker and co-founder of Groundswell Giving, Clare Ainsworth Herschell.

Interview KATE HOLLAND



Clare Ainsworth Herschell is the co-founder of Groundswell Giving, a giving platform for climate action that has raised and distributed over \$1.7 million in just three short years.

What does it mean to be a philanthropist?

The word philanthropy means “love of humankind” in its Greek origins. Most people are practising philanthropy in some way, whether they’re giving time, talent or treasure to causes that matter to them. Too often people imagine a “philanthropist” to be the stereotypical old rich white guy, but there are so many people giving in a multitude of ways in their everyday lives, and there are so many ways to give. A \$20 donation, volunteering your time at a nursing home or helping out by using a skill like photography to support a non-profit makes you just

as much a philanthropist as those giving \$10,000 or more. It’s a collective effort, which is the beauty of being part of a giving circle like Groundswell.

How do you start your day?

In total chaos! I’m not a morning person but I have school-aged kids and their bus leaves at 7am, so that first hour of the day begins reluctantly with an affront from my alarm clock and a flurry of school preparations.

What does ambition look like for you?

A sleep in! Other than that, my ambition is to play a role in getting Australia to do its part in limiting global warming to 1.5°C. It’s hugely ambitious, and we’re running out of time, but the goal is driven out of necessity for the future of my children and all the things we know and love in this world that will be impacted by the climate

crisis. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed, but taking action is the antidote to despair. And there’s now huge momentum in Australia in politics, business and the community — most Australians share this ambition.

Ambition for me is a collective thing. It’s about what we can achieve together, not the fairy tale that anyone can solve the climate crisis on their own, no matter how hard they work. I’m fortunate that my two Groundswell co-founders Anna Rose and Arielle Gamble are total visionaries and we’re all close friends, so everything feels more achievable with them alongside.

How do you create work-life balance?

My kids are what drives me in committing my energies to climate action, but it’s a constant juggle between spending time with family and time on climate advocacy. Some days, I must remind myself to slow



... all the solutions we need to turn things around for our climate and environment already exist — we just have to scale them up all over the world, and fast.

down and spend precious time with the kids while they're still young. Unfortunately, we're living through the critical decade for climate action and scientists have given us a 2030 deadline to turn things around before the Earth risks hitting critical "tipping points" — thresholds in the Earth's system after which the damage is irreversible. Twenty thirty is also the year that my youngest will graduate from high school. I'm doing what I can to make sure my son and other young people can leave school and enter the world with the hope for the future they all deserve.

Please talk to us about your giving platform Groundswell Giving.

Groundswell is a giving platform for climate action that I set up with two friends during the Black Summer fires. Millions of dollars were going to (much-needed) relief efforts for the Rural Fire Service and wildlife carers, but so little funding was going into advocacy to turn around Australia's shocking track record on climate change, which fuels extreme weather events like the bushfires.

Groundswell is open to everyone. Anyone can become a Groundswell member online by pitching in \$20 a week or \$1000 per year. The more members who join, the more grants are made, and we all get to vote on a shortlist of amazing climate non-profits every grant round, so it's also a fantastic way to learn about what's going on. To date, we have raised and distributed over \$1.7 million directly, and acted as a clearinghouse for larger donors who use our vetting processes as a shortcut in their own philanthropy.

Groundswell also offers gratis memberships to First Nations change-makers as recognition that First

Nations people are on the front lines of climate change and have traditionally been excluded from decision-making processes about the distribution of philanthropic funding.

What does a world in balance look like for you?

All our actions have a ripple effect beyond our line of sight. We need to take a more holistic view in all the ecosystems we're part of, whether it's our family, workplace, government or the natural world. Think about long-term, not just short-term consequences. Think about the whole system, not just the parts.

In terms of a practical vision of what a world in balance could look like, I recommend the film *2040* which paints a positive vision of what the world could look like if we scaled up the best of the solutions we have available today. The good news is that all the solutions we need to turn things around for our climate and environment already exist — we just have to scale them up all over the world, and fast.

How can people harness their own unique power to give?

No one can give everything, but everyone can give something — and we give collectively, it makes a big impact. This is exactly why we set up Groundswell: to make it easy to start funding effective climate advocacy, together. It's the easiest place to start, at \$20 a week, and you learn so much about the fantastic work happening in the climate movement that is so critical to fund in the time we have left to turn things around on climate. If \$20 a week is too much right now, consider a group or family membership:

find three others so you can each chip in \$5 a week. Or take a look at the list of previous Groundswell grantees — fantastic organisations like Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network, Farmers for Climate Action, Frontrunners, Our Islands Our Home, Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action — and give directly to them.

What are three non-negotiables we should be doing for our planet right now?

- 1** Climate scientist and author Dr Katharine Hayhoe says the most important thing you can do to tackle climate change is talk about it! So share why climate change matters to you with your family, friends, colleagues, Uber drivers, people you sit next to on the bus ... We simply can't solve a problem that isn't talked about.
- 2** Write an email to your local council, state and federal politicians and let them know climate change matters to you and helps determine who you vote for. Politics can seem overwhelming at times, but if we don't make our voices heard to decision-makers, they'll hear more from the coal and gas lobbyists who want to expand fossil fuels than they will from the vast majority of people who want climate action.
- 3** At home — get off the gas! Gas is a polluting fossil fuel, and dangerous for your family's health. Switch to induction, and make sure you have green electricity or solar to ensure the electricity powering it is clean too.

What's next for you personally?

A glorious nap, I hope! 🌿

For more visit groundswellgiving.org



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Discover how you can build your self-trust, allowing you to make decisions with more confidence, back yourself more fully and find your voice, so that you can live with a deeper sense of alignment, belonging and authenticity.

Words JESSICA LEE

It's not always easy to trust yourself. In life there are often differing opinions, expectations and desires pulling you in opposing directions. It can be challenging to hear your own inner voice. It can be even harder to find the courage to allow intuition to direct your decision-making process. The more you trust yourself, however, the more your confidence grows and the more aligned your life becomes.

What is self-trust?

In their *Psychology Today* article, "Self-trust and how to build it", relationship experts Linda and Charlie Bloom say, "The definition of self-trust is the firm reliance on the integrity of yourself." They note that people who are self-trusting "... have clarity and confidence in their choices. They are interdependent, which includes healthy dependency, not overly dependent or hyper-independent. They speak with authority that comes from a deep place within but is not arrogant. They are good observers and have cultivated the ability to learn from their experiences, both the successes and failures."

I interviewed yoga and meditation teacher Naomi McGowan of Inner Resonance about self-trust and she said, "Self-trust is neither earned nor gained — it is innate. Self-trust arises from listening deeply to your inner wisdom and choosing (consciously or otherwise) to

be guided by the sacred whispers of your heart. It can be forgotten, remembered, strengthened and rebuilt."

I know I'm not alone in saying that I haven't always found self-trust easy. Going through a chronic illness early in my 20s undermined my self-trust. As doctors questioned what I was going through and didn't always believe my experiences, I too started to second-guess myself. I stopped trusting what I knew was happening in my body and my life.

"The definition of self-trust is the firm reliance on the integrity of yourself."

I also stopped making decisions for myself as I was simply too exhausted and too scared to get things "wrong". I often said, "I'm happy with whatever you want" or "You decide". Of course, when you let what matters to other people become more important than what you need, you begin to lose your sense of self.

While I went through this illness over a decade ago, it's taken time and conscious work to come back to a place of self-trust. I've done some deep soul work to tap into my inner wisdom and to feel more comfortable making decisions that are right for me. McGowan says, "At the

heart of self-trust is remembering your worth and seeing yourself as a whole and complete being of value."

Are you struggling with self-trust? Do you want to feel more confident in your decision-making process? There are practical steps you can take to tune in to your inner wisdom and build your courage to make more aligned choices in your life.

7 Steps to build self-trust

Get to know yourself

To trust yourself you first need to *know* yourself. You need to know what you want, what matters to you and why it matters to you. Getting to know yourself requires time to pause and reflect. McGowan says, "First ask *yourself*, rather than looking externally." She says, "When you find yourself in a situation needing a response, take a moment to consciously invite your awareness to drop down from your head to your heart and then ask what is needed."

For me, the quickest way to build deeper self-knowledge over the years has been through journaling. I've used journal writing to make more aligned decisions in my life, especially when I've felt overwhelmed by pressures, obligations and expectations. Journaling helps me see my values with more clarity and helps me not get lost in others' opinions and people-pleasing.

Get to know yourself by spending time with yourself. McGowan suggests you "prioritise regular time for self-care. Spend





As you invest time in what helps you relax and reset, you will have more mental and emotional energy to make better decisions in your life, helping you to build your self-trust.

some quiet time each day with yourself, in an environment that minimises distractions — perhaps in meditation, sitting in nature, mindful walking or breath awareness.”

Get brave and decisive

If you're always making decisions with others in mind, you will struggle to feel aligned and fulfilled in your life. Building self-trust involves a healthy dose of selfishness. You need to know when a certain decision crosses a line for you and then be brave enough to speak up and make different decisions in your life.

McGowan says, “Clear internal boundaries — being authentic in your ‘No’ supports self-trust to thrive from a place of integrity.” She goes on to say, “Becoming more comfortable in your own skin, recognising your internal boundaries and standing firm with gentleness creates a nurturing environment for self-trust to begin to flourish.”

You can actively rewire your brain and build your self-trust by making more decisions for yourself, but that does mean being more vulnerable. As psychologist Elisha Goldstein says, “We can't learn to trust ourselves without being vulnerable. You need one to build the other.” Vulnerability can feel scary, but it has the power to transform your life.

Vulnerability expert Brené Brown says, “Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”

Start speaking up and make more decisions for yourself. Notice when you are about to defer to others, or to say “I don't mind” or “You choose”, and instead share your thoughts and opinions and stand by them.

Be guided by your values

Do you use your values to guide you and give you confidence in your decision-making? To counter others' expectations of you, return to your core values. Get clear on what matters to you. When making decisions, ask yourself, “Will this decision allow me to live my values more fully?” or “Would this decision move me away from what matters most to me?”

While your decisions won't always turn out as you'd hoped, when you make choices based on your values you can trust that you made the right decision for you. Being true to yourself matters. McGowan says, “Make a conscious choice to remain in your integrity, through your thoughts, words and actions.”

Adopt a growth mindset

Does the fear of getting things “wrong” stop you from making decisions? If you're a perfectionist, building self-trust can be challenging. You may know deep down what you want to say or do, but fear stops you. I know this has been something I've struggled with, until a good friend said to me, “Jess, there's no ‘perfect’ decision. Every decision has both positive and negative aspects.”

If you feel the intense pressure to always make the “right” choice, adopting a growth mindset can help. Having a growth mindset means giving yourself permission to try, learn, fail and grow. Being too hard on yourself will stop you from being able to trust yourself and your decisions — it will keep you stuck.

As McGowan says, “Be patient, kind and gentle with yourself, as you might be with someone you care for deeply.” You won't always “get it right” and that's OK. Even when your decisions don't turn out as you expected, good things can flow. Often, you'll find that you cope far better than you think you will. Be kinder and trust your ability to be resourceful and resilient.

Protect your energy

Do you find it harder to trust yourself when you're tired? I know I do. When I get tired or overwhelmed it's harder to make decisions. A tired and stressed brain doesn't work as well as a relaxed and well-rested brain. You may find that exhaustion and brain fatigue mean you defer to others more often, instead of backing your own ideas and choices.

Protecting your energy, therefore, is an important part of building self-trust and making better decisions. Make sure you are investing in your wellbeing and the activities that re-energise you. What do you do each day, week and month to re-energise? Does being in nature reset you? Does a gym workout help you release stress? Or maybe a social catch-up with friends or an art class is how you like to

unwind. Make a list of the things you like to do to re-energise and ensure they are part of your weekly or monthly routine.

In addition, get good rest and sleep and take regular breaks throughout your work day to protect your energy levels. As you invest time in what helps you relax and reset, you will have more mental and emotional energy to make better decisions in your life, helping you to build your self-trust.

Tune into your body

Do you struggle with overthinking? As incredible as your brain is at problem-solving, sometimes the deeper wisdom you need comes through your body. Tuning into your body can help you make better decisions and build your self-trust and self-knowledge.

When I was a kid, I discovered a hack that helped me determine what I *actually* wanted when my logical brain wasn't sure. When I was trying to decide between two options, I'd flip a coin. In the moment when I saw the result as either heads or tails, my body would





react. I would either feel a sense of relief, happiness and expansion, or alternatively, a tightening, shrinking and sinking feeling. My body would give me instant feedback.

In the moment when your “thinking” brain is bypassed, your body shows you what you actually want. Your body doesn’t lie. Pay attention to the subtle signs of your body to build your self-trust and make more aligned choices in your life. Check in with yourself daily, tuning in to your body’s wisdom:

- How is my body feeling today?
- What do I need today?
- What do I need to let go of?
- When I think about making this decision, how does my body feel?

Tap into your intuition

As you tune into your body you may also notice you receive more intuitive guidance. Your voice of intuition is likely to be a subtle voice, often quiet, speaking in imagery, sensations, short words or sentences. Maybe you have had a prompt to call someone or a one-word answer to a question you’ve been pondering.

Caroline Myss, spiritual writer, says, “Becoming a clear intuitive is the result of developing self-esteem. If you do not trust your inner self, you will not listen to your inner self.” Sheila Vijayarasa, spiritual writer, says in her book *Brave*, “We must believe we hold the truth and that it does not reside outside ourselves, that the truth does not lie with our parents, friend, boss or partner.”

Mindfulness practices that slow your rational thinking brain down can help you tune in to your body wisdom and intuition. For me, intuitive messages come while walking, after meditating, while journaling and in dreams. To hear your subtle voice of intuition, slow down and be still. Create time and routines that help you tap into your intuition and hear the guidance that is there.

Listen in for those subtle prompts and resist the urge to rationalise them away — instead, be open and curious. McGowan says, “Listen deeply to your embodied experience. When you become aware of a gut feeling or intuition, listen and act upon it.

“It’s an exciting journey learning to trust yourself. Small, achievable steps will help build a strong and steady foundation for self-trust to grow in a sustainable way” explains McGowan. Give yourself permission to learn and grow, to slow down and be still so you can listen to your body and your intuition.

Building your self-trust means being honest with yourself, reconnecting with your values and being braver than you may have been in the past. The braver and more confident you become, the better able you are to live the life you feel called to live and to feel a deeper sense of fulfilment and purpose. 🌱

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Lessons in love

Science says self-love is a superpower, so why aren't more of us practising it?

Words CHARLIE HALE

If you have ever stood in front of a mirror and told your reflection you love them, you might be familiar with the sense of idiocy that washed over me as I faced my bathroom mirror, searching for a scrap of authenticity in the words I had just spoken. If only self-love were that easy.

The words felt contrived, and not at all “me”. I wanted to love myself, but I probably wasn’t going to find it within some cookie-cutter wellbeing exercise. Self-love is perhaps the greatest love of all, but it’s also the hardest.

I have never been good at it. My inadequacies shine bright and, more often than not, I view my achievements as simply what needed to be done. Yes, woe is me. And yet I don’t know many people who can honestly say they haven’t experienced the feeling of not being enough, or even nearly enough. It’s hardly peer-reviewed data, but sometimes personal experience trumps the numbers; science is great, but it’s not a heart-to-heart with your best girlfriend, it doesn’t know the things you say to yourself just before you drift off to sleep.

In the past, when I have made mistakes, I’ve been quick to chastise and reject myself. I have felt guilt for passing on social occasions, guilt for not being further along in my career, guilt for not providing my daughter with a permanent home, mum guilt — all the guilts, in fact.

Lately though, I have been wondering why I am so hard on myself; who does this serve? There was a time when my high standards proved to be a powerful engine; they got me to where I wanted to go, but self-flagellation only gets you so far. That engine of doubt will inevitably burn out.

Often the stories we tell ourselves become outdated and need to be revised. Mine were longing to have the bonnet pulled up and be inspected. But the idea of self-love, and much of the conversation around it, has always rung a little self-absorbed to me — a way of letting yourself off the hook when you haven’t met the mark.

To me, the kingdom of self-love was just abstract “fluff”, but I was wrong — the science proves it to be anything but insubstantial. Studies have shown



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that people higher in self-love have greater happiness and resilience and less depression, anxiety and shame. They are also rated as more compassionate and generous by their loved ones.

Researchers from the Australian Catholic University in Sydney found that self-love reduces the link between perfectionism and depression. People who are kinder to themselves have been shown to be more resilient in the face of adversity and recover more easily after trauma. They are also more likely to be successful and productive, and more likely to stick to healthy lifestyle choices than people who shame themselves.

Self-love, then, is a psychological asset not to be sniffed at, even by its most fervent naysayers, like me.

But if it doesn't come naturally to you, can you cultivate compassion, even tenderness, for yourself? Absolutely, you can. Here are a few of the lessons I've learned so far.

Lesson #1: You don't have to be perfect to be worthy of love and kindness

Everyone deserves to feel love. Yes, everyone. The people you think don't deserve it are likely a product of the absence of self-love. You don't have to be perfect, great or even good to be worthy of love. In fact, the days when you're not even "good" are when you need to love yourself the most.

Lesson #2: It's not about letting yourself off the hook

Self-love isn't about being self-indulgent or lazy, it's about adopting a growth mindset. *What can I learn from this? How can I grow?*

Imagine your best friend coming to you after a failure. How would you react? What would you say? Your brain might be saying, "But you should be better." We are much more capable of viewing other people's "flaws" in an objective light. Try to wedge some distance between yourself and your "failures". Consider that your shortcomings don't make you less than, they make you *more* human. When you frame them in kindness, it's much easier to find the courage to face the parts of you that make you uncomfortable and, in turn, it becomes much easier to learn and grow. Be on your own team.

Fittingly, "I am on my own team" turned out to be the affirmation that

worked for me in those early days of mirror chat. You could also try: "Good morning [name]," or "I am enough".

Lesson #3: Love is hard, self-love is even harder

If you've ever been in love, you will have experienced the feeling of vulnerability it brings; it can make you feel unguarded, stripped bare. Self-love conjures the same vulnerability because it asks you to see yourself as an imperfect whole, and some parts of yourself will be more difficult to look at than others. That's OK. You don't have to look at them all at once and you don't have to love all of your stories, but you should be gentle with yourself. Tread with caution and compassion.

Lesson #4: Remember the science

When we act with self-love, we trigger the release of the love hormone oxytocin, and some of the happy hormones endorphins. Together, these hormones fight stress in your physical body and increase feelings of support. When you treat yourself with kindness, you deactivate your threat-defence system and switch on your capacity for growth.

Likewise, when you shame and berate yourself, you switch to defence mode and shut down the learning centres of the brain. There is no such thing as "tough" love, only compassionate love.

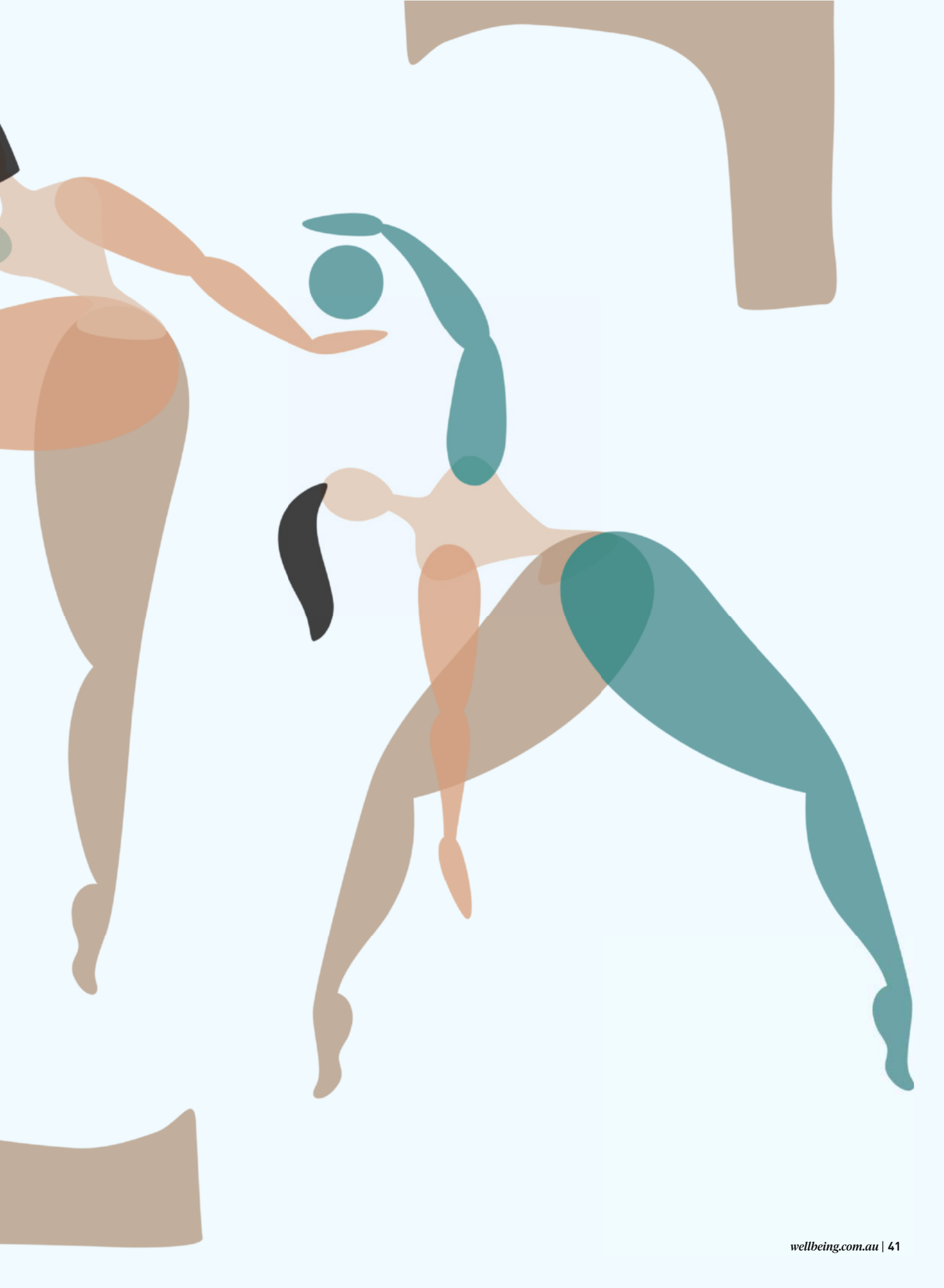
Contrary to popular belief, resilience isn't learned by experiencing many hardships, but by cultivating a strong growth mindset whenever you face a challenge. If you want to be strong, first you must be vulnerable.

Lesson #5: Practise, practise and practise again

You don't arrive in the kingdom of self-love by accident. But self-love can be learned, and the more you practise being gentle with yourself, the more you strengthen the pathways in the brain that control compassion and kindness to yourself and others. Simply being nice to yourself, then, can begin to reverse a lifetime of self-judgement, guilt and shame. 🌱

Charlie Hale is an English-born journalist who writes about a plethora of things women care about, from pasta to politics and everything in between.







mind
FLYING SOLO





Party of one

Some people leapfrog from relationship to relationship, settling for someone who isn't right for them because of the fear of being alone instead of taking the time to find out who they really are. Being single should be as validated and respected by society as coupledness is, but it's not always the case. Explore the unexpected joys of being single and discover positive ways to find meaning and peace in being single.

Words CARROL BAKER

Flying solo, going stag, being footloose and fancy free — there are countless ways to describe those who are single by choice, after a partnership breakdown or when a spouse dies.

Some people leapfrog from relationship to relationship, settling for someone who maybe isn't right for them, because of the fear of being alone. But being single can be empowering; it's an opportunity to take a journey of self-discovery, to lead a rich, inspired and fulfilling life.

Whether you are single for now or choose to be single for life, you are not broken and you don't need to be fixed. Yet popular culture paints a vastly different picture.

Being single should be as validated and respected by society as coupledness is, but it's not always the case. Narrative therapist Nicole Hind says part of the problem is that we're a family-centric society. "Children, families, partners and finding love can make us feel that there is all there is, and if we are single then we have missed the boat," she says.

Across the globe, singledom has indeed copped a bad rap. Social scientist Bella DePaulo collated data from 1000 American undergraduates who were asked to note characteristics of married versus singles. Married people were far more likely to be seen as mature, happy, kind and honest. On the flip side, singles were described as immature, self-centred, unhappy and lonely. There's no doubt that if others

see singles as less than, it can negatively impact on how singles see themselves.

It's not just the younger generation in the Western world who perceive being single as undesirable. In China, the term *sheng nu* which translates to "leftover women" is a term coined by the All-China Women's Federation for unmarried women.

In parts of India, police are even getting involved. Is being single a crime? According to *The Times of India*, if you are a young man of marriageable age, being single is just not on. In 2019, Panoor police surveyed young unmarried men in 9000 households to try to find a solution for their singleness.

Single-shaming is also swayed by gender. Single men are called bachelors, and sometimes perceived as suave and carefree, while women are called spinsters — they're desperate and plonked firmly on the shelf. It's little wonder women are still banging their heads against a glass ceiling — and it's not going to crack any time soon. Counsellor and psychotherapist Melissa Ferrari says at some level the perceptions are slowly changing, but there's still a long way to go. "It persists and still contributes to the inequality that continues to exist between the sexes," she says.

The unintentional faux pas

"Are you still single? Don't worry, you'll meet someone soon," your friend says soothingly over a latte, while jabbing you in the ribs when a good-looking bloke walks past. Well-intentioned friends and relatives



Friends shape who we are. They offer comfort, camaraderie and a shoulder to cry on when we need it most.

might ask the question or arrange a few blind dates to “help” your single status.

Ferrari says it’s often well-meaning, and that any barbs fired your way are probably unintentional. “People can be inconsiderate — they just don’t think. Some people are very OK with being single, but others aren’t,” she says. “For those who want to be partnered it can be likened to saying to someone having IVF treatment, ‘When are you having a baby?’”

Having a clever comeback or throwing out a challenge when someone asks about your status can also be empowering. Hind suggests, if someone says, “I can’t believe you are single,” smile, make eye contact and use a playful phrase, “I like going solo,” or challenge them: “Hey, do you want to question that for a moment — why do you think everyone *has* to be partnered?”

Don’t settle petal

For many singles, the relentless search is on to find your “person”. The saying “my other half” is often bandied about by those with partners. Terms like this imply that you are less than, if you’re going it alone. Movies like *Jerry Maguire*, when Tom Cruise gets the girl, telling her “You complete me,” do little for the singles cause.

In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, while swigging from a champagne bottle and wallowing in her singledom, Bridget belts out a mournful “All by Myself” in the opening credits. Being single doesn’t mean you need to be sad.

Even so, Hind acknowledges many are indeed looking for someone else to complete us. “And sometimes we don’t know ourselves very well, so we don’t find someone suitable, or we’re in such a rush we jump in too quickly,” she notes.

While men seem to have been more fortunate with the bachelor label and all it implies, women seem to cope better when relationships end. Hind says many men repartner quite quickly because they don’t want to be alone. “Going through separation is unbearable and they think they have to fix it,” she says. So they need to be in a new relationship to do that. While women have their tribe — intimate friendships with other women — men often don’t.

Alone or lonely?

Those who are alone aren’t necessarily lonely. German researcher Anne Böger says that partnership status is a central

predictor of loneliness, that yes, those who are single can feel lonelier than those who are partnered. But age is *also* a predictor of loneliness. Her research showed older people feel less lonely regardless of whether they are partnered or not.

Loneliness is a feeling of disconnect from others, and that can happen in partnerships and marriages too. Ferrari says loneliness in relationships can hurt even more. “For singles, there’s still that spirit of hopefulness — maybe I’ll meet someone one day?” she says. “Loneliness in a marriage can be soul-crushing.”

If both parties agree they still want to be in the partnership, Ferrari suggests an exercise called “eye gazing”, which is locking eyes with your partner for two minutes a day. “This creates curiosity and excitement; when we’ve been together a while, we stop paying attention because we think we know our partner,” she explains. Learning to co-regulate, by going to bed and waking at the same time (if you can’t go to bed at the same time, then tuck your partner in) and hello and goodbye hugs also help. “If couples are lonely, it’s usually because they don’t feel as though they are in sync,” she says.

You are single but don’t want to be?

While some are single by choice, others self-sabotage relationships, or don’t think they are good enough, and as a result they’re missing out on opportunities to make meaningful connections with others.

Ferrari says it’s a complex issue, and chatting to experts to dig deep can be helpful. “Exploring how you have been shaped psychologically through your childhood and through your caregivers helps you to understand your own vulnerabilities,” she says.

It also helps to look at how you’ve behaved in previous relationships. Ferrari says this helps you to understand who you really are in relationships. “What is your attachment style? Are you avoidant, anxious or secure in relationships?” This impacts on how you relate to a partner.

Get set to soar

Being your authentic self means celebrating who you are and doing what you can to create the life you want. You don’t need someone to rescue you from your own life — live your life your way.

There are so many benefits to flying solo, from lazy lie-ins on the weekend to being able to eat a whole tub of chocolate ice-cream by yourself. You can dance naked in your lounge room (don’t forget to draw the blinds), travel to Tibet or belly-gaze on a beach in Bali at a moment’s notice.

Being single means you can do what you want when you want. You can spend your time purposefully, nourish the friendships in your life or go after that big promotion at work without feeling you’re neglecting your partner.

Singledom gives you more time to focus not only on discovering who you are, but to lend a helping hand to others. It’s been shown that those who help others are more confident, resourceful and resilient; it also allows them to make meaningful connections with others.

Love me, love me not

You need to believe that you are worth loving — and we all are. Self-love isn’t thinking you are superior or better than others: it’s treating yourself with kindness and respect, it’s nurturing your spirit.

Ferrari notes, “Self-love isn’t just about bubble baths and indulging yourself, it really is about getting to know who you are.” If you aren’t happy in your own skin, if your self-confidence needs a boost, work on that. Look at being single as a precious gift. Take the time to discover who you really are. Begin a journey of self-discovery, try new things, flex your creative muscles. Get fit and active and boost those feel-good happy hormones. Believe in yourself and the power of the universe.

If you are struggling, know that you can’t all be happy all the time, whether you’re single or not. It’s OK to feel sad, hurt, worried or lonely. Hind says you need to embrace your emotions, to experience them. “But you also need to take care of yourself in them, and reach out to others if you feel vulnerable,” she says. “Remember all feelings are OK, but not all the stories they tell us are true.”

If you are feeling overwhelmed by emotions, Hind says it can help to physically hug yourself as if you are a child. “People are often surprised when they really lean into that practice, and do it regularly, your body will begin to calm down,” she says.

Try a date night with yourself

How often do we see singles eat toast for dinner, or an old fast-food takeaway that tried to grow legs and run as they reached for it at the back of the fridge?

Break out the fine china and prepare food you love. Take yourself off to see a movie solo, or buy some delicious chocolates and enjoy the lot, one tiny bite at a time. Don't wait for someone to give you flowers — buy your own — that's what Tara Schuster, author of *Buy Yourself the F*cking Lilies*, did. She began a journey of self-awareness. It's the story of Tara's path to re-parenting herself and becoming a "ninja of self-love". You can too, through simple daily rituals — a morning stretch and meditation — and doing what you can to heal your emotional wounds.

Be brave. We are often scared to do things on our own, but the payoff can be a boost in confidence. It might feel risky for some, but when we do, we feel proud.

Be gentle

Friends shape who we are. They offer comfort, camaraderie and a shoulder to cry on when we need it most. Ferrari says positive people connections are very important when you are single. "Go where

the love is if you haven't got a romantic love in your life," she says. "Be with people who love you, and you have fun with."

And remember, it's OK to be you, whether you want to be partnered or not. As Catherine Gray, author of *The Unexpected Joy of Being Single*, points out, the modern dating landscape is a minefield. We want "soul mate" marriages whereas our predecessors were willing to settle for "you'll do" marriages, she writes. Sometimes in the past women virtually had to marry to survive — we don't have to.

Now women and men are single because we can be. We can take our time

to choose, and we don't have to settle for less than we deserve.

If you are single, challenging societal stereotyping of what it means to be single will be an uphill battle. While you are perched on top of that mountain, gazing out at the endless possibilities that await you, know that you are enough.

Let it be your triumph of truth. You can be single and live a fulfilled, happy life, your way. 🌈

Carrol Baker is a freelance journalist who writes for lifestyle and health magazines across Australia and New Zealand.





Introducing Australia's 2022 Natural Medicine Award Winners

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) each year hosts the ATMS Natural Medicine Awards where practitioners, natural medicine clinics and students have their hard work recognised and celebrated.

In November 2022, ATMS hosted the Natural Medicine Awards in Sydney, flying in all the finalists to come together in person.

The winners for each category **Practitioner of the Year**, **Clinic of the Year** and **Student of the Year** were announced. It was a lovely evening of celebration and it was great to reconnect with everyone in person.

The keynote speaker for the event was **Tammy Guest**, business mentor, naturopath, entrepreneur, speaker, author, mother and helicopter pilot. She spoke about being a leader in your space, how we all have different skill sets so we need to make sure we're visible to everyone who needs us so no one falls through the net.

ATMS congratulates all the 2022 winners and highly commended finalists for the ATMS Natural Medicine Awards.

Meet your ATMS 2022 PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR

Dedicated to Dorothy Hall
for Practitioner Excellence



Jayne Sharpham

Naturopath, Nutritionist & Herbalist
www.tamworthnaturopathy.com.au

Jayne has worked in the natural health field for over 18 years and owns Jayne Sharpham Naturopathics. Having a deep passion for natural health, Jayne has been able to help clients achieve a greater sense of wellbeing.

Living in the Tamworth area, Jayne loves the rural lifestyle and is proud to be helping those with their natural health care needs in this area.

We asked Jayne what this award means to her:

It's lovely to be recognised amongst my peers and industry leaders, especially after 18 years in the industry.

It is wonderful the work we are doing in Zambia is acknowledged - but not for my own reward - but so there is awareness of the needs of these people.

Fixing the client's diet, helping them with their gut health, reducing their stress, working on lifestyle factors, supporting their hormones etc are all ways I work with my clients to support their overall health and wellness.

As a practitioner in a rural area, it has been isolating and difficult over the years and this award encourages me to keep going! People in rural communities deserve quality health care just as much as those living in the city so I take great pride in supporting my local community.



Meet your ATMS 2022 CLINIC OF THE YEAR

Dedicated to Maurice Blackmore for Professionalism and Contribution to the Natural Medicine Industry



Goulds Natural Medicine Clinic
www.gouldsnaturalmedicine.com.au

Goulds Natural Medicine has a very long history in Hobart. Originally established in the late 1800s, it moved to its current site nearly 100 years ago and has become a Hobart institution.

Goulds Naturopathica changed hands in 2006 to the current owners, a collaboration between four Naturopaths (Dawn Whitten, Dr. Jason Hawrelak, Belinda Robson and Daniel Robson) and medicinal herb farmer, Greg Whitten. Goulds is what it is today because of the groundwork laid by four generations of predecessors and the combined contribution of an amazing, diverse and community-minded team working in many areas of Goulds Farm, Apothecary and Clinic.

We caught up with the Goulds team to see what they thought about the win:

We appreciate ATMS creating a space to recognise and celebrate contributions within the natural medicine field - creating a culture of appreciation and acknowledgement.

We look forward to continuing our work providing high-quality natural medicine care, to be a place of learning, a safe haven for grassroots practice and critical evidence-based practice and to contribute to the river of natural medicine learning.

We were surprised to win the award as we felt the other finalists were also deserving of the award. In particular, the Lismore Herbie Hub who have been a steady presence within Lismore providing herbal medicine support to those in need after the horrific floods of early 2022.

Meet your ATMS 2022 STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Dedicated to Peter Derig for Outstanding Student Achievement



Zoe Rosa
Endeavour College, NSW

Zoe Rosa is in her final year of Naturopathy at Endeavour College of Natural Health. During her time at the student clinic, she was able to support her clients and produce great results for them.

Zoe has been a part of volunteer programs including Lauren Lacey's Nutrition and Public Health volunteer programs. This involved going to Fiji and travelling the island to take blood pressure, BMI, blood glucose and heart rate tests. These tests were done with the goal of preventing diabetes from developing in these communities.

Zoe believes these volunteer programs are integral for students and practitioners to be a part of.

We asked Zoe what her award win meant to her:

This award means a lot to me. It feels special to be recognised for my work and contributions. I hope it also inspires other students to stay on their path and not give up on their dreams.

It took me a while to find a degree that felt truly aligned. No matter what other people say about your career or study choices, if you are passionate, you truly will excel and shine in it.

This award has motivated me to continue to give back to the community.

It also has inspired me, through seeing and meeting the other practitioners involved in this award and what others in the natural medicine field are doing for our community.

It has given me confidence to make the transition from college to starting my own natural medicine business.



Ikigai

It is one's reason for being, which in principle is the convergence of one's personal passions, beliefs, values and vocation: those who follow the concept of ikigai undertake the activities of their life with willingness and a satisfying sense of meaning.

What is the secret to a long and happy life? Some think it's finding your ikigai. A Japanese philosophy that embodies the idea of happiness in living, or your life's purpose, ikigai is comprised of two words: iki, meaning life, and gai, meaning value or worth. Ikigai is that driving force that gets you out of bed in the morning. It's the energy that powers you through dark times, knowing that brighter days are on the horizon. It's the intersection of your passion, strengths and ambition. To discover your own purpose, ask yourself: What am I good at? What do I love? What does the world need? With Japan having one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world, perhaps finding your ikigai could be the secret to a happier, healthier life.





Kumi Taguchi

Understanding vulnerability

In sharing her story, Insight host Kumi Taguchi learned the importance of holding a safe space for people to feel vulnerable and tell their truth.

Words SIMONE ZIAZIARIS

With a career in journalism spanning more than two decades, Kumi Taguchi has become intimately familiar with vulnerability.

The host of SBS's flagship current affairs program, *Insight*, has interviewed families who have lost their homes to bushfires, military personnel diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and people living with addiction, to name a few. But it wasn't until Taguchi documented and shared her own story that the journalist truly understood what she asks people to do daily.

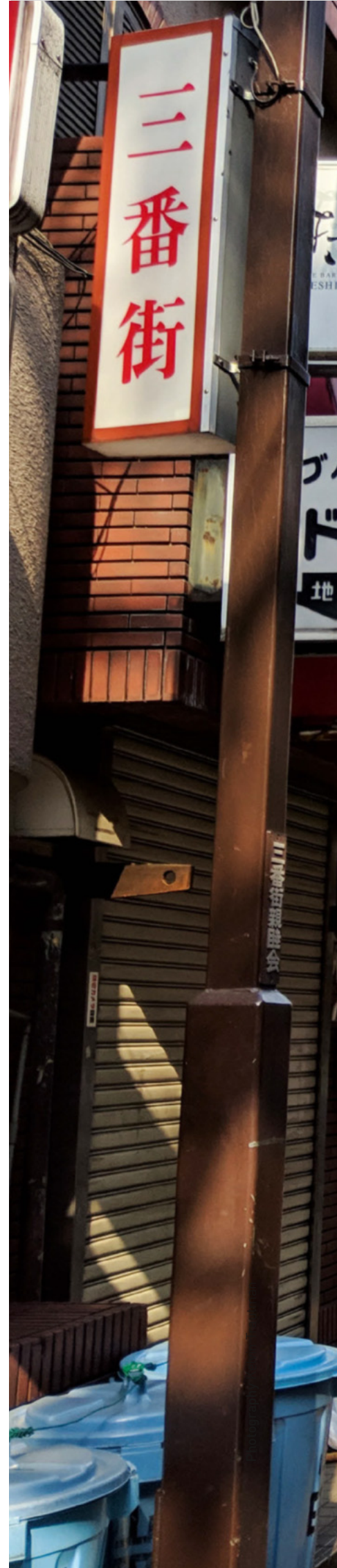
In 2019, when she was the host of the ABC's *Compass*, Taguchi was encouraged by her team to explore her story of belonging. Her father, Akira, had passed away two years earlier, but his relatives in Japan were still unaware of his passing. Interested in understanding her father's

relationship with Japan and her own sense of identity, Taguchi set out to share her story. Her team planned the program over a series of months, but the idea of a documentary focusing on Taguchi's life felt deeply uncomfortable to her.

"As a journalist, I feel like our credibility is nearly based on the fact that we aren't the story, and I've always had visible resistance to journalists becoming the story," she says. "My boss at the time said to me identity is a very big thing to get your head around, and she had a belief that the bigger the concept, the closer in you have to go to a story.

"It wasn't so much me desperately wanting to reveal all and go back to Japan and tell my story to strangers, but I could see that it was the best way to do justice to what we were trying to do as a unit."

They arrived at the peak of cherry blossom season. But about halfway





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While Taguchi has had to learn how to hold a safe space for people to open up and share their stories, the camaraderie in the room each week helps to lift the weight of people's stories.

through filming, Taguchi called it quits. She told her film crew that she wanted to stop, pack up and go home to Australia.

"I felt vulnerable," she says. "It was really, really interesting because it gave me a real insight into what we ask people as journalists when we ask them to share their stories. I've interviewed hundreds and hundreds of people in my career, and I knew that it was hard, but I didn't realise how difficult and how vulnerable that experience can make you feel. It's given me the biggest insight and gratitude. Each week when I walk into that *Insight* studio, and these people are sharing stuff that is so personal, I have so much admiration for them," she says.

Her producer convinced her to push on, and the show, *Taguchi's Japan*, went to air in 2019. Afterwards, Taguchi received messages from viewers who shared their own experiences. "There is something powerful if you share a story that's authentic and genuine," she says. "I think it gives permission to others to feel a certain way, and maybe a certain part of their own journey is unlocked."

Struggling with identity

Taguchi's passion for Japan has only grown deeper over the years. Her love of the culture, politeness, attention to

detail and the feeling of safety is evoked each time she lands in the country. She recalls the smell of *senbei*, Japanese rice crackers, wafting from a corner shop in a small corner of Tokyo and the warm, old-fashioned academic feel of a member-based hotel where she would stay (and still stays) during her visits.

"This one building in Tokyo has been the only consistent bricks and mortar place in my life that I've known," Taguchi says, explaining she was born in Melbourne before moving to Sydney and later to NSW's Southern Highlands.

While her father was born in Japan, Taguchi's Australian mum spoke and taught Japanese and ran a business creating clothes from traditional Japanese woven fabrics. "Our homes were always quite Aussie homes but also quite 'Japanesey'," the *Insight* host says. "We sat on the floor often to eat dinner; bowls, plates and cups and things we had were Japanese; and a lot of our meals were Japanese. But I never thought it was Japanese. It was just normal — what we grew up with."

Despite Taguchi's love of Japan, her feelings towards her Japanese heritage have shifted over the years. In her adolescent years, she struggled with identity and the perceptions of her culture

— particularly when at school studying World War II, Australian prisoners of war and the bombing of Darwin.

"I do remember feeling a bit of shame around my background. There was very much, 'Japan is the enemy'. I remember distinctly feeling quite conscious that that was my people, but I'm Aussie — this sort of conflict," she admits. "There was definitely a sense of loss. I just remember wishing and thinking that if I were blond-haired and blue-eyed, life would be easy, which is clearly not rational, but it was definitely a sort of desire to not be [from] the background that I was."

Taguchi's experiences have helped shape how she approaches her work and the sensitive topics she tackles as the host of *Insight*. But while being the centre of a story taught her to understand the other side of vulnerability, she says music has also played a crucial role in her career.

From age five, Taguchi trained as a classical violinist, eventually practising six hours daily and landing a music scholarship at university. She says her music training discipline and the multitasking skills she learned when playing in orchestras and with other musicians put her in good stead to become a broadcast journalist.

"I think probably the biggest benefit of my music training is that it is training. It's an incredible discipline," Taguchi says. "With a live broadcast, there are five or 10 different things competing for your brain's attention — you will have this in your ear, a director telling you something and a producer telling you something, and then you've got to concentrate on where you're standing, what you're saying and listening



to whoever's talking as well as planning your next question. "What you're playing, [you're] reading the music, looking at the conductor, listening to the violinist next to you, looking over to the cellist and seeing their cue for the next bar where you've got to come in — it is insane what's happening in your brain at that time.

"I think that [violin performing] has actually been the best training ground for my career. The multitasking discipline has actually translated unbelievably to a sort of live news multitasking environment in a way that I never would have imagined."

Perseverance pays off

Despite a promising music career, Taguchi always had her eyes on becoming a journalist. She had a burning desire to know about the world and was fascinated by film, making her first doco at 14 years old and "begging" for work experience at Film Australia when she was 16.

"They kept rejecting me, and I just kept writing back. There was something about wanting to know about the world that I just couldn't let go of. I was obsessed with the Vietnam War and Agent Orange, and JFK's assassination — all that stuff during high school," she explains. "I always wanted to be part of telling stories. My career has probably taken twists and turns that I never would have imagined. There are so many lovely people that I meet every day who have something to say and who challenge my views, and so it just appeals to every single value that I hold close. I just feel like it's the industry for me."

In her career thus far, Taguchi has emceed the Invictus Games opening and

closing ceremonies, co-anchored shifts on the ABC News channel, filled in as host of 7.30, News Breakfast and ABC Radio Sydney's drive slot, and presented several news programs during her time working overseas in Hong Kong.

But as she's ticked major career aspirations off the list, her priorities and work desires have changed. "My whole career up until about 30 or 40 [years old] was kind of directed by what job I wanted," she says. "But it got to the point where I've done so many things — and I don't want to blow my own trumpet because I'm really not that confident — but I've done a lot of things that I wanted to do. I remember going home and thinking, I can't see what the next job is."

At the time, Taguchi was working in the relentless breaking news cycle. She wrote on a piece of paper: I want to work for a woman, in a small team that doesn't change and on content with a shelf life of more than a day. "I just had a feeling that that's what I needed in my next step," she says.

About a month later, the journalist was asked to host *Compass*, the ABC's long-running religion and ethics series. While Taguchi wasn't exclusively interested in religion, ethics and morality, the role meant working for a woman in a small team with content that lasted beyond a day.

"I thought, this is what I asked for, and this is going to be a massive shift, but I think I've got to do it, and I did. I'm a big believer in not getting complacent, and I always want to challenge myself to not be comfortable. The flow-on effect of that has been the next part of my career, and in a sense it took a different way of framing

what I wanted out of my job for me to make that decision," she says.

Embracing change

An advocate for throwing herself into new environments, Taguchi left the ABC a few years later to host SBS' award-winning Australian current affairs program, *Insight*. The weekly show features people from across Australia, sharing their first-person stories on various topics — from coercive control to addiction and Australia's 20-year involvement in Afghanistan.

Taguchi says while she has had to learn how to hold a safe space for people to open up and share their stories, the camaraderie in the room each week helps to lift the weight of people's stories. "It's as if there's a different level of understanding that happens in that space because people are having to speak in front of each other. When I think about it, there is no other space like it," she explains.

She believes filming in real time in a room where people openly share their stories can help change how we talk about difficult topics. "I tell myself that we're doing something really great in that room and that there isn't anyone who's there to unburden themselves without wanting to do so," she says. "Instead of feeling weighed down, I generally feel really proud and happy with what we do and grateful that we have a show that allows people that space." 🍷

Simone Ziazaris is a freelance journalist from Sydney who loves writing about the arts, sustainability and human rights. When she isn't at her computer typing, she is out and about taking film photos.



7 ways to motivate children

One of the most important ways to guide your child is through connecting their school and home learning experiences. The exploration of activities can allow for essential skill development as well as enjoyment.

Words SHELLEY ANN MORGAN

To become lifelong learners, it's important that children are motivated. Did you know that there are a range of strategies and activities that you can incorporate throughout your child's school life to help develop interest, build confidence and self-esteem and increase motivation? Ultimately the development of a range of skills and interests through school and home may allow a child to discover their passion, igniting the spark of lifelong learning.

First, it is important to understand how motivation works. There are two primary types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to behaviour that a person engages in because they personally find the task satisfying — for example, reading and learning about a topic in a book because you find the topic interesting. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to behaviour that a person engages in for external rewards — for example, reading and learning about a topic in a book because you want to receive higher grades. While we use both types of motivation throughout life, research has shown that students who are motivated intrinsically performed higher academically. It found that key intrinsic motivational factors that assisted with learning were students' desire to be involved, curiosity to find out more about their interests, challenge such as working out complex topics or tasks, and interaction such as creating social connections.

While it's not always possible to incorporate intrinsic motivators at school and at home — and students will use both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators — adding intrinsic motivators when possible can enhance learning or engagement in a particular task. To assist in your child's development and to help value lifelong learning, here are seven ways to increase motivation.

Find an interest or hobby

One of the best starting points is to help your child find an interest or hobby. If they do have a particular interest or hobby, try and build on it. Highly motivating activities for children are ones in which they can apply real-life situations to a learning task, which also provides meaning to an activity. One way this can be explored is through attending museums, which often cater to kids. Museum programs easily explain to children how things work and how particular topics relate to real-life situations.

Talking to your child about what specific programs are offered at the museum can enhance their natural curiosity and motivation to want to explore and learn more about a particular topic. For example, an early years (three- to five-year-olds) program once offered at the Australian Museum called Mini Explorers investigated minibeasts that could be found in our very own backyard. This topic can be easily discussed,



questioned (questions promote learning) and enjoyed by children. A trip to the museum can provide an opportunity to develop a child's interest or skills and can also end up being a fun day out.

Build social connections and increase skills

To facilitate learning, a child will need to feel connected to others. Kids' clubs can provide a sense of belonging and build trust, respect, connection and community with others. There is often a diverse range of kids' clubs within each community and school that can range from science, music, drama, photography, martial arts, sports, scouts and summer camps.

If you're having trouble working out what options to explore with your child, make a list of what they enjoy then decide whether the activity is suited for a club or class in your area. For example, if they enjoy experiments and investigation, explore science clubs. If your child draws or paints often, explore art classes (although some clubs may offer art). Inviting a friend or two to be a part of your child's learning experiences at home — whether it is working on homework together, a hobby or a day out at the museum — is a great idea. Having friends who connect with the same interest as them will help increase motivation and enhance learning.

Build self-esteem, confidence and positivity

Confidence, self-esteem and motivation are important components of learning. A child will generally choose a hobby in something they are interested in, which will allow them to develop their skills, learn more and, most importantly, enjoy. It often evolves into a strength area of the child, as a result building a child's confidence. Also attending extra-curricular activities to increase skills (such as local kids' clubs) is a great way to improve confidence and self-esteem.

Don't forget to praise your child where credit is due. If your child has been working on a challenging project, praise your child for their efforts and not just the results. Using a statement such as, "You tried assembling that aeroplane wing a few ways and you finally got it. Well done!" This can help

build confidence and self-esteem and increase motivation to attempt another challenging and enjoyable project. A child who feels successful is more likely to be motivated.

While encouragement can be the catalyst to success, let your child make mistakes too. Guide them through ways to start again or try a completely different direction. Let them know adults make mistakes and sometimes we can learn better or new things from these situations. While something didn't work out, it's also important for them to know that they gave it their best shot, helping them to build a positive mindset.

Become involved

A 2012 report published by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth found that parental involvement has a positive impact on student achievement as well as the social-emotional development of the child. Parental involvement (also known as parental engagement) helps increase a child's motivation. While parents are encouraged to participate in particular school events that promote social aspects and a community environment, parental involvement in the transfer of learning from school to home can also allow for higher academic achievement.

Incorporating ways to engage in your child's school journey, whether it is helping with homework or a school project, talking about a favourite school activity or conversing about the day at school (including discussions about social aspects of the day, which can help guide your child through any social issues), and linking school learning with events or situations at home will not only provide a supportive environment for your child but build positive educational experiences. For instance, if a child is learning about recipes or cooking at school, replicating the cooking experience at home will provide your child with the knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm to show or discuss what they've learnt. Working on this type of hands-on activity is great way to promote intrinsic motivation, and also ends up being an easy way to talk about school. Your interest in their journey at school will allow them to value their learning experiences too.

A student who has an idea of who they want to become when they leave school will be more motivated to achieve at school.



Encourage choice, incorporate games

Having the freedom to make choices in life provides people with empowerment. Having the opportunity to make choices can also enhance motivation. Often schools try to create ways to offer choice in subjects such as allowing choice of particular projects or books.

However, this cannot always be achieved. While particular school topics may not be of interest to your child, school projects or homework will still need to be completed. One way to include an intrinsic motivator is to connect games with learning, focusing not on winning but on the experience and joy of it. If your child is having difficulty understanding their homework, there are many games that can link learning to a topic, especially in English and maths tasks, which may give a child the learning success needed to help get through their homework. You may have a few options for games, but if your child is having difficulty making decisions, it may be necessary to



limit choice-making to two items. Games are a great way to make learning fun.

Incorporate an emotionally literate environment

The term “emotional literacy” means the ability for an individual to understand their own feelings and behaviours, and to be able to self-regulate their feelings and behaviours. As a positive consequence, a person is then better equipped to understand the feelings and behaviours of others, therefore improving their social skills.

Beneficial supports to help your child self-regulate their behaviours can include breathing or meditation techniques, which can help a child stay calm if they’re feeling angry or anxious. An emotionally literate environment has a positive impact on achievement. A child who has an emotional understanding will feel comfortable with themselves and others. This allows them the opportunity to concentrate; therefore, this particular environment increases the motivation to learn.

Construct a long-term plan or create ideas

As a child progresses through school, it’s important to have ideas about what they would enjoy or are enjoying, and later a long-term plan that incorporates the skills to be acquired at school to help achieve transitions from primary to high school and to tertiary studies. There are many pathways from school to career options.

While a student may only be ready to develop a long-term plan during high school, having ideas, interests or hobbies during primary school are the building blocks for skill development. Ideas or a plan can always be revised and changed along the way. Or they may become more specific and focus on advanced courses. For example, to become a civil engineer, a high school student would select or focus on subjects ranging from physics, mathematics, technologies and science. A future plan, hobbies or interests enables a teenager or child to keep interested in their learning and value education too.

A student who has an idea of who they want to become when they leave school will be more motivated to achieve at school.

Most importantly, help make your child’s learning experiences fun; your optimism in your child’s journey highlights to them that you value their learning experiences. Remember, being successful in a career doesn’t always mean receiving top results in high school mathematics and English. Jamie Oliver is one of the most successful chefs in the world. Dyslexia didn’t stop him from achieving international acclaim. While Oliver worked through learning difficulties at school, he managed to enjoy school and develop an interest and passion. With your help maybe your child can become motivated and find their passion too. 🍀

Shelley Ann Morgan is an educator and freelance travel and wellbeing writer based on the Central Coast of NSW. She is a primary teacher with 20 years’ experience and has written extensively in the area of education.

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Who brings over 20 years' volunteering experience to her practice as a wellness educator, as well as a co-ordinator of yoga classes for charity.

The REDD Centre Team

A multi-disciplinary group of women providing women with the latest medical advice and draw attention to, and break down taboos surrounding menstruation.

Rach Mac

A former victim of domestic violence who now uses her organisation Broken Crayons Still Colour to help women with emergency relocation and even with associated challenges such as navigating the court system.

Jessica Murray

A school teacher on maternity leave who has become a beacon of hope for her far-western NSW community, building and resourcing spaces that bring families together.

Bente Hart

A rural pharmacist who has not only supported her community through bushfires and COVID, but has also worked tirelessly to improve frontline pharmacy care for all residents.

Michelle Key

A volunteer who has founded and grown an organisation providing care packs for men, women and children in 12 hospitals and hospices across Sydney and the NSW Central Coast.

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8 healthy wholegrains you should be eating

Whole grains can be a nourishing food for the fibre they offer but also their rich nutrient profiles. The challenge can be how to get those grains into your diet in delicious ways. In this article we look at grains such as quinoa, oats, whole wheat, buckwheat, rye, brown rice, barley and bulgar wheat to see how you can make them part of your recipe roundup.

Words LISA HOLMEN

Whole grains are a great and easy way to add fibre and nutrients into your diet. Since they are naturally high in fibre, they keep you fuller and satisfied for longer. They are also rich in nutrients including iron, magnesium, manganese and B vitamins just to name a few, and are linked to a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other health issues. They may be a carbohydrate, but rest assured they are of the healthy complex kind.

So what exactly is the difference between a refined grain and a whole grain? All grains start as whole grains, but in the processing and milling stages many essential nutrients are lost. Whole grains are simply grains which still have the whole grain (including the bran, the germ and the endosperm) intact, while refined grains are processed, resulting in foods including white bread, sugary breakfast cereals and white rice, which offer next to no health benefits for your body. As far as classification goes there are two main types of grains: cereal grains and pseudo-cereal grains. Cereal grains come from cereal grasses such as oats, wheat, rice, corn, barley, rye and millet, while pseudo-cereal grains do not come from grasses but are cooked and consumed in a similar manner to grains, for example quinoa, buckwheat and amaranth.

Don't know where to start? Discover eight of the best whole grains to eat as part of a healthy diet and some delicious ways to serve them.

Quinoa

This ancient food of South American origin has long been hailed as a superfood. In a botanical sense, quinoa is classified as a seed, but since it's more like a grain in cooking technique and nutritional profile, it's classified as a pseudo-grain in the dietary guidelines. It's packed full of vitamins, minerals, protein, omega fatty acids and dietary fibre. Quinoa is also

If you're short of time in the morning, you can easily speed up the cooking time by soaking your oats overnight or making overnight oats to meal prep for the week ahead.

a great source of antioxidants, including quercetin and kaempferol, which can help neutralise free radicals in the body. Since it is a complete protein, it is very popular for vegans and vegetarians because it contains all nine essential amino acids, making it a perfect plant-based protein option.

Quinoa is available in a range of colours from white to red and is very convenient since it is quick-cooking — typically cooking in just 15 minutes. It has a mild flavour with a subtle chewiness, making it very versatile in a range of both sweet and savoury dishes including salads, stir-fries

and porridge as well as served with roast vegetables. While not essential, quinoa can also be toasted before boiling it in liquid or stock to further enhance the flavour. Similar to rice, quinoa is prepared in much the same way, whether it's boiled in the saucepan or made in a rice cooker, making it a nutritious side to complement a main meal or mixed with nuts and seeds. Before cooking, it's best to rinse the quinoa to remove the compounds called saponins that can give the quinoa a bitter taste. If you're an avid baker, try using quinoa flour in exchange for refined plain flour in breads, pastries and cakes to boost their nutrition and fibre content.

Oats

Oats are one of the most popular whole grains, and for good reason. They are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre, particularly beta-glucans, a soluble fibre which helps digestion and nutrient absorption as well as help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol. Oats contain polyphenols, which act as antioxidants and are a powerful anti-inflammatory agent. Although oats are naturally gluten-free, it's best to check the label for gluten-free certification since they sometimes may be processed with other grains.

When buying oats, it's best to look for the word "whole" and opt for oats like steel-cut, oat groats and rolled oats. Instant, "quick oats" and flavoured oats tend to be much more processed and often contain added sugars like high-fructose corn syrup. It's





much healthier to buy the unsweetened kind and sweeten them naturally with fresh or poached fruits and a drizzle of honey. If you're short of time in the morning, you can easily speed up the cooking time by soaking your oats overnight or making overnight oats to meal prep for the week ahead. The ways you can use oats are endless, so don't just stop at your morning porridge. Try experimenting with oats in your next cookie, bake, crumble or smoothie or even use them as a binder for burger and vegetable patties or a topping for casseroles. Oat flour can also be used to bake bread and other baked items, and of course the popular oat milk as a dairy milk substitute in your morning coffee or cereal.

Whole wheat

Whole wheat is a very versatile cereal grain and is a rich source of antioxidants, fibre and minerals. There are many products on the supermarket shelves which sound like they are whole wheat but are far from it, so don't let the clever marketing fool you! Make sure you opt for foods containing the label "100 per cent whole wheat", which contains the entire grain, not just "wheat", since it is processed and stripped of the

Buckwheat flour is a perfect base for pancake, crêpe and waffle mixes, while whole buckwheat is perfect for salads, soups and soba noodles.

husk and bran which contain so many nutrients. Since whole wheat has gluten it's only suitable for people who do not have a gluten allergy or intolerance.

Whole wheat is a perfect addition to bread and other baked goods as well as pasta. Whole wheat bread is delicious in sandwiches, and the options for healthy fillings are endless. You can also use whole wheat breadcrumbs for crumbing seafood rather than using processed white or panko breadcrumbs. Breadcrumbs can also be used in meat and vegetable burger patties to provide some added texture. Like brown rice, whole wheat takes a little longer to cook, but it's worth it in the end for the added health benefits.

Buckwheat

Contrary to its name and similar to quinoa, buckwheat is also a pseudo-grain. Buckwheat is rich in nutrients like

manganese, magnesium, copper, phosphorus, iron, B vitamins and fibre. It is also high in resistant starch, a type of dietary fibre that passes to your colon where it feeds your healthy gut bacteria. Buckwheat is naturally gluten-free and is a complete protein, so is a great plant-based protein option for vegans and vegetarians.

With its pleasant nutty taste and texture, buckwheat can be consumed in a wide range of dishes. Like rice and couscous, cooking with buckwheat is easy: simply add the groats to water and bring to the boil and allow to cook. The cooking time is similar to quinoa and it will usually be tender within 12 minutes. Buckwheat flour is also a perfect base for pancake, crêpe and waffle mixes, while whole buckwheat is perfect for salads, soups and soba noodles (which are usually a combination of buckwheat or combination of buckwheat and wheat



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flour). It is also a nutritious side for dishes like stir-fries and curries rather than the traditional rice.

Rye

Rye is rich in a wide range of vitamins and minerals, including iron and dietary fibre, containing even more than whole wheat. It also has fewer carbohydrates than wheat and has a low glycaemic index, which is great for keeping blood sugar steady. Since rye is also a member of the wheat family, it's not suitable for people with gluten allergies and intolerances.

Rye is available in a variety of forms from light, medium to dark. Look for whole rye made with unrefined flours when possible. Light and medium rye are more likely to be refined so it's best to stick to dark grains with a higher bran content and for that true rye taste. Dark rye has quite an intense taste so may not be everyone's

cup of tea. There are so many cooking uses for rye — from baking bread and crackers to even brewing beer and making whiskey. Think beyond rye flour and experiment with rye flakes in your morning porridge or cracked rye as a textural crunch to salads and vegetables. Rye berries can also be eaten whole like wheat berries, or simply rolled into cereal flakes.

Brown rice

Say goodbye to white rice; brown rice is a much healthier alternative since it is a whole grain and does not lose most of its nutrients, minerals and antioxidants in the milling process. Brown rice has less fibre in comparison to other grains but it more than makes up for it with the high amount of B group vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals. Brown rice is naturally gluten-free and contains lignans, which are antioxidants that help reduce heart

disease risk by reducing blood pressure and "bad" LDL cholesterol.

There are so many different rice options available, from basmati to jasmine and even black or wild rice for something a little more exotic. Brown rice tends to take a bit longer to cook in comparison to white rice, but try to be patient for a few extra minutes. You can use brown rice as a side to complement a curry or stir-fry or in dishes like salads, sushi, brown rice crackers, soups, salads and rice puddings.

Barley

Barley is a very versatile cereal grain and is available in two main forms: whole (or hulled) barley and pearled barley. Only hulled barley is considered a whole grain since it's minimally processed. As well as being rich in vitamins and minerals including selenium, magnesium, zinc, copper, iron, phosphorus, potassium and B vitamins, barley also contains a higher amount of dietary fibre than any of the other grains. It is also naturally gluten-free.

This whole grain is one of the most ancient grains and has long been used as a soup staple. It has a mild nutty flavour with a beautiful texture and can be used in both savoury and sweet dishes. It's also popular in dishes including salads, Buddha bowls, pilafs and baked goods including breads. It can even be made into a warm breakfast cereal like porridge. Hulled barley takes a lot longer to cook in comparison to its more processed sister pearled barley. You can even soak or sprout barley, which can boost its nutrients even more, since it makes them more digestible in the body.

Bulgur wheat

This Middle Eastern staple has surged in popularity recently. Bulgur wheat, also known as cracked wheat, is low in fat, high in fibre and packed full of vitamins and minerals including magnesium, manganese and iron. Bulgur is cracked wheat which has been partially cooked then dried.

Bulgur is most known as the key ingredient for tabbouleh, paired with mint, parsley and tomatoes, but it can be used for so many more dishes. It is easy and quick to cook so is a great for people who want the convenience of a healthy, quick-cooking grain to incorporate into their busy lifestyle. It has a texture which almost resembles couscous and is a delicious addition to soups, stuffed in vegetables and salads such as tabbouleh. It can even be added to veggie burgers, fritters and meatballs as a nutritious filler. 🍷

Lisa Holmen is a food and travel writer and photographer. Her aim is to "eat the world" one inch at a time and explore as many different cuisines and cultures as possible. Follow Lisa's journey at lisaeatstheworld.com.

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Yoga for staying calm

Learning to stay present during life's inevitable storms can lead to invaluable lessons of acceptance and growth.

Words RACHAEL COOPES Photography TESSA TRAN

"Welcome the present moment as if you had invited it. It is all we ever have so we might as well work with it rather than struggling against it. We might as well make it our friend and teacher rather than our enemy."

~ Pema Chodron

If there's anything we have learned from the past few years, it's that life is going to continue to provide us with challenges. Just when we think the storm has passed and we are ready to sail in optimal conditions, the weather seems to turn and keep us on our toes. The relentlessness of the continually changing weather and stormy skies can be overwhelming and exhausting. It's understandable why we begin to check out, close our eyes and just want to wake up when it's all over. This approach can offer us short-term peace by escaping the discomfort of what is. However, in the longer run, there are benefits in staying completely present in the storm as we learn acceptance and embrace the opportunity to grow from every experience.

The power of *atha*

The first word of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is "*atha*" or now. It is an auspicious word, with some teachers suggesting that if you really understood what *atha* means, you would understand everything and reach a state of yoga or liberation. Practising mindfulness, which Jon Kabat Zinn defines as "paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally", is the key to staying in the "now", no matter what is going on. The non-judgement part can be particularly tricky to practise. Seeing our experiences as they are, without putting any kind of lens on them, framing them as good or bad, allows us to foster more acceptance in our lives.

The power of acceptance

"Accept, then act. Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it."

~ Eckhart Tolle

Acceptance of all our experiences, regardless of how stormy or calm they are, has been shown to positively affect our overall wellbeing. In one particular study, individuals who accepted rather than judged their mental experiences appeared to attain better psychological health, and less reactivity to stressors. Other studies

... you don't need to practise every day, but there will come a time when you will be grateful you practised every day.

suggested acceptance reduced feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety and distress. Acceptance allows us to get on with the task at hand, and do what we need to do, instead of putting energy into worry and fear. As my teacher David Life used to say, "So what, now what?"

Escaping the storm

Most of us are constantly trying to avoid our current experience. We walk into a room that is too cold, and we turn the heat on; when it gets too warm, we open the windows and take our coat off, forever trying to escape whatever discomfort we feel. Inevitably, though, at some point we will be thrust into a situation where we can no longer control the temperature or the weather, and there is no escape. As the storm rages, without any skills to keep us awake, to simply be in the experience,

we struggle to stay afloat. All manner of addictions arise from this moment, of grasping and craving, clinging to something that helps us evade the reality of the battering of our boats in the tempest.

How to stay present

The yoga practice provides us with many tools to help us stay present and observe whatever is arising.

- The **asana** shows us how to dive into poses and stay steady regardless of discomfort and strong sensation. It allows us to practise breathing calmly and being steady, staying in a posture, when we'd really prefer to run.
- Concentration on the **breath**, in pranayama practices, is very powerful at quietening the mind and bringing us directly into the present. It also teaches us the transient nature of our experience, how it is ever-moving, in motion, traversing the cycles of beginning, middle and end, over and over.
- We learn through **pranayama**, watching, controlling and freeing the breath about the changing nature of things at a very primal, cellular level. And it shows us how every new breath is a chance to start again, that the newness, the freshness of each inhale and exhale is a different experience. Whatever storms we are in will pass at some point, giving way to something new.
- **Meditation** shows us how our thoughts come and go, jumping around and as changeable as the weather. Being reminded of the physical and mental layers that this too shall pass, for better or worse, is a great way to practically work with stepping into the present, accepting what is and trusting it will pass eventually.
- **Drishti**, or a focus point, is another tool we can use to train the mind to concentrate. It is through concentration,





Crescent lunge



or *dharana*, we place the mind at one thing at a time, which allows us to be present and available to see what's in front of us.

Non-attachment

In the *Yoga Sutra* 1.2, "*Yogash* [union] *citta* [mind] *vritti* [whirlings] *nirodha* [to cease/get rid of]" is sometimes translated as "Yoga is when the mind stops." But in that case, the party is over. When our minds stop, we don't get to experience anything, let alone yoga. My teacher Manorama D'Alvia speaks to it from the perspective of not attaching to the rotational movements of the mind, or the *vrittis*. If *nirodha* is to stop or cease, and we think of *citta* as the ocean of the mind with the *vrittis* as the waves or thought patterns, yoga is when we stop attaching the chaos of the surf. We identify less with the individual waves, and see that we are the ocean, vast and deep. Then no matter what storm is raging, we are always connected to that deeper oceanic part of ourselves, which isn't so affected by

the individual movements and tides; after all, the weather changes, but the ocean is always there, seemingly limitless and rich.

Pratyahara

Because the nature of the world is designed to steal our attention, our energy constantly moves outwards through the senses. As we practise withdrawal of the senses, pulling them back inwards towards us in times of crisis and challenge, we preserve our energy which will be required to take skilful action in whatever stormy situation we are in. We cannot steer the boat across immense waves if we are not paying attention, concentrating, making intelligent choices, and have the energy to do so. Using our practice to harness our ability to draw the senses inwards will make it easier in those moments that feel tougher to do so, when the lightning and thunder feel overpowering. As D'Alvia says, you don't need to practise every day, but there will come a time when you will be grateful you

In one particular study, individuals who accepted rather than judged their mental experiences appeared to attain better psychological health and less reactivity to stressors.

practised every day. The more we practise when the skies are calm, the more we will be prepared and ready when we need a yogic mind in those turbulent times.

What being present does for us

When we pay attention to what is happening in front of us, with acceptance, a calm mind, free from judgement, we see things as they really are. Instead of operating from a place of fear, or projecting into the past or future, we wipe the lenses clean and can see clearly — not from a place of denial or overwhelm, rather the stance of a warrior on the battlefield, like Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgita*. Just as he had to accept his role in fighting a battle he didn't want, we may find ourselves in blustery conditions we don't want to be part of. When we have a yogic mind, we can face those moments; we can do what must be done with a clear mind and steady hand.

Turbulent times as a teacher

The greatest gift of all, however, from staying with eyes wide open in the tempest, is that we can use the experience as a teacher. Moments of great joy are bolstering and fortify our spirit. But the obstacles and storms of life are where the greatest learning is. Use those moments as a teacher and no experience shall go to waste; rather they will enhance our life, showing where we are stuck, where we need to grow and how much further we can travel in terms of kindness, compassion and empathy for self and others.

Chaos to calm yoga practice

This practice is designed to foster presence through some of the tools suggested above, as well as some balancing poses which require our steadiness, *drishti* and concentration.

Pratyahara

Choose a comfortable seat and listen to the sounds around you. Start to pull your senses inwards. Close the eyes. Relax the jaw and let the tongue drop away from the palate. Observe any taste on your

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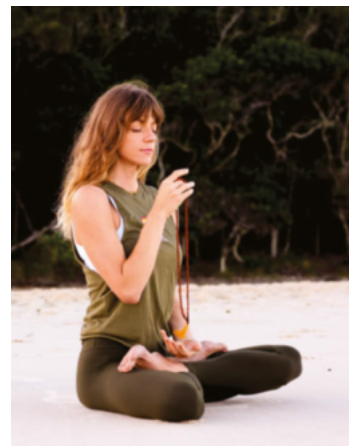
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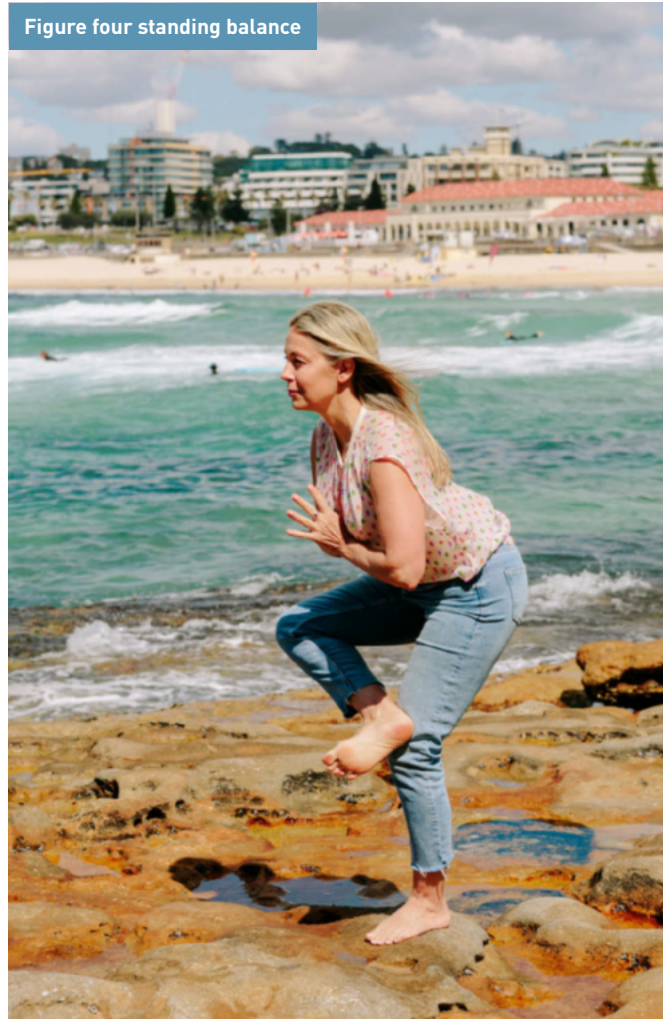
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Tree pose



Figure four standing balance



tongue. Take in the smells around you. Feel what sensations you can especially on the hands and fingers. Listen to the sounds around you. Keep your awareness on the senses in this way, not letting them move out, gathering stimulation or escaping this present moment.

Meditation

Keep sitting. Notice any thoughts that start to arise. Let them bubble up, feel them, experience them, accept them and let them move on. Keep noticing your senses, physical sensations, taste, the dark behind the eyelids, the sounds, the smells. As you do, keep allowing thoughts and feelings to come up, accepting them and letting them go. Stay aware, completely in the present moment.

Tree pose

Stand with feet hip-width apart. Bend the right knee and lift the right thigh parallel to the earth. Externally rotate the right thigh bone out and around and place the foot in the left inner thigh. Keep pelvis in neutral as you press foot into thigh, and the outer left hip hugs in to press left thigh back into the foot. Take five breaths. Swap to the other side.

Figure four standing balance

Stand with feet hip-width apart. Bend the right knee and lift the right thigh parallel to the earth. Externally rotate the right

Ardha chandrasana



thigh bone out and around and place the right foot over the left knee. Bend the left knee as though you are chair pose and keep the spine long. Take five breaths. Swap to the other side.

Ardha chandrasana

Start with block outer edge of right foot, in a lunge position. Take the block out in front of you as you lift the back leg and open the left hip so that the left foot is in line with the hip and toes are flexed and pointing forward like a *tadasana* leg. Keep right

hand on block under right shoulder, and left hand on hip or reach it up as you wrap right ribs under, left ribs on top. 🌀

As a mama, writer, Play School presenter and yoga teacher, Rachael Coopes loves storytelling and yoga philosophy. A certified 800-hour Jivamukti teacher with more than 1000 hours of training and a decade of teaching, she currently facilitates yoga teacher training programs at BodyMindLife. She is eternally grateful to all her teachers.

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5 pointers for peaceful periods

Periods can be a bloody pain, but you can breeze through the monthly menses with therapeutic food, herbs and supplements.

Words CAROLINE ROBERTSON

“**W**hy can't I be a boy?” I remember moaning on my first menstruation. To suffer this cycle for another 40 years seemed unfair. Being punished with painful periods for not getting pregnant was beyond annoying. How can one unused egg massacre my whole womb anyhow? Does this mean no swimming or white clothes for a week every month? Despite prior preparation, the first period can be a complete shock to girls. Suddenly they must manage this bloody guest while carrying on like nothing's happening. How to surf this unpredictable wave of bleeding, cramps, moodiness, fatigue, sore boobs and more?

Cringeworthy commercials of girls in slinky knickers, cartwheeling, skydiving, waterskiing and horseback riding with flashes of blue fluid does nothing to normalise this tricky transition. Surprisingly, when sanitary company Libra were among the first to show red menstrual blood, they copped criticism for being too graphic, embarrassing and humiliating to women. The secret stigma of “the curse” still has some shameful associations. However, many traditional cultures celebrate and accept this fertile phase as a sacred time of rest and renewal. Instead of popping a painkiller and carrying on, women in indigenous cultures are allowed to adjust their pace as they wish. They may retreat to menstrual huts, have a domestic break or do rituals. Menarche, the onset of menstruation, is often marked by ceremonies such as in Ghana where girls sit under an umbrella and receive gifts on their first “show”. The Californian Hupa tribe worships menstruating women as

an earth-balancing energy. With Mother Nature's help, women can welcome this wondrous event and manage their menses with minimal moans. Women's tendency to live longer than men may be connected with their monthly blood purification. Good can come from groans as Tshetrim Tharchen wrote, “Menstruation is a small price you pay for being blessed with the grandest gift you can ever wish for, and that is, to have the privilege to give birth.”

Healthy periods blossom from healthy habits in diet, exercise, sexual activity, sleep and stress management.

Womb room

A healthy girl starts her periods after signs of puberty. This can be delayed due to being underweight, overweight, overexercising, medication, stress, hormonal balances or medical issues. Hormones surge to make an egg mature and pad the uterus ready for fertilisation. When a baby doesn't move, the endometrial lining leaves as menstrual blood. “Periods usually start between ages 11–16. The starting age is affected by genes and bodyweight. Girls with lower bodyweight generally start their periods later,” Dr Farah Kroman wrote for Carefree. Periods can be irregular for the first year and then generally cycle every 28 days with bleeding varying from three to nine days. The flow tends to be heavier for the first few days then trickles off. Although it can appear to be a bloodbath, the average blood loss over a period is just two or three tablespoons according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ovulation occurs around 14 days prior to the period. This may trigger mild pain around the lower abdomen and a stringy egg-white discharge. Woman's state shifts throughout the cycle, with ovulating women being more extroverted, sensually alert and

Photography Getty Images





creative, whereas menstruating women are more introverted, intuitive and sensitive. Period tracker apps help one to keep tabs on the monthly guest and monitor symptoms.

Period problems

Menstrual mayhem can seriously cramp one's lifestyle. Issues may stem from systemic problems or be directly related to the reproductive system. From a holistic perspective, period problems are rarely isolated incidents and are usually

connected with imbalances in the digestive system, endocrine system and the liver. Healthy periods blossom from healthy habits in diet, exercise, sexual activity, sleep and stress management.

Common monthly menaces women face include acne, bloating, constipation, diarrhoea, dizziness, fatigue, flooding, headache, pain, sleep disturbances and sore breasts. Fluctuating moods can include anger, anxiety, irritation, teary sadness and low confidence. Some experience extremely

painful periods which may trigger diarrhoea, nausea and dizziness. It's important to get a full medical check-up to identify any underlying issues including endometriosis, fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disease and polycystic ovary syndrome.

Sanitary solutions

The days of bulky pads being the only sanitary option are over. There's a world of ways to manage menses now which are eco-friendly, effective and chemical-free. Popular period products include bleach-free organic tampons, menstrual cups, unbleached organic pads and period pants. It's vital to remove tampons every few hours as the longer they're left in the higher the risk of toxic shock syndrome, a bacterial infection caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Herbal handholders

Though contraception and pharmaceutical painkillers give effective relief for some, they aren't addressing the underlying cause of period pain and could contribute to undesirable adverse effects. In consultation with your qualified herbalist, consider these natural cramp calmers.

- Bupleurum is a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) favourite for painful periods and PMS. It has anti-inflammatory and sedative properties.
- Corydalis is another Chinese herb in the opium family traditionally used for menstrual cramps and migraines.
- Cramp bark is a powerful herb capable of settling smooth-muscle spasms and contains pain-relieving methyl salicylate.
- Ginger has been shown to ease period pain in several positive studies.
- *Khaya senegalensis* is a traditional African reproductive remedy now organically grown in Australia. "My number one go to these days is Khapregesic, a powerful anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, antioxidant, digestive and relaxant. I find it especially useful for my endometriosis clients and have had some excellent feedback," says naturopath Angela Harrison.
- Kava kava is a South Pacific plant dubbed "nature's Valium" for its sedative and pain-killing properties.
- Skullcap contains muscle-relaxing baicalin, which has scientifically supported analgesic and anti-inflammatory actions.
- *Vitex agnus-castus* (chaste tree) is prescribed by some herbalists to reduce breast pain associated with periods due to its dopaminergic compounds. Avoid vitex with IVF or fertility drugs as it can contribute to ovarian hyper-stimulation syndrome.

5 pointers for peaceful periods

Cultivate calm

When we're pumping out stress hormones, we have less material to make sex hormones. This can result in delayed or missed periods or even early menopause. Mindfully manage stress throughout the month for a more serene cycle. Schedule nature time, massage and relaxation. Minimise obligations just before and during your period.

Beddy byes

"Seven in 10 women say their sleep changes just before their period," according to the Sleep Health Foundation. Optimise rest by reducing stimulants like caffeine and sugar after 2pm. Ideally be in bed by 10pm. Create a zen zone which is comfortable, dark, cool, quiet, ventilated and EMF-free. Try a 10-minute meditation practice before bed for deeper sleep. Sleeping in the foetal position with a heat pack over the abdomen can ease cramps.

Menu for menstruation

Eat your way to easy periods by cutting constipating, inflammatory and stimulating foods. A low-fat, vegan diet significantly reduced pain and PMS in a study led by Dr Neal Barnard published in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Reduce carbonated drinks and salt as these can increase bloating. Alcohol can inhibit the liver's hormone-clearing capacity making periods heavier. Caffeine and sugar can aggravate premenstrual moods. Magnesium-rich pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, almonds, spinach and avocado can reduce cramps. Ayurveda says because the digestion is weaker during menses the ideal diet is light, liquid, warm, cooked food with digestive spices such as cumin, fennel and hing

(asafoetida). Naturopath Fin Mackenzie of Green Door Health recommends following a "Mediterranean/anti-inflammatory diet and increasing foods like LSA. This acts as a weak oestrogen and displaces 'recycled oestrogen' with healthy oestrogen, adds fibre for a healthy bowel and regular bowel movements and supplies omega 3 essential fats and protein."

Better bowels

Menstrual bloating and pain can increase if our bowels are blocked. Avoid constipating supplements and foods such as white flour, red meat and yellow cheese. To clear your colon, hydrate with pure water and enjoy papaya, fibrous fruits, leafy greens, prunes and soaked chia seeds. Aloe vera juice, flaxseed oil, magnesium oxide or psyllium can stimulate sluggish bowels. Daily self-massage, focusing on the abdomen in a clockwise circular flow along the colon, can also enhance elimination.

Adjust activity

Exercise is an effective and fun way to stimulate circulation, clear congestion, elevate endorphins and stretch away accumulated tension for easier periods. Too much exercise, however, can create more cramps, unbalance hormones and disturb the period flow. Moderation is key. Ayurveda recommends rest during menstruation with gentle walks. Yoga poses to help period pain and facilitate flow include *Baddha konasana*, *Balasana*, *Upavistha konasana*, *Bharadvaja* and *Kashtha takshanasana* Flow or Chopping wood pose. Inversions with the pelvis above the heart or vigorous exercise and sex isn't recommended until bleeding has cleared.



Eat your way to easy periods by cutting constipating, inflammatory and stimulating foods.

Soothing supplements

- Calcium — Insufficient calcium can increase uterine contractions.
- EPO — “Evening primrose oil of at least 1 gram per day is recommended to reduce inflammation, prostaglandin production and improve progesterone sensitivity,” according to Mackenzie.
- Magnesium — This menstrual marvel can relax smooth muscle and reduce prostaglandins associated with period pain, along with potentially easing menstrual migraines.
- Vitamin D — Vitamin D deficiency can raise prostaglandins and reduce calcium, which potentially increases period pain.
- Zinc — This antioxidant reduces inflammation and improves micro-vessel circulation to prevent cramping when taken a few days before and during periods. Zinc also encourages healthy ovarian follicles.
- Essential oils — Applying or inhaling diluted essential oils of cinnamon, clary sage, clove, lavender, Roman chamomile or rose may ameliorate menstrual pain, according to several studies.

DIY castor pack

“The humble and cost-effective castor oil pack is simple but powerful, especially when used in the week leading up to your period. It has a strong anti-inflammatory

action, as well as detoxifying and clearing lymphatic congestion, a common pattern in pelvic and period pain.

“For best results use the castor oil packs 5–7 days in a row before your period,” says naturopath Angela Harrison.

The castor plant encases a natural oil with soothing and circulatory stimulant properties. It has been traditionally applied externally to ease menstrual cramps in women who aren’t pregnant. For this simple method you will need organic castor oil, a big towel, a tea towel and a hot-water bottle.

What to do

- 1** In a warm room lie on a towel on your back with your calves resting on pillows.
- 2** Apply a generous layer of warm castor oil over your lower abdomen.
- 3** Place a plain tea towel over the oil.
- 4** Rest a heat pack or half-filled hot-water bottle over abdomen.
- 5** Place blanket over abdomen if cold or leave exposed if comfortable.
- 6** Relax for 5-10 minutes, smiling to your uterus and breathing deeply into it.
- 7** Feel your belly soften like jelly in the sun.

“Herbal treatment for young women is often different from those of older women with regular cycles”, says Mackenzie. “It combines an acute mix for the painful days often including cramp bark, wild yam, white willow, California poppy, ginger and/ or devil’s claw. Other days of the cycle we

work on hormonal modulation and may include chaste tree, shatavari, peony, ladies’ mantle and withania, depending on the individual. I will also usually include a magnesium citrate/bisglycinate 400mg 1–2 times a day and always include PEA (palmitoylethanolamide), a wonderful natural pain reliever which works similarly to CBD oil (an endogenously produced cannabinimimetic compound) and is often enough to halt having to take NSAIDs or paracetamol.” 🍵

Caroline Robertson is a naturopath and author of six books. For Zoom or clinic consultations, visit carolinerobertson.com.au.

Periods

- 👉 It is possible to get pregnant if you have sex on your period as sperm can survive up to five days.
- 👉 Wintry weather can make period pain worse with reduced circulation and increased blood vessel constriction.
- 👉 Voices tend to get higher during ovulation with a lower tone or intensity during periods.
- 👉 Alcohol can amp up period cramps due to prostaglandin increase.
- 👉 Getting your menses and menopause later has been correlated with a longer lifespan.
- 👉 “Strawberry week” or “Erdbeerwoche” is German slang for when you’re on your period.



How to embrace seasonal beauty

With the cyclical passing of spring, summer, autumn and winter, the needs of our beauty routine also change. Here's how to season-sync your skincare and make-up for inside-out radiance all year round.

Words LOLITA WALTERS





The idea of “eating seasonally” and its benefits is a concept that is widely celebrated; however, have you ever thought about applying a similar approach to your beauty regime? Just as your body’s nutritional needs change with the seasonal transition through the warmer and cooler months, so too do the needs of our skincare and make-up. So how can you sync up your topical skincare ingredients and creative make-up looks to align with Mother Nature’s natural rhythms? It all comes down to understanding how different phases of the year affect your skin and visual identity, then embracing an adaptable seasonal beauty approach by selecting products to match.

Natural and kind is always in season

No matter what time of year, selecting natural, organic, toxin-free and cruelty-free beauty products should be a priority. A large amount of the ingredients in the topical products we apply to our skin absorb into our bodies, so it makes sense to minimise chemicals in your skincare and make-up. Think of it like selecting natural wholefoods and organic produce for your meals! If ingredient lists are full of words and numbers you can’t understand, chances are your body won’t either. By opting for products that are chemical-free and against animal testing, you are making choices that are not only kind to your skin and body, but good for the planet too.

Emmily Banks, founder of Depths Of Beauty, is a pioneer of the natural beauty

... having both an adaptable skincare and make-up repertoire is an excellent way to feed your skin what it is seasonally craving for optimal health, while allowing for visual creativity.

movement. As Australia’s leading natural beauty educator and professional make-up artist, she believes in embracing seasonal beauty that is both natural and ethical, saying, “I believe that as long as we are using truly natural and organic products, our skin will thank us for it, no matter the season.”

The ebb and flow

With a natural beauty approach as the foundation, you can take your routine to the next level by working with the ebb and flow of the seasons. According to Banks, everyone can generally benefit from applying specific plant compounds such as certain antioxidants, vitamins and minerals to maximise nourishment according to the season. “For example, light and refreshing botanicals, such as rosewater and aloe vera, are very complimentary in warmer seasons, while richer fats such as shea butter or avocado oil are excellent during cool weather,” she says. “Make-up styles definitely change as the seasons shift too, allowing for experimentation with different colour palettes and products that energetically align with various times of the year. I always encourage people to have fun with their make-up looks throughout the changing seasons.”

Essentially, having both an adaptable skincare and make-up repertoire is an excellent way to feed your skin what it is seasonally craving for optimal health, while allowing for visual creativity.

Skincare for different seasons

Our skin is our largest organ and needs nourishment all year round. Understanding what is going on at skin level throughout the different seasons will allow you to best nourish it tailored to the time of the year. “The key concept is to choose mainly lightweight, sheer and water-based formulas during the warmer months and transition to fuller-coverage creams, balms and oils for the cooler months,” says Banks.

The warmer months

So what is happening to your skin during spring and summer? Due to humidity, heat and sweat, pores will be more open which may contribute to an increase in breakouts. However, due to higher temperatures leading to great water loss from the body, skin can also be prone to dehydration.

“During the warm seasons, your skin needs deeper levels of hydration as the heat of the sun draws out moisture. You may also get slightly sun-kissed, so

regularly applying lightweight water-based skincare with ingredients such as aloe vera based serums and rose or lavender mists will be best," advises Banks. Try the following spring and summer skincare routine tips.

Protect your skin from the sun with SPF 50+

Use daily in the morning as the final step in your skincare routine. Reapply frequently, especially after swimming or perspiring. Look for a natural, zinc-based sunscreen formula.

Keep pores clear

To help prevent breakouts caused by oil and sweat, cleanse morning and evening with a creamy cleanser that clears away build-up without over-stripping the skin (harsh cleansers can lead to more oil production). Exfoliate two or three times a week to buff away dead skin cells.

Hydrate from within

Make sure you are replenishing water levels by consuming two to three litres of water daily. Add a sustainably sourced marine collagen supplement to further support skin hydration.

Topical vitamin C

Vitamin C is a holy grail for supporting a bright complexion during summer as it helps protect your skin from pigmentation.

Utilise hyaluronic acid

Hyaluronic acid is a humectant that holds up to 1000 times its weight in water molecules, deeply hydrating the skin at a cellular level sans oil — ideal for the hot weather.

Lighten your load

Due to increased oil in the skin, you may benefit from lightening your skincare routine by using only a lightweight moisturiser and skipping the face oils. Overall you want to simplify and use fewer layers or steps in your skincare routine.

The cooler months

Due to chilly air and drying winds, generally there is less moisture in the skin during the cooler weather than in the summer heat, as well as fewer lipids in the skin barrier. These differences can contribute to dryness and irritation.

"Winter and autumn certainly call for deeper levels of moisturising as your skin won't be naturally producing as much oil as in the warmer months," agrees Banks, who recommends you look for oils and balms with ingredients like shea or cocoa butter, coconut oil and jojoba oil, "which will be most beneficial for your skin when the cool snaps." Try the following autumn and winter skincare routine tips.

Protect your skin barrier

Your skin barrier is essential for healthy skin yet is more likely to be compromised in the cool weather.

Stop using foaming cleansers that strip the skin. Switch to a creamy cleanser which is gentle on the skin barrier and supports important lipids.

Feed your skin with plant oils and probiotics

Research shows that certain plant oils may help repair the skin barrier and also prevent your skin barrier from losing moisture. Many of these oils have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects that further protect the skin too. Great options include avocado and grapeseed oils. Probiotics are also great to topically support the skin microbiome and protect your complexion.

Stay hydrated (and warm!)

Wintery weather can be very drying for the body, so keep up your two to three litres of water daily. Including herbal teas with ingredients like burdock and calendula can further support skin health from the inside out.

Include natural retinol alternative bakuchiol

Skin turnover may be more sluggish in wintertime. Bakuchiol is a true superstar when it comes to maintaining a youthful, even and radiant complexion year round. It has been shown to work in a similar way to traditional retinols, by increasing skin cell turnover, however without the irritating and drying effects.

Layer up

Layering your skincare has never been more important than during the cold months of the year. By applying a serum, followed by a face oil, sealed in with a nourishing moisturiser, you can lock hydration in from the deeper layers of your skin upward, while protecting and shielding it from the elements.

Make-up for different seasons

Different seasons come with different energies and occasions, which are reflected in make-up styles, colour palettes and product selection. "Make-up styles definitely change as the seasons shift," says Banks. "During summer, it's all about the minimal golden bronzed look and nude lip." Choosing water-based or powder-based products in the heat will be best to maximise staying power and minimise overly shiny, oily skin. "Autumn is the time to embrace a cooler change and embrace deeper hues, like plum on the lips and silver on the eyes, and winter is the perfect season to experiment with fuller-coverage foundations and cream-based formulas, including lip and cheek tints," Banks recommends. Then once spring has sprung, it's time to reflect this with your make-up too: "Play with vibrant

bold colours on the lips, like cherry red and bright orange paired with pastel rosy hues on the cheeks and thick statement lashes and eyeliner. Beautiful!"

Lolita Walters is an Australian freelance journalist, editor and lifestyle writer focused on wellness, beauty and travel.

Emmily Banks' seasonal make-up cheat sheet

Spring

It's the perfect time of year to apply a hint of colour on the eyes, like blue, purple or gold to enhance natural vibrancy. A rosy flush of pink or peach on the apples of the cheeks will add warmth and radiance to beautifully match the energy of springtime! This is your time to trial beautiful pastel shades.

Summer

It's best to keep make-up light and bronzed with warm golden undertones. Think natural beauty basics like a quality natural mascara, a brown eyeliner, a rice powder bronzer and festive lipstick. Also opt for sheer, lightweight products that don't add additional sheen, as your skin is naturally producing excess oils and sweat from the heat. Choose powder or water-based foundations as opposed to oil-based formulas. If you can find ones with SPF, it's a welcome bonus.

Autumn

Autumn is a time to dive into the onset of the darker, cooler months and enjoy applying deeper tones to the eyes and lips. Have fun experimenting with plum and dark cherry palettes. Welcome illuminating products like highlighter, serums and oils into your make-up toolkit to keep your skin looking fresh and radiant.

Winter

During the colder months our skin can feel dry and lacklustre so it's best to apply super nourishing and hydrating oils and balms with deeply restorative minerals, vitamins and antioxidants to prep your skin ahead of make-up. Then stick to the theme when it comes to choosing your foundations, blushes and highlighters. Think cream and oil-based formulas. In the cooler months, a cream highlighter is a secret weapon that adds glow factor, perfect for brightening a dull winter complexion. If you're feeling lacklustre, brighten your day with a bright pop of colour on the lips!



SPECIAL REPORT

Menopause — maximise the change

Menopause is a normal and natural part of the ageing process for women, often referred to as the “change of life”. The changes and symptoms are real, but using natural measures to ease the negative effects can make this a time of positivity and opportunity.

Words LISA GUY

T rue menopause doesn't actually occur until a year after a woman has her last menstrual period, and it can affect all women differently. Many women have minimal symptoms and embrace this stage of their life and their changing body. But for others the menopausal transition can be an extremely stressful and difficult time, as they try to cope with distressing mental and physical symptoms that greatly affect their quality of life.

There are three stages to menopause: perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause.

Perimenopause, also called the menopausal transition, is the years leading up to menopause when women experience changes in their menstrual cycle, and symptoms such as hot flushes and changes in mood and sleep. During this time the production of oestrogen and progesterone, the two hormones made by the ovaries, can vary greatly. Perimenopause begins around the age of 45 to 55, and it can last for around four years, depending on a woman's overall health and other factors including what age their period began and whether they smoke.

Menopause is the stage when a woman's period stops permanently, which signals the end of their fertile reproductive years. Women are born with all their eggs, stored in the ovaries which stimulate the production of oestrogen and progesterone. Menopause happens when there are no more eggs left in a woman's ovaries, and as a result oestrogen levels naturally drop. Oestrogen has an effect on nearly every tissue in the body, so women can start experiencing a variety of menopausal symptoms associated with low oestrogen levels around this time.

After menopause, women go into postmenopause. This stage is when menopausal symptoms ease; however, health risks associated with loss of oestrogen increase as women get older. Supporting heart and bone health is particularly important for postmenopausal women.

What causes menopause?

When women are in their mid-30s their ovaries start producing less oestrogen and progesterone, and in turn their fertility starts to decline. During these reproductive years oestradiol is the major form of oestrogen produced by the ovaries. During menopause, the adrenal glands and women's fat cells take over producing low levels of oestrogen called oestrone.

Menopause is caused by a change in hormones, including gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH), luteinising hormone (LH), follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), oestrogen (oestrone, oestradiol and oestriol), progesterone and testosterone. FSH and LH usually go up as you get close to menopause, and oestradiol, progesterone and testosterone levels go down.

As hormone levels drop, women can start experiencing a number of annoying and uncomfortable menopausal symptoms including hot flushes, moodiness, weight gain and issues with sleep. Symptoms can come and go, and their intensity and frequency can vary greatly from woman to woman. The body does eventually adjust to these new changes. Most women take around five years to make the transition through these stages; however, for some women it can

take much longer. While a lot of women experience only mild symptoms, for others menopausal symptoms can be severe and can greatly affect their quality of life.

Common menopausal symptoms

Some of the most common menopausal symptoms include changes in menstrual cycle, hot flushes, changes in mood and memory, insomnia, anxiety, depression, weight gain, incontinence, reduced sex drive, joint pain and dryness of the skin, hair and vagina.

Menstrual cycle changes

Changes in menstrual cycle are usually the first sign that a woman is in the menopausal transition. Women's periods may last longer or start becoming shorter. Women can start bleeding less or more than usual, or they may get spotting or very heavy periods. During the menopausal transition women's periods can come and go because their hormones can spike back up at times. Periods may be closer together or start again after having no period for months or even after a year. Women tend to get their period every two to four months as they are transitioning into menopause.

Hot flushes and night sweats

Hot flushes are the most common symptom associated with menopause. Around 75 per cent of women experience hot flushes during menopause. Hot flushes are a sudden intense feeling of heat involving the face and upper body. Hot flushes commonly last for two to four minutes and are often accompanied by profuse sweating, skin reddening, palpitations, anxiety, irritability and the





Oestrogen helps women maintain a healthy metabolism and lean muscle, so when oestrogen levels drop women start to lose muscle and their metabolism slows down.

chills. Hot flushes often occur during the night, called night sweats, which can disrupt women's sleep.

Hot flushes are caused by hormonal changes in menopause, namely oestrogen decline, that affects the hypothalamus, which is the part of the brain that controls body temperature. They can be mild for some women and for others they may be intense enough to wake them during the night. Hot flushes can last anywhere from 30 seconds to 10 minutes. They can happen several times an hour, a few times a day, or only once or twice a week.

Stress can be a trigger for hot flushes. Women find they experience more hot flushes when they are tired and overworked. This could also be a sign that their adrenal glands are running below par. When you're stressed the adrenal glands produce the stress hormones cortisol and noradrenaline, which causes an increase in core body temperature, increasing your susceptibility to hot flushes and night sweats. Spicy foods, alcohol, caffeine and poor blood sugar control can also worsen hot flushes in some women.

Sleep issues

During perimenopause some women start experiencing issues with their sleep. Some women find it difficult to fall asleep easily, or they wake too early. Some women wake during the night due to night sweats and they can't fall back to sleep. Oestrogen influences circadian rhythms, and thus changes in hormone levels during menopause can alter women's sleep patterns. Progesterone, which is known as the "relaxing hormone", has a mild sedative effect and also plays a role in promoting healthy sleep patterns. When progesterone levels start dropping along with oestrogen during the menopausal transition, women may find it more difficult to get to sleep.

Mood changes

Hormonal fluctuations and declining oestrogen during perimenopause can bring about changes in mood, and it can make women more vulnerable to depression and anxiety.

Oestrogen helps boost levels of serotonin, which is the neurotransmitter that promotes happiness and feelings of wellbeing. When oestrogen levels drop during perimenopause, so too do women's

serotonin levels, which can contribute to increased feelings of anxiety, irritability and sadness. It's reported that around 20 per cent of women experience depression at some stage during menopause.

Oestrogen also has an effect on our other "happy" neurotransmitters, increasing levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) and endorphins, which help keep you calm and promote feelings of pleasure. Low progesterone levels during menopause can also affect how a woman feels. Progesterone acts as a natural antidepressant and can help boost mood and reduce anxiety.

Poor sleep and fatigue, stress and family changes such as children moving out of home and caring for ageing parents can all affect mood.

Vaginal and urinary changes

Oestrogen maintains the strength and thickness of the vaginal wall and the urethral lining, along with vaginal lubrication. During menopause vaginal atrophy occurs where vaginal tissue becomes thinner and drier, and it loses its elasticity. Vaginal atrophy can make intercourse painful for women and it can make them more vulnerable to urinary tract infections, inflammation and overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria. Vaginal atrophy can also contribute to urinary symptoms in some women such as loss of bladder control and a sudden, frequent urge to urinate, or urine may leak when they exercise, laugh or sneeze.

Changes in sex drive

Loss of libido is another common complaint during menopause. Reduced oestrogen levels in vaginal tissue and reduced blood flow to the genital area contribute to vaginal dryness, irritation, soreness and painful intercourse (dyspareunia). Dropping progesterone levels also play a role in low libido. Stress, depression, weight gain, poor body image, depletion in androgens (DHEA and testosterone) and poor nervous system and adrenal function can also negatively influence sexual desire in menopausal women.

Weight gain

Women often experience weight gain during the menopause transition. As you age you naturally start losing muscle mass and increase body fat, which slows down your





Some of the most popular phytoestrogenic herbs prescribed to treat menopausal symptoms are black cohosh, chasteberry, red clover, dong quai and wild yam.

metabolism, that is, how fast the body burns calories. Oestrogen helps women maintain a healthy metabolism and lean muscle, so when oestrogen levels drop women start to lose muscle and their metabolism slows down. This leads to weight gain, particularly around the abdomen, hips and thighs. This extra fat laid around the abdominal region is often seen as a protective mechanism, for future production of oestrogen from fat cells. Dropping progesterone levels also plays a part. Progesterone acts as a natural diuretic, so low levels can contribute to fluid retention. The drop in oestrogen and progesterone can also cause unbalanced blood sugar levels and increased sugar cravings.

Stress and cortisol fluctuations can also contribute to weight gain in menopausal women. High cortisol levels increase insulin production, which triggers abdominal fat to be laid, along with poor appetite regulation.

Skin and hair

Oestrogen plays an important role in keeping women's skin healthy and youthful-looking. Oestrogen stimulates the production of collagen and oils, and helps keep the skin hydrated, soft and plump. Collagen is the protein that gives skin its strength and elasticity. Oestrogen also promotes wound healing and offers some protection against sun damage.

As oestrogen levels drop during menopause, women's skin becomes thinner, drier and more delicate, which makes it more vulnerable to damage, sagging and

wrinkles. Some women's skin may also become more sensitive, itchy and irritated. Oestrogen also promotes hair growth, thickness and fullness. When oestrogen levels decline during menopause women often notice their hair becomes thinner and less full and falls out more.

Cognitive function

Cognitive decline is one of the most frequent complaints of perimenopausal women, with between 44 and 62 per cent of women saying they notice a change in their cognitive function. Women may start experiencing brain fog and issues with memory and concentration.

Evidence shows that oestrogen has a neuroprotective effect on the central nervous system, and that it may exert a protective effect on the deterioration of cognitive functions that occur with normal ageing. Low-grade inflammation has also been identified as a potential cause of cognitive decline during menopause.

Sore joints and muscles

Oestrogen is an anti-inflammatory hormone which helps keep joint inflammation under control. Oestrogen plays an important role in keeping joints lubricated and cartilage healthy. When oestrogen levels drop during menopause this can exacerbate joint and muscle pain caused from ageing and wear and tear. Smaller joints in the hands and feet and the knees, hips and neck joints are commonly affected. Studies show that the menopausal transition promotes systemic

inflammation. Weight gain, muscle loss, stress, inactivity, dehydration and gout can all contribute to joint pain.

Bone health

Preventing bone loss is a major concern for a lot of women entering menopause. Oestrogen helps promote strong healthy bones by slowing the natural breakdown of bone. When oestrogen levels drop during menopause bone loss speeds up significantly, increasing a woman's risk of osteoporosis. Research indicates that up to 20 per cent of bone loss occurs in women during menopause, with one in 10 women over the age of 60 suffering from osteoporosis.

Heart health

Once women reach menopause their risk of developing heart disease increases significantly. Oestrogen has a protective effect for women against heart disease. Oestrogen's protective effects include increasing HDL "good" cholesterol, decreasing LDL "bad" cholesterol and improving blood flow by relaxing and dilating blood vessels. Progesterone also plays a protective role by helping regulate blood pressure. When oestrogen levels drop, fat levels in the blood can increase, which puts women at risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke and heart disease.

Treating menopausal symptoms naturally

Thankfully, menopausal symptoms can be treated safely and effectively with natural medicines, so women can have an easier and happier transition through menopause. Herbal medicines, specific nutrients, hormone-balancing foods and lifestyle strategies can support women's physical and mental health through this transition, to help prevent or reduce the severity and duration of menopausal symptoms.

Herbal medicines

The use of herbal medicines for treating menopausal symptoms has a long history of traditional use. Naturopaths and herbalists today use specific herbs to manage a variety of menopausal symptoms including hot flushes, insomnia, mood changes, fatigue and low libido. Herbal medicines can be taken as a concentrated tincture or extract, in tablet or powder form or as a herbal infusion.

Adaptogenic herbs

When the ovaries stop producing oestrogen the adrenal glands step in and start producing lower levels of oestrogen. The adrenals produce a hormone called dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) which is used to make oestrogen.

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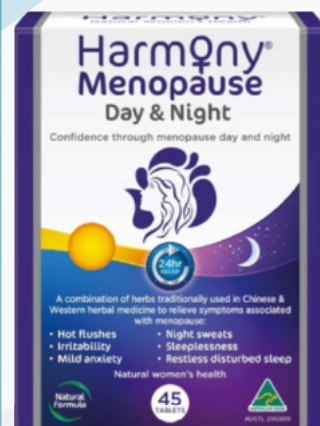
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Research shows that adaptogenic herbs are beneficial for reducing hot flushes and night sweats and for improving libido and vaginal dryness, and can improve wellbeing and quality of life in menopausal women.

Adrenal health is therefore extremely important to ensure that oestrogen production continues throughout menopause. It's thought that women who have poor adrenal function going into perimenopause, with low DHEA levels, will have greater issues with menopausal symptoms including hot flushes, bone loss, weight gain around the middle, muscle loss and skin thinning. Signs that your adrenal glands might be under-functioning include feelings of overwhelm and being unable to deal with stress, fatigue and poor sleep, changes in mood and blood sugar levels, and brain fog.

Adaptogenic herbs support adrenal function. They enhance the body's resistance to stress and disease and help mitigate the harmful effects of stress. Adaptogens support a healthy mood, and can reduce anxiety and depression. They can also improve sleep and boost vitality. Research shows that adaptogenic herbs are beneficial for reducing hot flushes and night sweats and for improving libido and vaginal dryness, and can improve wellbeing and quality of life in menopausal women.

Some of the best adaptogenic herbs prescribed for menopausal women are shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), rehmannia (*Rehmannia glutinosa*), Korean ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*), ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), and rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*).

Medicinal mushrooms such as reishi, shiitake, chaga, maitake and cordyceps also have adaptogenic benefits, and can help support cognitive health and immune function. The beneficial compounds in medicinal mushrooms are heat-stable, so try adding half a teaspoon of medicinal mushroom powder to your next cup of coffee, chai, dandelion coffee, hot cacao or smoothie.

Maca root (*Lepidium meyenii*) is also considered an adaptogenic herb. This Peruvian superfood has been long revered by ancient cultures for its ability to boost vitality and libido. Studies have shown that maca can improve sexual functioning in postmenopausal women, along with improving depression and hot flushes. Maca powder has a light nutty flavour that can be easily added to

smoothies, baked goods, protein balls, porridge and breakfast cereals.

Mood boosting and anti-anxiety herbs

Herbs that have a calming effect on the nervous system and mild sedative effect are extremely beneficial for women going through menopause to improve mood, anxiety and insomnia. Because stress is a common trigger for hot flushes these calming herbs are also useful for easing hot flushes and night sweats.

The best calming anti-anxiety herbs commonly prescribed for menopausal women include chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), ziziphus (*Ziziphus jujuba*), lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*), valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and hops (*Humulus lupulus*).

St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is another extremely beneficial herb traditionally used for treating mild to moderate depression, anxiety and insomnia associated with menopause. In combination with black cohosh or passionflower, St John's wort has been found to significantly improve hot flushes and mood. St John's wort can interact with certain medications so take caution when taking this herb with pharmaceutical antidepressants, sedatives, migraine medications or heart medications.

Phytoestrogenic hormone-balancing herbs

Phytoestrogenic herbs exert an oestrogen-like effect in the body. These herbs are commonly used to help balance hormones in menopausal women, which can ease symptoms associated with declining oestrogen levels including hot flushes, anxiety, moodiness, depression, insomnia and vaginal dryness. Other health benefits attributed to phytoestrogens are a reduced risk of osteoporosis, heart disease and breast cancer.

Some of the most popular phytoestrogenic herbs prescribed to treat menopausal symptoms are black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa* or *Cimicifuga racemosa*), chasteberry (*Vitex agnus*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*) and wild yam (*Dioscorea villosa*).

Wild yam creams used topically are a popular natural treatment for menopausal symptoms. Wild yam contains diosgenin, a phytoestrogen, that can be converted



Photography Getty Images





Magnesium ... helps calm and support the nervous system, making it beneficial for women who are feeling anxious and have difficulty sleeping.

into progesterone. The body can't do this conversion itself so it needs to be done in a lab. Natural progesterone creams typically contain diosgenin from wild yam. Progesterone plays many important roles in the body, including balancing blood sugar levels, boosting metabolism, promoting normal sleep patterns, stimulating new bone, reducing anxiety and depression, improving libido and acting as a natural diuretic.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) is another phytoestrogenic herb commonly prescribed as a herbal infusion for the treatment of hot flushes and night sweats. Combine one tablespoon of dried sage leaves or two tablespoons of finely chopped fresh sage and leave it to infuse overnight in 500ml of boiling water. Add the juice of a lemon and keep it in the fridge. Drink three glasses a day.

Top menopause nutrients

B vitamins

Optimal B vitamin levels are particularly important during menopause. B vitamins are required for energy production and for healthy adrenal gland function. They're needed to help maintain good mental health and emotional wellbeing, as

they're required for serotonin synthesis. B vitamins also support the body during times of stress. Deficiencies in B vitamins are associated with mood changes, depression, insomnia, anxiety and fatigue.

Eating a diet rich in B vitamins and supplementing with a good multi-B-complex vitamin is recommended. Foods rich in B vitamins include legumes, whole grains, raw nuts and seeds, green leafy veggies, organic eggs and chicken, grass-fed red meat and organic milk.

Magnesium

Magnesium is considered the "anti-stress" nutrient as it helps calm and support the nervous system, making it beneficial for women who are feeling anxious and have difficulty sleeping. Magnesium is essential for producing energy and for healthy nerves, bones and muscles. This important nutrient also helps balance blood sugar levels and reduces fluid retention.

The best dietary sources of magnesium include organic tofu, legumes, raw nuts and seeds, whole grains, wheat bran and dark green leafy vegetables. The recommended dosage when supplementing with magnesium is 600–800mg of elemental magnesium daily.

Calcium

Calcium requirements increase during menopause. Oestrogen enhances calcium absorption and helps retain calcium in the bones. Calcium is vital for building and maintaining strong healthy bones. This mineral also helps regulate heart rhythms and blood pressure, and is needed for healthy nerve and muscle function.

It's important that menopausal women consume adequate calcium in the diet to help support their bone health and reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Women over the age of 50 should be consuming around 700–1200mg of calcium daily through their diet. Some of the best calcium-rich foods include organic yoghurt, cheese and other dairy foods, calcium-fortified plant-based milks, tinned sardines or salmon with the bones, almonds and almond butter, Brazil nuts, sesame seeds and tahini, chia and flaxseeds, organic tofu, tempeh and edamame. Green leafy vegetables (such as kale, bok choy, turnip, mustard and collard greens), cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and seaweed (such as kelp and wakame) also provide calcium.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is another essential nutrient needed for maintaining bone health. Vitamin D enhances calcium absorption and bone mineralisation, which helps reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Research shows that adequate vitamin D intake is associated with a lower risk of osteoporotic hip fractures in postmenopausal women.



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Vitamin D also affects your mood and brain function. Vitamin D deficiency is linked to the development of depression, insomnia and anxiety. If you're deficient in this important vitamin it can negatively affect your cognitive function and reduce dopamine levels. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that is responsible for creating a positive mood and enjoyment of life.

Sunlight is one of the easiest and healthiest ways to get sufficient vitamin D. Your skin makes vitamin D when it is exposed to UV light. Sensible sun exposure of around 15 minutes daily in summer, and two to three hours a week in winter, on the arms, legs, hands or face (without sunscreen) will help you maintain adequate vitamin D levels.

Vitamin D is found in oily fish (such as wild salmon, trout and sardines), organic eggs, dairy and plant-based milks fortified with vitamin D, cod liver oil and mushrooms that have been exposed to UV light. It is recommended to supplement with 2000–5000IU of vitamin D3 daily to correct a vitamin D deficiency and to maintain healthy levels in menopausal and postmenopausal women.

Omega-3 essential fatty acids

Most clinical studies highlight the fact that supplementation with omega-3 essential fatty acids during menopause can assist with hormone production and can help alleviate menopausal problems such as anxiety and depression, along with reducing inflammation and improving cognitive function and heart health.

You need a good supply of these beneficial fats to support brain function and cognition. Omega-3s are important for improving memory and mood and for prevention of depression. Omega-3 fats also have potent anti-inflammatory properties that have a positive effect on joint health. Omega-3s can alleviate arthritic symptoms and sore and painful joints.

Omega-3s play an important role in the structure, appearance and health of our skin. They keep the skin moist and hydrated, which helps prevent skin dryness and fine lines and wrinkles. They also have a cardioprotective effect. Postmenopausal women have higher triglyceride concentrations than premenopausal women, which exposes them to an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Omega-3s can lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels, which offers protection against cardiovascular disease.

Hormone-balancing and healing foods in menopause

Phytoestrogens

Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring plant compounds that mimic oestrogen in the body. Phytoestrogens have a similar

chemical structure to oestrogen and can bind to oestrogen receptors in the body, inducing an oestrogenic response.

Including phytoestrogens in the diet can help balance hormones and alleviate menopausal symptoms including hot flushes. Phytoestrogen consumption has also been associated with a reduction in cancer incidence and prevention of cardiovascular disease and obesity through their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Flaxseeds, also known as linseeds, are a particularly good source of phytoestrogens called lignans. One study found that women who added 40g of crushed flaxseed to their daily diet for six weeks reduced their hot flushes by 57 per cent. Participants also experienced an improvement in mood, joint and muscle pain, and chills and sweating, which greatly improved their quality of life.

Phytoestrogens found in flaxseeds have also been found to have the ability to lower total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol and raise "good" HDL cholesterol. They also contain heart-healthy omega-3 fats and dietary fibre.

The best way to have flaxseeds is freshly ground to release their lignans, and then kept in the fridge to prevent the beneficial fats from oxidising. Add ground flaxseeds to porridges, muesli, smoothies, yoghurt, baked goods and protein balls.

Soybeans and soy foods are rich in phytoestrogens called isoflavones. Always choose organic, non-GMO soy foods such as tofu, soy milk, tempeh, miso and edamame. Tempeh and miso are particularly great choices as they're made from fermented soybeans. When soybeans are fermented their calcium content is made more bioavailable. Avoid consuming highly processed soy products and concentrated phytoestrogens as they may not have the same protective effect on the body as natural wholefood sources. Also be careful when consuming soy-based protein powders as you may be consuming much higher amounts of soy phytoestrogens than you would if you were consuming moderate amounts of soy in the diet. Organic and preferably fermented soy eaten in moderation as part of a healthy well-balanced diet is recommended.

Supplementation with isoflavones is not recommended for women at high risk of breast cancer; however, including some organic soy as a wholefood in the diet is fine. There have been no human studies that have found a link between eating soy and an increased risk of breast cancer. On the contrary, studies show that eating soy can have a protective

effect against breast cancer. There have been some conflicting studies, however, that have been done in a lab using isolated isoflavones that have shown isoflavones enhanced the growth of breast cancer cells in rats. If you have a history of breast cancer talk to your doctor and naturopath or nutritionist about the safest types of phytoestrogens to include in your diet.

Phytoestrogens are also found in a variety of other foods including legumes such as lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans, seeds and nuts, whole grains, some fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, sprouts, cabbage, onion, garlic, grapes and berries, cacao, tea and coffee.

Brassicas

Brassica vegetables such as broccoli, kale, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, collard greens, broccoli sprouts and rocket contain phytochemicals called glucosinolates, which can help improve menopausal symptoms by helping balance hormones and enhancing liver detoxification.

Women transitioning through menopause should be including a variety of brassicas in their daily diet. When brassica vegetables are cut or chewed it activates an enzyme called myrosinase that converts glucosinolate into indole-3-carbinol (I3C). Brassicas' anticancerous properties are attributed to the presence of I3C. This compound helps support liver detoxification and the elimination of carcinogenic substances from the body, along with supporting healthy oestrogen metabolism.

As hormone levels fluctuate during perimenopause a healthy functioning liver is important to help keep hormone levels balanced. If your liver is working below par, used oestrogen can be reactivated and then recirculated back around the body, which can exacerbate menopausal symptoms.

Probiotics

Your gut plays a key role in guarding against anxiety and depression-related disorders. Most of your brain chemicals, including serotonin, dopamine and GABA are produced in the gut. Dysbiosis (imbalanced gut microbiome) and gut inflammation have been linked to several mental illnesses including anxiety and depression, and can worsen women's mental health during menopause. Studies have shown that probiotic supplementation is effective at alleviating depression and anxiety symptoms.

Probiotics will also help improve vaginal microbiota quality and improve urogenital health. Hormonal changes occurring during menopause, in particular



Regular exercise helps reduce several risk factors associated with menopause including weight gain, poor sleep, anxiety, low mood, bone loss and muscle wastage.

decreased oestrogen levels and vaginal atrophy, can cause a depletion in certain beneficial bacteria and an increase in vaginal pH. This creates the perfect environment for pathogenic bacteria to colonise the vagina and increase the risk of vaginal infections.

Promoting a healthy balanced gut microbiome by taking a good-quality broad-spectrum probiotic supplement and including fermented probiotic-rich foods in the diet can help reduce menopausal symptoms and support overall health. Some of the best probiotic-rich foods include yoghurt, kefir, miso, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha and kvass.

Healthy fats

Include foods rich in beneficial mono- and polyunsaturated fats including omega-3 essential fatty acids. These healthy fats are the building blocks of hormone production; they help keep inflammation at bay, keep joints lubricated and healthy, improve cardiovascular function and cognition and help support mood and memory. These beneficial fats also promote satiety, which is important for preventing weight gain, and they keep the skin moisturised and youthful-looking.

Oily fish such as wild salmon, trout, cod and sardines are the best source of omega-3 essential fatty acids. Chia, flax and hemp seeds, walnuts and dark green leafy vegetables are also good sources of these beneficial fats. Avocados, raw nuts and seeds and healthy cold-pressed oils such as extra-virgin olive oil, macadamia, flaxseed and avocado oil also make great additions to the diet.

Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats. A diet rich in saturated and trans fats will raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of weight gain and cardiovascular disease. Trans fats are the worst offenders, being one of the prime culprits in heart disease. Reduce your intake of these unhealthy fats by limiting processed and greasy fast foods. Avoid refined vegetable oils like canola, corn, soybean and sunflower oil as they're inflammatory and easily go rancid.

Lifestyle recommendations

Some effective ways to help reduce anxiety and improve mood and sleep include regular exercise, meditation, yoga, deep-breathing exercises, going for a walk outside in nature and connecting with others.

Exercise is particularly important for physical and mental health and wellbeing, especially during menopause. Regular exercise helps reduce several risk factors associated with menopause including weight gain, poor sleep, anxiety, low mood, bone loss and muscle wastage. Being active also helps promote healthy blood pressure and blood sugar control, along with reducing cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease. Resistance training is particularly important for maintaining a healthy metabolism, lean muscle mass and bone density. Studies have found that doing aerobic and strength-training exercise at least three times a week for 12 weeks can improve menopausal symptoms including sleep quality, depression and insomnia.

Optimise your bedroom for a better night sleep. Keep your room well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature. A cooler room will help reduce night sweats and improve the quality of your sleep. Open up a window and use a fan to move the air around. Use layered bedding that you can easily remove if you feel too hot and wear light nightclothes. Keep a flask of cool water next to your bed to sip on, and you can try putting a cool pack under your pillow to help keep you cool while you sleep. 🌿

Lisa Guy is a highly qualified naturopath, author, passionate foodie and founder of artofhealing.com.au and bodhiorganictea.com.



6 floor exercises for lean legs

Make every day leg day. While training body parts on certain days may seem like a time-efficient idea, a better strategy is legs daily. The bonus is this set can be completed in the comfort of your lounge room.

Words **BELINDA NORTON**

Our leg muscles are used all day every day. To ensure they are functioning well we must ignite all the muscles surrounding each large leg muscle group. Using the leg muscles in a purposeful way every day will improve our overall biological body. It will ensure all muscles are awakened and will maintain mobility into the ages.

Lean elongated legs are created by keeping the muscles in good function and form. Our legs and lower body are the easiest and quickest place to build lean muscle. We have over 200 muscles below the waistline, including the largest muscle in the body — our gluteus maximus. Getting off our glutes and getting that lower body moving will allow us to feel confident in our skin. Having the feeling of toned legs is so much simpler than we think, and it starts by asking more of our lower body during every movement.

Learning how to reignite the inner thighs is a question many people ask. This dormant muscle is a problem area for many alignment reasons. The often-forgotten muscle can cause knee tracking injuries which may reduce activity. The blame can not only be on this one muscle as our body fuel and genetics also regulate the types of muscle fibres we maintain, which determines our rate of injury.

Cardio alone will also not improve our leg muscles, but cardio with these exercises

will ignite the dormant muscles to spark again. Walking cardio is a key component of these leg workouts and adding this daily will ensure toned legs can be attained. The key is to mix up the intensity and speed of your morning walk by adding a slight jog or run. Keep the body guessing with a trail and/or hills and add a set of stairs and steps at least once a week.

Lean elongated legs are created by keeping the muscles in good function and form.

It is also vital to identify and train upon our weaker leg muscles, which are generally on the left side for many, but I encourage you to pay attention to all muscle imbalances. By feeling these muscle discrepancies, we will become more successful in our leg elongation chase. Researchers state that lunges are the ultimate body tester to assess the biological age of the body; therefore adding lunges into your daily walking life will increase your mobility. To build lean and strong legs, you need a mix of strength and power, which will also help you reach your goals faster.

Don't forget to foam roll and stretch. Think about your leg muscles this way:

when we pull our jeans from the dryer, they are hard to move around in comfortably, right? Tight muscles feel the same way. Foam rolling acts like a deep tissue massage that can help release adhesions in your muscles that may be limiting your range of motion or performance during your workouts or causing the swelling fatigue from the daily sitting and working. So "roll out the kinks" in your legs before your workout for better exercise performance and, ultimately, better results.

Do the following leg exercises at home on the floor daily, or even in the evenings. Don't just randomly add a leg day; plan it and add it to your weekly routine.

Lean legs

Complete each for eight to 12 reps for a total of three or four sets. Ideally, try for two days of leg workouts each week, mixing multi-muscle compound movements (think squats and lunges). These six floor leg exercises will target the legs. Feel free to add leg weights to your ankles as you become stronger.

The hundred draw

Draw both legs into chest, hold on to legs, curl your head and chest up to a tight ball. Send legs out to a tabletop position with your knee directly above your hip and shins parallel to floor. Hold on behind thighs and actively curl up, deepening and hollowing out the abs. Hover arms right above



1

The hundred draw



2

Leg scissors



3

Single leg circles



4

Jackknife bicycle



5

Toe taps



6

Bird dog

abdominal wall and start to pump your arms up and down, taking deep breaths.

Leg scissors

Begin on the back with hands either at the sides or underneath the gluteus for added back support. Extend legs out straight, then twist them in and out above each other, or straight up and down — either way, don't let the legs drop to the mat as you're working through your reps. Make sure the core is engaged and that the lower back is pressed onto your mat throughout.

Single leg circles

Begin on the back with legs extended straight out in front, and arms stretched out by the sides, with palms flat on the floor. Engage core to press low back into the floor. Extend one leg straight up with toes pointed up toward the ceiling. From

here, move raised leg in large, controlled, clockwise circles, as if tracing circles in the air with the foot. Reverse the circles, moving in an anticlockwise direction. Keep your core engaged so your back stays connected to the floor and repeat with the opposite leg.

Jackknife bicycle

Begin by lying on your back with arms extended above the head. At the same time, bring arms in towards feet, slowly lifting your head, shoulder blades and upper back off the mat. Reverse the move to get back to your starting position and repeat.

Toe taps

Begin by lying on back with arms by sides, legs bent at 90 degrees and feet lifted in air, so shins are parallel to floor. Hinge at the hip joint to lower left foot toward the

floor without letting low back lose contact with mat. Lift leg back to start position by engaging low abdominals.

Bird dog

Begin on hands and knees with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips. Extend left arm straightforward to shoulder height while extending right leg back to hip height. Pause to check that hips and shoulders are still square to the floor. Lower back to start. 🌀

Belinda Norton is a health and fitness educator and personal trainer with 23 years' experience. She is a published author of Fit Mama, health writer and shares her women's wellness and body alignment expertise. Belinda is a mother of two teens, speaker and children's health advocate. Connect with her at blivewear.com or Instagram @Belinda.n.x.



For Mum, with love

It's time to celebrate the women who give us so much love and care — and what better way to do so than with a gift that promotes their wellbeing?

If you're a mother, why not use this special day to truly treat yourself? Mother's Day is a great opportunity to either buy yourself a gift or put in a wish list for products or indulgences that you really want. This way you not only get to prioritise your self-care, but you avoid excess waste and items you don't need in your home. We've done the hard work for you and curated a selection of beautiful gifts that say from the heart, "I appreciate you, Mum." This Mother's Day, give the gift of love and presence.

Mother's Day gift ideas



2

1 New Nordic

Healthy hair starts with the New Nordic range of all-natural supplements. The nutrients we put into our bodies support every function, including the growth and strength of hair. New Nordic's Hair Volume™ is an award-winning formula that supports hair growth and nail and skin health. This alternative hair treatment combines apple extract, millet and horsetail plant with zinc and biotin, making this product rich in protein and keratin, known for strengthening and volumising hair and increasing elasticity in the skin. Remember, beauty and strength come from within.

newnordic.net.au

2 Nature's Cuppa

Nature's Cuppa offers pure organic tea straight from nature to your cup. For over 30 years Nature's Cuppa have been carefully handpicking organic tea from their plantation in the Sri Lankan Highlands to produce a premium-tasting cuppa just as nature intended.

naturescuppa.com

3 Monk's Chai

Monk's Organic Specialty Chai pays respect to the roots of Asian and Indian spiced tea traditions while adopting a contemporary

approach to deliver a premium brew. They take a specialty approach to sourcing only the finest-quality ingredients for their chai. Monk's ingredients are all specialty grade and always certified organic. With 14 years of experience and nearly nine million mugs of chai brewed, they have created a recipe that is premium, bold, spicy, sweet and comforting.

monkschai.com

4 Solidteknics

A gift for your mum that will last many lifetimes! Solidteknics' nöni™ 3L Rondeau is 100 per cent made in Australia from highly conductive, non-nickel stainless steel. It's ideal for all types of slow cooking, stewing, baking and frying, from stovetop (including induction) to oven, and comes with a multi-century warranty.

solidteknics.com



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5 Olsen Wines

Olsen Wines Reserve preservative-free Yarra Valley Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2019 is a barrel-aged wine that sets a new standard for preservative-free wines. The fruit was picked at optimum flavour development to produce a pure, natural wine handmade from the Olsen Park Estate Vineyard. With its deep, rich and ruby colour, the aroma shows subtle French oak with ripe cherry fruit characters leading to a full-flavoured palate with fine persistent tannins.

vin888.com.au

6 Olsen Wines

Olsen Wines Reserve preservative-free Yarra Valley Single Vineyard Pinot Noir 2020 is a natural, cool-climate wine handmade from the Olsen Park Estate Vineyard. Very low-cropped fruit from old vines, matured in French puncheons for 10 months, the wine offers a rich garnet colour with an aroma showing ripe strawberry and subtle oak influences. Its medium-bodied palate with good fruit and a long finish is supported by subtle tannins and tight acidity.

vin888.com.au



7 Oil Garden Relaxation Set

Oil Garden's Relaxation Set includes a Refresh & Renew blend featuring a stimulating splash of citrus oils, ginger and lemongrass as well as a nourishing Fractionated Coconut Body Oil. Give your mum the gift of relaxation this Mother's Day. oilgarden.com.au

8 Beneficial Beer Co

This award-winning, classic non-alcoholic all-malt lager exhibits traditional malt and estery yeast character as well as some subtle noble hop character. Highly drinkable, this is a full-bodied brewed beer that makes it hard to tell that it isn't similar to its full-alcohol sibling. It's Beneficial Beer Co.'s first beer on the shelves and there will be many more to come. Taste the difference today. beneficialbeer.com.au

9 Adapt Drinks

It has been a long day, all you want to do is unwind but your mind is still racing. This is the perfect time to have an Adapt Drinks Relax, a non-alcohol and no-sugar sparkling drink. Made with all-natural ingredients including adaptogenic herbs and L-theanine, Relax will give you a moment for your mind and mood. adaptdrinks.com.au

10 Signature Barware Complete Cocktail Kit

Professional bar equipment available for you to use at home. You will receive all the premium cocktail tools you need in a stylish bar kit stand to effortlessly shake, stir, mix and muddle creative beverages at home. The bar tool kits are available in six beautiful colours and each complete kit comes with a sleek and stylish stand to display and organise your professional tools with ease. barware.com.au

11 Horner Wines

The Horner Wines "Mrs H" Organic Sparkling Rosé is the perfect wine to enjoy during the warmer summer months with friends. It's full of beautiful, sweet strawberries and raspberries on the palate with crisp pink lady apple acidity to finish. Serve with your favourite charcuterie. hornerwines.com.au

12 Naked Life Spirits

Naked Life is Australia's most-consumed non-alcoholic cocktail range, with 15 favourite cocktails. From Margarita to Mojito, Cosmo to Canadian and Dry and many more, Naked Life uses distilled botanicals to create a range that allows people to celebrate the moments with nothing to hide: no alcohol, no sugar and very low in calories. They are also the winner of the 2022 non-alcoholic producer of the year in the Melbourne International Spirits Competition. Find them at Woolworths, Coles and Sans Drinks. nakedlifespirits.com.au

13 Sunshine & Sons

The Pineapple Parfait Gin is a contemporary tropical fruit salad gin packed with flavour that tastes like a holiday. Opened with much fanfare and many wide-eyed guests on the 15th August 1971, the iconic Big Pineapple is a testament to the magic of big dreams and a bit of fibreglass. This delicious subtropical fruit salad gin celebrates that day and the Sunshine Coast's most-loved tourist attraction. Pineapple, passionfruit, strawberry, mango, vanilla

and coconut combine to make a surprising, delightful and evocative gin. sunshineandsons.com.au

14 Made by Fressko

All mums deserve some calm time. Shop Fressko's range of 100 per cent organic tea and glass infuser flasks and take 20 per cent off with the code MUM23. High quality and super stylish, Fressko is the original double-walled tea infuser flask that steeps hot tea or fruit water to perfection through the removable infuser filter. Insulated for hot and cold and designed in Melbourne, pick your mum up a tea flask for Mother's Day today. au.madebyfressko.com



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15 De-Stress Your Life Ritual Pack

Designed to be enjoyed as a series of home spa experiences or a complete head-to-toe ritual, iKOU's De-Stress Your Life Ritual Pack will de-stress both skin and mind. It's the perfect gift of me-time for the mother or nurturer in your life.

ikou.com.au

16 Gwinganna

For women of all ages, the ultimate wellness escape is Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat in the Gold Coast hinterland to truly rest and recharge. Explore innovative programs, fully inclusive packages, unique therapies and new premium accommodation options.

gwinganna.com

17 Sanctum

Perfect for those who are sustainably conscious, the Sanctum gift pack is suitable for every skin type. It includes a water-resistant paper pouch containing Sanctum's Soothing Cream Cleanser, Tone & Refresh Mist, Firming Eye Balm, Moisture Concentrate and a Lemongrass & Witch Hazel Soap.

sanctumaustralia.com

18 Weleda Relaxing Body Oil – Lavender

If you're looking for a gift for people who love nature, Weleda's Relaxing Body Oil surely has everything. With its lavender scent immediately dispelling any feelings of stress, the oil creates a sense of peace and wellbeing. Infused with a delicate light blend of sweet almond and organic sesame oils, it absorbs quickly in the skin, making it the perfect remedy to help induce a restful sleep.

weleda.com.au

19 Young Living Essential Oils

Spoil the special women in your life this Mother's Day with a perfect gift she is sure to love. Young Living's Lustre Artisan diffuser is handcrafted making each piece a unique work of art that will illuminate the decor of any home. Enjoy the sweet scents of Young Living's Vanilla and Geranium Bourbon essential oil when diffused separately, or even together for a luxurious aroma

youngliving.com

20 Rose Soothing & Protective Moisturiser

A heritage formulation with a cult following of A-list devotees, this decadent crème is powerfully restorative and delivers the same consistently incredible results today as it did over two decades ago. It's the perfect Mother's Day love gift.

mvskintherapy.com



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21 Homedics

Homedics Beauty Mirror is an elegant and practical mirror that offers storage and can be set to provide either natural reflection or a magnified view for precision and detail. Complete with 360 degree rotation, the mirror includes the ability to tilt forwards and backwards. The LED illumination is fully adjustable to create the ideal level of light for any time of day. As it is battery operated, the mirror is portable so that you can use it wherever is most convenient and is a must-have for every household.

homedics.com.au

22 Spring Seed Wines

Treat your mum to Spring Seed Wine Co "Gypsy" NV Blanc de Blancs this Mother's Day. Spring Seed Wines are made from grapes grown on certified organic vineyards which are located in the premium wine region of McLaren Vale. Owned by Battle of Bosworth's Joch Bosworth and Louise Hemsley-Smith, the vineyards were established in the early 1970s by Joch's parents on the site of an old almond orchard.

bosworthwines.com.au

23 Stefano Lubiana

The 50 per cent whole bunch fermentation has given Stefano Lubiana 2021 Estate Pinot Noir Biodynamic wine a beautifully lifted nose of dark cherry and spice. The palate is subtly intense, driven by a long firm

26



structure wrapped around a core of rhubarb and dark berry compote — a wine which commands your attention.

slw.com.au

24 Natio

Bring tranquil treatments into your home every day with this luxurious body care trio. The Inspire gift set features three full-sized spa products brimming with richly replenishing botanicals and uplifting natural aromatics for an invigorating pep-up, transforming Mum's home into a lush spa sanctuary.

natio.com.au

25 Tilley Soaps

Allow your senses to explore the therapeutic benefits of the Tilley Soaps Aroma Natural aromatherapy collection. The range includes ultrasonic diffusers and TGA-approved vaporisers which can be used independently or with pure essential oils. Their selection of 36 different 100% Pure Essential Oils includes single oils, blends, Australian and organic oils".

tilleysoaps.com.au

27



26 Eco Tan

We've put Mum's favourite products into one luxe velvet pouch so you can gift her what you know she'll love. They're made with only the highest-quality natural and organic ingredients, because you know she deserves the best.

ecotan.com.au

27 Pana Organic

Pana Organic's delicious, vegan, organic chocolates are the perfect gift for mums who appreciate quality over quantity. Surprise her with a Hazelnut Dark chocolate made with organic cacao, coconut milk, maple syrup and whole roasted hazelnuts. Pana Organic's delicious chocolate is also perfect for anyone who deserves a decadent, guilt-free treat.

pana-organic.com

JOMO

n 1 pleasure derived from living in a quiet or independent way without feeling anxious that one is missing out on exciting or interesting events that may be happening elsewhere.

If you've ever felt the familiar itch of FOMO or the fear of missing out, perhaps you need the antidote of its friendlier cousin, JOMO, the joy of missing out. JOMO is understanding that missing out is not something to be feared, but to be embraced, enjoyed and indulged like a warm bubble bath. It encourages you to reclaim your most precious resource; your time. Decline the calendar invite. Release the guilt of saying "No" to things that don't serve you. Stop endlessly scrolling. Acknowledge that your carefully curated social media feed is a distorted, funhouse mirrors version of reality; don't fall into the dark algorithmic hole of The Comparison Trap. JOMO is being present in your life and trusting that you are exactly where you need to be, regardless of what's going on elsewhere. Missing out is not a tragedy, quite the opposite; release the shackles of fear and embrace the sweetness of joy.





Take a walk on the wild side

Hiking, trekking and bushwalking have become a go-to pastime for many. Discover the many ways hiking benefits your mind, body and spirit, the magic of connecting with nature and what you need to get started.

Words CARROL BAKER





Hiking, trekking, bushwalking or tramping — no matter what you call it, going for a walk or climb, far from the madding crowd, is a beautiful way to connect with nature.

If you've never thought about strapping on some boots and heading bush, there are lots of good reasons why you should. Hiking benefits your mind, body and soul; it rejuvenates the spirit and offers opportunities to build cardio and endurance fitness as well as flexibility. For some, hiking is a way to challenge themselves, and for others a social and fun activity or a way to escape the grind.

According to Forests Australia, there are over 134 million hectares of bush to explore. So what are you waiting for?

When hiking, the awe-inspiring sight of a mountain vista, the sweet melody of birdsong, delicate beauty of wildflowers or glimpsing morning dew clinging to a spider's web bathed in light are moments that can take your breath away. Experiencing Mother Nature can be humbling; you're connected and surrounded by a living, breathing thing and that can be balm to the soul.

When Darren Edwards, the founder of Trail Hiking Australia, began hiking in the bush, it turned his life around. He had worked hard and suffered from depression and burnout. "I was trapped in the mentality of having to work harder and harder and one day it was like my world imploded," says Edwards. "Hiking enabled

For some, hiking is a way to challenge themselves, and for others a social and fun activity or a way to escape the grind.

me to get rid of all the noise inside my head, and the pressures around me."

Hiking brings the present into focus. It's a way to let nature soothe and heal. It can help you to be present in the moment, as you feel the warmth and texture of a paperbark tree, watch a native animal drink from a nearby stream or close your eyes and feel the kiss of the morning sun.

Back to basics

Before you begin hiking, there are some things to consider. Edwards says planning is key. "Some people might see something on social media and think, 'OK, that looks like a cool place to go for a walk,' but you need to prepare," he says.

Knowing some basics of navigation in the bush is important. Edwards says we all need to start every hike with the knowledge that we are personally in control of making it back safely. "Know how to read a map and compass, and have reliable mobile apps on your phone," he says.

The length and difficulty of the hike you plan to undertake also need to be factored in, to match your ability. In Australian national parks, the Australian Walking Track Grading System grades hikes from 1 through to 5. A Grade 1 hike is a well-

formed trail with no steps and a short duration, yet on the other end of the scale a Grade 5 hike is unformed and could be a very rough track with potentially steep and extreme gradients. Edwards suggests up to Grade 3 is usually OK for a novice hiker with a moderate level of fitness. "Beyond that you really need to have a bit of experience under your belt," he says.

Build your fitness

Edwards stresses it's important to walk to your ability. "You need to check. The terrain beyond the initial sign may be difficult and navigation can be challenging — I also volunteer for the SES and we see it often where people get into strife if they aren't prepared," he says.

When you first start, build up your fitness and confidence with shorter hikes and, as your fitness improves, try longer hikes. Be sure always to walk within your comfort zone.

Accredited exercise physiologist Bek Payne says starting small is always a good idea. "You'll build up leg strength as well as endurance," she notes.

Inclines and steps add to the challenge. Payne explains that when walking normally, each time you take a stride, the



leg swings and it's relatively easy. "But each time you raise your leg you use extra energy, and step more on the balls of your feet — you use your calves more which can be strenuous," she says.

When bushwalking you are potentially walking on rocky uneven ground. Payne points out that there is increased risk of falls and injury, regardless of age. "Being mindful of foot placement when you are walking is very important," she says.

You can hike solo or with friends or a walking group or take a paid guided hike. When you plan a hike, always share where you're going with others when you plan to leave and when you should be finished.

Darren Edwards' recommended apps

➤ **Emergency Plus:** Uses a phone's GPS functionality so callers can provide emergency call-takers with their location information as determined by their smartphone.

➤ **BOM Weather:** The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's weather app, giving you the most accurate weather information at your fingertips.

➤ **First Aid app:** The Red Cross First Aid app is a free, comprehensive pocket guide to first aid and CPR.

➤ **Navigation app:** Pocket Earth Pro (available on iOS devices).

Gearing up

Really getting up close and personal with gear is important. Hiking with blistered feet and a pack that digs into your ribs will diminish your enjoyment factor, and chances are it's an experience you won't want to repeat.

For a longer hike, Edwards says gym gear won't really cut it. Ideally clothing should be lightweight and comfortable.

"Even for an easy short hike, comfortable foot protection and sun protection is important," he says. "I have seen people climbing hills in heels ... that's definitely not a good idea." On rough terrain, hiking boots are recommended for an extra level of ankle protection.

When you buy a pack to carry your gear, try it on first for size and comfort and adjust it to see that it is a good fit. The same goes for hiking boots.

For a hike lasting a few hours or a half day, Edwards suggests carrying a minimum of two to three litres of water, fruit, nuts and a bread roll. As you are hiking, take rest breaks to stop and immerse yourself in the beauty of the natural world that surrounds you. Breathe in the crisp fresh air.

For longer hikes or overnight ones, Edwards says your requirements are different. "Gear selection is critical — things that will breathe easily and wick perspiration away from your skin, like wool," he says. "It won't allow bacteria to

accumulate; you want to pack lightweight things that will pack down well."

For nourishment on overnight hikes, Edwards recommends dehydrated meats and foods that are freeze-dried to keep the weight down. You can take your own or purchase what you need from a hiking store.

Dealing with critters

When going for a walk in the bush you might end up with some unwelcome hitchhikers including sandflies, ticks and leeches. Cover up with long-sleeved clothing and use repellants.

Snakes are a concern for some, Edwards says. Most of the time they'll hear you and get out of your way, but be vigilant. "If I'm walking along a riverbank in warm weather, I'll anticipate I might see a snake sunning itself on a rock. Just give them space to get away from you," he says.

To maximise everyone's enjoyment when hiking, there is a hiker's etiquette. Whatever you carry in, carry out with you. Be sure to respect others. Edwards says he's been on hikes where people have had loud music blaring as they trek. "Fellow hikers go out there for peace and quiet and to be with nature," he says. "Keep to the left of the trail and always yield to those going up as it's harder work going uphill." 🌿

Carrol Baker is a freelance journalist who writes for lifestyle and health magazines across Australia and New Zealand.



Forget the trends

It's easy to be dazzled by the latest design trends, but authentically following your heart is the most rewarding way to decorate your home. Read on as interior design experts uncover the meaning of trends and share tips on discovering your personal style.

Words JESSICA BELLEF

Cottagecore. Millennial pink. Chubby design. Do any of these words ring a bell? A quick online search of these buzzwords will reveal they are interior design trends that have popped and fizzed within the last 10 years. The words may be new to you, but the trends' influence can be witnessed in stores and hospitality spaces, online, in print and possibly even in your home.

For centuries, colours, shapes and patterns have ridden waves of popularity and contributed to the identity of a decade. Tastemakers and revered media outlets were once the gatekeepers of trends across all facets of design, and *en vogue* styles would slowly filter down to the general public. Today, the relationship between trends and broader society is closely entwined in an increasingly online world of relentless information and inspiration sharing. Neale Whitaker, a highly respected interior design personality and television presenter with a wealth of expertise in publishing, is more interested in learning about *why* things are suddenly fashionable rather than what is fashionable. "It's so often an oblique comment on society or culture or a reaction to what has gone before," he says.

Sydney-based designer Amanda Talbot suggests that design trends reflect societal developments and are a reading of the global mood. Well versed in the business of trends, Talbot's career spans trend forecasting for international brands such as IKEA and Louis Vuitton, authoring multiple books and designing a slew of homes and high-profile hospitality projects. "Trends come with the zeitgeist of what is happening around us," she explains, adding that the events covered in the 24-hour news cycle shape individuals' values and decisions about how they live. "This includes what

is happening economically, environmentally, socially, advancement in technology, wars and disasters," says Talbot.

There has been no greater societal shift in our lifetime than the COVID pandemic. "During COVID, people were awakened to the environmental state of the world and the lack of equity with people even in our own neighbourhoods. This meant people were looking for products that supported other

"Getting caught in a trend cycle is such a terrible place to be for you, the environment and for all of us."

people and the planet," says Talbot. She also notes now that lockdowns are a thing of the past and society has seemingly controlled the virus, people are in a celebratory mood and keen to bring colour, fun and glamour back into their worlds. "It's a chance to express yourself," she says.

So are design trends good or bad for society?

The design trend landscape for 2022 reflected society's need for calming positivity and increasing awareness of climate change. Countless trend reports made mention of nature-inspired colour palettes, artisanal handmade objects and shopping second-hand and vintage. These are all wonderful things that can contribute to a happier household and a lighter environmental footprint.

However, it's hard to find an upside to the excessive production and promotion of trending products purely for profit-making, where the commercialisation of trends influences individuals to buy

mindlessly and think materialistically. "If you happen to love what is currently fashionable, that's fine, but if you don't — leave well alone," Whitaker cautions.

Due to the pervasive nature of social media and the internet's ability to disseminate information instantly and widely, trends spread quickly and cycle through at a dizzying pace not seen in the past. This focus on buzzy newness and immediacy leads to overconsumption and a throwaway mentality, resulting in excessive waste and overflowing landfills. "Getting caught in a trend cycle is such a terrible place to be for you, the environment and for all of us," Talbot posits. In addition, when a design trend saturates a market, it can lead to a homogenisation of looks and styles, a "cookie-cutter" effect that renders things monotonous and predictable.

It's telling that Whitaker and Talbot, who have both worked for acclaimed international design magazines, report they are weary of design trends. Instead, they decorate in ways that are honest reflections of their life and true loves, valuing spaces that are personal and nurturing. "I have always believed our homes tell our stories," says Whitaker. "I love the authenticity and individuality that comes from choosing things we genuinely love as opposed to things that are merely fashionable."

When the focus is shifted away from staying "on trend" and confidence in personal style is nurtured, life becomes more meaningful. "I proudly say I am anti-design and more about embracing living," Talbot enthuses. "The only way to bring soul to a room is to fill it with what you love. Do not to be dictated by current trends because they come and go." She urges individuals not to be scared about experimenting, which is a sentiment





closely held by Whitaker. “The easiest way — of course — is to simply be fearless and go with your heart, but that’s often easier said than done!” he says. Luckily, both experts have shared their top tips on creating a beautiful, meaningful home that tells your story without buying into trends.

Start by looking inward

Not sure how to begin parsing out your personal style? You make decisions daily that reflect your stylistic approach, from the clothes you wear to the things you capture in your photo reel. “Always look for clues around you,” Amanda suggests. “Ask yourself: What do I love in life? Nature, cosiness, glamour? Your favourite place

is the Mediterranean? This helps paint a picture and begins your brief.” Look at different aspects of your life and note the key colours, textures and themes that pop up. The beauty here is that there are no wrong answers — how could there be? It’s all about you!

Create a mood board

Mood boarding can help you further define the things you love, pulling them together in a format that is easy to visually digest. Whether using an image curation website like Pinterest or collecting pages from a magazine, go with your gut and pick out the pictures that immediately resonate with you. Collect 10 images of interiors

that you are drawn to and analyse the spaces. Take note of any repeating colours, patterns and shapes and observe the amount of light and the presence of nature. The act of selecting and assessing the images will lend you some clarity and focus. Have fun with it!

Layer it up

Most hotels are impersonal by design, stripped to the bare essentials and generic in style in order not to polarise or offend. They are transient, functional spaces that must look untouched and new for arriving guests. Hotel rooms are missing those key indicators that make a space look lived in and soulful — a messy stack of dog-eared



books by the bedside; kitchen shelves overflowing with mismatched crockery; hats and jackets hanging by the door.

Layers indicate a human presence, and Talbot knows that the key to creating a soulful home is to embrace those enlivening layers. "Even if you are going for a minimal look, layering with artwork, soft furnishings, textures and lots of table lamps with a soft golden glow will make your room feel so good," she says.

Whitaker highlights art as a key layering element that stamps a home with a personal touch. In fact, he suggests your walls are a great kick-off point to bring uniqueness to your spaces. "Framing some personal photos or mementos and

Changing the colours, adding in new-found pieces and donating things that no longer bring you joy are all part of nurturing a space that is truly your own.

arranging them gallery-style might be a good place to start. What we choose to display on our walls is often very personal and can be independent of our furniture or soft furnishings," he says.

Display meaningful objects

The things you collect and hold special offer great insights into who you are. Travel mementos, books, gifted items and hand-me-downs from loved ones are imbued with meaning and have a grounding effect when displayed in your home. They are reminders of where you've been and who you are and indicate your dreams for the future. These objects are unique to you, and proudly displaying them reinforces a sense of self and infuses the space with your individuality.

Give a bookshelf over to your collection of teapots, group collected feathers in a jar and pop it on the coffee table, or cover a wall in vintage shop signage, if that's your thing! If you embrace the things you love and weave them into your surroundings, your spaces will feed back feelings of support and comfortable familiarity.

Experiment with colour

Colour is a powerful tool in the interior and product design worlds. It is scientifically proven that colour influences psychological and physiological states, and how we use it in our homes directly impacts our emotions. The tolerance levels for hues differ from person to person — some individuals may be overwhelmed by saturated colours, while others will find neutral walls uninspiring.

Colour preferences are entirely personal, shaped by our memories and experiences. When choosing colour palettes for your interiors, look to your mood board or follow your instincts. Don't rely solely on colour trend reports; if a paint retailer tells you a particular colour is popular, take it with a grain of salt.

If you are hesitant to splash a statement colour across your walls, Whitaker suggests adding accents of a favourite colour throughout the home. Add your chosen hue in small doses, assess how it makes you feel, and keep adding until you find a comfortable balance. That's the only rule here — go with what makes you feel good.

In her book published in 2014, *Happy: Creating Joyous Living Spaces Through*

Design, Talbot writes, "When you use colour with confidence, it says something about your character. You are showing that you are strong, capable and something that many others long to be. Believing is the key to living it."

Shop mindfully

"We really do need to find confidence in what we love and consciously purchase," says Talbot, highlighting a salient aspect of this discussion. Shopping with intention plays a significant role in creating a beautiful home that is authentically "you". Try to take an objective view of pervasive advertising messages and marketing images and recognise them as the seductive sales tool they are designed to be.

Always ask yourself the following questions before making a purchase:

- Will it bring me long-term joy?
- Is it well made and likely to last?
- Do I already own something similar that serves the same purpose?
- Am I shopping because I am bored, angry or stressed? Does my body and mind need something other than this right now?

The greatest test involves delaying your purchase and walking away. Reassess your feelings toward the item in 24 hours and, if you are still enamoured, it is meant to be!

Keep playing

An autobiographical home evolves and shifts as the homeowner does. Arrange your things in a way that makes you happy, and then rearrange it all when you feel like an update. Repurpose discarded items or reinvent older pieces with coats of paint or new upholstery. Changing the colours, adding in new-found pieces and donating things that no longer bring you joy are all part of nurturing a space that is truly your own. If you view your home as a laboratory where you are free to play and express yourself, you are more likely to make changes. Hesitations will melt away the more you play, giving you the confidence to celebrate your own style and leave the trends behind. 🌊

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Photography Getty Images

The buzz on native bees

An emerging backyard hobby, keeping Meliponini (native stingless social bees) is growing in popularity, supports sustainability and adds diversity to your garden.

Words LINDA MOON

Bees are vital to the ecology of our planet and also to our human food supply. The busy insects pollinate over 80 per cent of the world's flowering plants, according to a 2022 report into native bees by AgriFutures Australia. While the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) gets most of the limelight and credit, there are over 20,000 other bee species across the globe. Research suggests the contribution of wild bees to pollination is even greater than the *Apis* species.

With bees of all kinds increasingly threatened — by pesticides and other agrichemicals, climate change, habitat loss and varroa mite (a parasite decimating honeybee populations) — native bees have been thrust into the spotlight. Seemingly unaffected by varroa, and viewed as a saving grace for the planet, the native pollinators have become the subject of growing fascination.

Meliponiculture

While there are approximately 1700 native bee species across Australia, only 11 of these live in communal hives within a rigid, complex social structure like the European honeybee, which allows them to be moved about and managed by humans. Known collectively as Meliponini or “social stingless native bees”, they consist of two genera: *Tetragonula* and *Austroplebeia*.

Across the world, however, there are over 500 different species.

Meliponiculture is the practice of stingless native beekeeping. A 2021 survey found at least 1158 native stingless beekeepers (and 11,971 nests or hives) within Australia. One such enthusiast is Greg Coonan, author of *Keeping Australian Native Stingless Bees*. Coonan, who offers support and advice to others keeping the bees, reveals they're mostly kept for enjoyment and to help the environment. Along with pollinating edible and ornamental gardens, they're important pollinators of native plants.

Coonan's menagerie, in suburban Brighton, Brisbane, consists of 20 hives and three Meliponini species native to southeastern Queensland: *Tetragonula carbonaria*, *T. hockingsi* and *Austroplebeia*. Most are rescued bees still in their original home. A mature native hive has a population of about 8000 to 10,000 bees, he says. Rather than beeswax combs, the Meliponini store their honey in little pots.

Relatively unaggressive and stingless, they're great around children and pets. Another key difference is their smaller size. “They look like a house fly,” he says.

Climate factors

Unfortunately, keeping the Meliponini is limited by where you live. While solitary and



The most important factor to get right is the location of the hive ... Ideal locations include north-facing verandahs and patios and beneath shady trees on the north side of your property.

semi-social bees are found in all regions of Australia, the social stingless variety are only found in warm parts of the country, including Queensland, the Northern Territory, northern half of Western Australia and northern coastal parts of NSW. Native to tropical and subtropical regions, "they haven't evolved to go down into the temperate climates," Coonan explains. Only *T. carbonaria* is suitable for warmer parts of NSW: and the Northern Rivers region down to as far south as Bermagui, he says.

The colder than average recent winter killed off several of Coonan's small rescued hives. Below 18°C, the stingless social bees are unable to fly and stay in the hive, he says. "They don't really get active until about 21 degrees." When it gets really cold, the bees don't sleep either, but work to protect the eggs. "They'll build a crafted inner chamber in and around their brood with a material called *involucrum*," Coonan says. "All the bees pack in around their brood to vibrate their bodies to generate heat to keep their brood warm."

Hive behaviour

Like the European honeybee, the colony revolves around the queen and her brood. However, unlike the honeybee queen, the native social bee queen can no longer fly once she begins mating and laying eggs. "The bees aren't going to leave her," Coonan says. "They can live in a good box or a natural home, like a log, literally for decades."

Unlike her honeybee equivalent, the native social queen has a single mate. "She'll carry that sperm in a sac in her body all her life [which is roughly two years]," Coonan says.

Eighty per cent of the colony are "hive bees" with roles in the nursery with the queen, and working in food and beverage in the honey and forage stores, Coonan says. The other 20 per cent are "gatherers" collecting pollen (the bees' protein source), nectar and tree resins for building honey pots and sealing their chambers. Gatherers only live about two to three weeks if they're lucky, Coonan says. "Just about everything wants to eat the little guys: other predator insects, little birds, geckos, lizards and particularly spiders. It's just the natural attrition rate; they must be a really valuable food

source because there's something eating them all the time." To keep the population thriving, the queen lays 350 to 400 eggs every day of her life, Coonan says.

Re-queening the hive

The hives are very efficient at re-queening when needed. "They'll often keep a couple of princesses in the hive so it has a contingency," Coonan says. The egg cells also contain many larger outer cells for replacement queens, he says.

When a hive needs to re-queen, thousands of drones (male bees) will suddenly appear from up to five kilometres away, he says. "Because they're from other hives, they're not allowed into the hive." Roosting on nearby branches at night, clustered together for protection and swarming around the hive all day long, they'll remain there until they die.

Sourcing a hive

The Aussie Bee website lists most of the hive suppliers in Australia, Coonan says. Try to buy from someone local to you. "The bees are more likely to be acclimatised to the environment you're in; you're more likely to get ongoing support systems and people to mentor you," he says.

Gaining a hive means relocating one that's already established. "People put out empty boxes and other objects hoping they'll be colonised, but there's not much chance of it happening," he says. "They're not like honeybees. They're extremely uncooperative, stubborn and only do what they want to do. Give them the home they've chosen themselves."

Coonan's rescued colonies reside in logs (brought to him by tree loppers and firewood cutters), a mailbox stand, water bottle, porcelain fish and water meter pit. "They occupy so many different places. It's amazing," he says. In the wild, the social stingless natives typically favour the hollows of old dead trees created by termites.

Within the industry, a hardwood timber box known as the OATH (Original Australian Trigona Hive) is commonly used, Coonan says. What's key is that their chamber is secure from the elements, other insects and predators, he says. The native bees also use sticky tree resins to line and seal their chamber, be it a box

or natural home. "When the resin sets it becomes quite brittle and hard and very secure," he says.

Location, location

The most important factor to get right is the location of the hive, Coonan says. This needs to give the bees full sun in winter and full shade in summer. Ideal locations include north-facing verandahs and patios and beneath shady trees on the north side of your property. Such zones capture the northern sun in winter (when it's low in the sky) and the shade in summer (when the sun is in a high position overhead). If needed, trees can be trimmed back in winter to allow in more light. Those lacking appropriate spots in their garden can simply move their hives to achieve the same conditions, Coonan says.

Living in a high-rise unit is no barrier to keeping the bees, provided you have a north-facing balcony or verandah. "They will find food, they will thrive without you putting in anything," Coonan says. However, growing suitable flowers nearby will make their lives easier.

Feeding the hive

The main diet of bees is nectar and pollen collected from flowers. Like honeybees, native bees tend to be attracted to purple, blue and white flowers. "The plants evolved to be pollinated by insects are largely your purple, blue and white flowers and the plants evolved for birds to pollinate are normally your yellow and orange," Coonan explains. "It doesn't mean they [the bees] will avoid yellow and red; it just means they won't pollinate those flowers."

Native bees are versatile feeders. Coonan's bees, for example, adore crepe myrtle and nutmeg bush. "They're a bit like honeybees, they're not worried if it's exotic or native or some of the hybrids," he says. "They obviously like a varied diet, because they bring in all different-coloured pollens. In suburbia it's like paradise for them."

Harvesting honey

Coonan describes the native bee honey as unique, strong-tasting and a bit watery with a citrus tang. He ascribes the stronger taste to tree resins and tannins used by the bees in the production of their honey pots.

Research, including that by the University of Queensland, has discovered that the native bee honey has powerful antimicrobial and antifungal properties and is also antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. About 85 per cent of the sugar is trehalulose, a rare low-GI sugar



suitable for diabetics, and which is also acariogenic (ie doesn't cause tooth decay).

Unfortunately, Coonan says no one has yet figured out how to harvest the native bee honey without an attrition rate on the bees. Harvesting the honey uses what's called a "bed of nails" to pierce the hundreds of small honey pots created by the bees. "Because it's a work area in the hive there can be hundreds of bees working in there when you're doing this and you end up with hundreds of drowning bees," Coonan explains. A further disincentive: any honey harvest gained from the bees is small.

While the native social bees are generally non-aggressive and stingless, they will attack if you try to steal their honey or split the hive. "While they've only got a bite like a little black ant, if you've got thousands of them biting you at the same time they're very effective at chasing people away," Coonan says.

Those harvesting native bee honey are advised to do so in spring and only if the hive has a gross weight over 10 kilograms. "Make sure they're at full strength going into winter," he advises.

Defending the hive

It's not uncommon for a stronger hive to try to take over another hive, Coonan says. Sadly, this involves a battle to the death. "The invading hive turn up in

thousands, and the hive being attacked will send out all of its bees to do battle," he says. "They grab each other and fall on the ground and won't let go. The hive with the most bees always wins. It's normally the invaders. Once they've gotten rid of all the bees that were there, they move their mob in and keep going. So you don't lose a hive but it's absolutely brutal. You can have a black carpet of dead bees on the ground."

Coonan suggests relocating your hive and placing an empty "fake" or "bait" one in its place. "Quite often, if you do it right, you can actually capture the invaders and start a new colony without losing your hive," he says.

Helping farmers

According to the AgriFutures report, native bees are being used or trialled in warm climates as a commercial pollination service for growers of macadamias, blueberries, mangoes, strawberries, avocados, lychees and greenhouse tomatoes. However, the small foraging range of the natives (about 300 to 700 metres depending on the species) means many hives are needed to pollinate a farm. Comparatively, the European honeybee has a foraging range of several kilometres.

"Potentially, they're going to be vital to the pollination of commercial crops," Coonan says. "Because of the likely

threat of varroa mite to the honeybees it's becoming imperative."

Encouraging solitary bees

Those in the colder southern parts of the country can still enjoy and help native bees by encouraging the solitary and semi-social species into their gardens. These range in size and shape from the tiny 2mm long quasihisma bee to the fuzzy 24mm carpenter bee. Many, such as the blue-banded, teddy-bear, carpenter and sweat bee, perform what's known as "buzz pollination", which benefits eggplants, tomatoes, chillies and other Solanaceae crops, but cannot be performed by the European honeybee.

About 70 per cent of solitary bees build burrows in the ground where they lay their eggs within individual sealed chambers. Others choose rotted or pre-existing holes in wood, woody stems, old vegetation and other natural materials. To attract them, grow bee-friendly plants. Leave areas of the ground undisturbed and naturalised, reduce hard landscaping or establish a wildflower meadow. Include rotten logs. Alternatively, buy a pre-made bee motel. Avoid pesticides and chemicals. 🐝

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Going Lo-TEK

The environmental impacts of technology are substantial, which is why there is a move toward judiciously employing some alternative models of usage and at the same time looking at certain indigenous technologies that may be relevant to modern life.

Words MARTIN OLIVER

The modern world is characterised by a focus on technology, one that might be characterised as an addiction, and the trend is towards an ever-greater technological reliance. Environmentally speaking, the associated impacts are proving to be substantial. Engineering structures are usually built outside the human scale, and one-size-fits-all applications of technology are often homogenous rather than being tailored to the local environment via an intimate knowledge of how it functions.

In recent years, alternative visions have sprung up. One is *Low-Tech Magazine*, an online and hard copy resource put together by Kris De Decker, a blogger based in Barcelona. The idea behind the publication is not rejecting technology, but judiciously eschewing the newest and shiniest option in favour of older and often simpler alternatives with a lesser impact. In the *Low-Tech Magazine* world, “dumb” phones are in, and the internet would have a speed limit in order to curb its voracious demand for data centre energy.

Parallel with this, another paradigm is being explored, one that looks at how technologies developed by indigenous populations may be relevant to the modern world. Often going back centuries, and still in use today, these approaches have demonstrated substantial resilience and longevity, something that cannot be confidently claimed for the high-tech world.

Julia Watson, a teacher of urban design at Harvard University Graduate School of Design and Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, has

gathered together 120 examples in her book *Lo-TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism*, which was published by the German publisher Taschen in 2020. Despite the similarity in the language, Lo-TEK is not the same as “low-tech”; instead the “TEK” part stands for Traditional Ecological Knowledge, a term that has been in circulation for at least

These [solutions] represent a healthy counterbalance to high-tech urban concepts that are unmoored from the ecological reality in which they are embedded.

a decade. The book crosses between a range of different habitats that are occupied by humans, including mountains, forests, deserts and wetlands.

After spending six years developing the concept, Watson has assembled a toolkit of home-grown solutions that she believes could change the way that cities are designed. These represent a healthy counterbalance to high-tech urban concepts that are unmoored from the ecological reality in which they are embedded. She emphasises symbiosis with the natural world, and “harnessing the intelligence of complex ecosystems”. Common features across these indigenous technologies are the use of locally available materials and a low embodied energy.

Agroforestry polycultures

Monocultures are a feature of the industrialised modern world that aids mechanised farming. However they are also out of balance with nature, and are prone to pest attacks that are usually kept in check with toxic pesticides. An alternative is the use of traditional polycultures that feature a range of species.

In the southeast of the Brazilian Amazon live the Kayapo tribe, who occupy and protect a huge territory roughly the size of South Korea or Iceland. They operate a sophisticated agroforestry system involving both rainforest and savannah ecosystems and exploit the biodiverse transition zones between the two for maximum effect. These zones are where villages tend to be located and are referred to in Western ecology as ecotones.

The Kayapo use about 250 different food plants, and about 650 that have medicinal properties. In savannah environments, forest islands known as *apêtê* are created, starting from small mounds of vegetation growing on ant nests. As *apêtê* become older, the larger trees in the centre are cut down to allow in light. A fully developed *apêtê* has a range of microclimates that vary in shade, light and humidity. The tribe has a detailed understanding of niches and companion planting, helping it to achieve the best results. Fire is also used strategically as part of their management of the landscape.

Such a system contrasts with the short-sighted and destructive bulldozing of the Amazon by agribusiness interests for raising beef, encouraged by the policies of former far-right Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro.



Floating islands

In the southern wetlands of Iraq, close to the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the Ma'dan (also known as the Marsh Arabs) have lived for thousands of years on small floating islands known as *tuhul*. These are constructed using alternating layers of reeds and mud dredged from below. Buffalo farming takes place on the islands, and over time the thickness of the reed islands increases.

The Ma'dan are also recognised for their architectural achievements. As a building material, reed possesses numerous advantages: it is water-resistant and insect-repellent, and offers thermal and acoustic insulation. Living structures are made from reeds and *qasab*, a type of giant grass that resembles bamboo. Most remarkable is a beautifully designed type of building known as a *mudhif*,

which serves as a guest house and for gatherings. Inside, its lines of reed pillars and sweeping arches are reminiscent of being in a church. A *mudhif* can last for 15 years before needing to be rebuilt.

In 1993, then Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein started draining the marshes because they were considered a refuge for militia forces and terrorists opposed to his government. Since 2003, water has been returning into the marshes, but the traditional culture of the marshes is struggling to survive, and this has been compounded by three years of drought. Sadly, it is easier for misguided people to wreck traditional cultures than it is to regenerate them later.

Living root bridges

The Khasi tribe inhabits subtropical mountainous country on the southern

edge of the Shillong Plateau in northern India. They are best-known for living root bridges (*jing kieng jri*) that are used to cross waterways such as streams. Made using the roots of the rubber fig tree (*Ficus elastica*), such a suspension bridge is slowly created by training the fig roots, often using wooden or bamboo scaffolds as an aid. This process takes about 30 years, and therefore requires a very long-term vision. As the fig tree produces new roots throughout its life, these are trained to strengthen the bridge. Living root bridges require active maintenance to prevent them from decaying or going wild and becoming unusable.

Such bridges can hold up to 50 people and last for up to 600 years. The longest known bridge stretches over 50 metres. It is only in recent years that they have attracted attention from the outside world. Between 2015 and 2017, German researchers



Khasi living root bridges inspired a proposal to use bamboo scaffolds to train ficus trees into position, as a means of creating covered walkways leading to public transport nodes.

travelling around the region located 77 of them. As for the origin of these remarkable structures, this is lost in time, and the tribe has no knowledge of when they appeared. Other tribes in the region use aerial rubber tree roots to make ladders and platforms.

Water cooperation

Dating back to around the 10th century CE on the island of Bali are the Jatiluwih rice terraces, covering 600 hectares, that obtain water from the same sources. It is transported via canals, small aqueducts, bamboo pipes and underground tunnels.

Subak is the name for the cooperative system that governs this water management and enables it to be shared fairly between farmers in an egalitarian way that contrasts strongly with competitive Western cultures where people often tend to be looking out for more than their fair share. The transfer of water between fields is made at scheduled times.

Rice grown in this project is cultivated without fertilisers or pesticides, and rice as a crop has been central in supporting the island's relatively dense population. For tourists, these terraces have become a draw, bringing visitors to the island's farming regions.

At a more metaphysical level, *subak* reflects the philosophical concept of *Tri Hita Karana* (literally "three causes of happiness") which is embedded in the wider Balinese culture. *Tri Hita Karana* aims to sustain harmony with the realms of the spirit, the human world and nature. The rural landscape includes shrines, and water temples where rituals are held. *Subak* rice terraces are considered a "cultural landscape" by UNESCO but are at risk from forces such as tourist development.

Mulberry–silk–fish pond systems

In eastern China, an ingenious polyculture has grown up in the district of Nanxun, close to the city of Huzhou. It is located in a lowland wetland ecosystem in a subtropical monsoon climate, and is estimated to be about 2500 years old. Nanxun is an ancient town that has been compared to Venice due to its network of waterways.

In times past, flood-related disasters were common, which led to the creation of a network of channels and ponds. As the

ponds were being created, the sludge that was dug out was piled around their edges to create dykes. This evolved into an ingenious mulberry–silkworm–fish cultivation system, where mulberry trees planted on dykes are used for raising silkworms, and silkworm faeces are fed to fish in the ponds. The fish-excrement-rich mud at the bottom of these ponds is sometimes dredged and used to fertilise the mulberry trees.

This model has been recognised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System, and the Nanxun area is one of the program's pilot sites.

Water transport in Iran

Iran is a country that is largely arid, where access to water is an important issue. Around the first century CE, underground tunnels known as *qanats* started to be built, to transport it from where it was abundant to where human populations were located. In this hot and dry region, water flowing underground is protected against evaporation.

Building a *qanat* involves tapping an aquifer at the top of a valley and, aided by a gentle slope, relaying the water to other areas through gravity. Sourcing water from an aquifer has the advantage of being largely unaffected by rainfall levels, and the use of gravity has the modern benefit of circumventing the need for electricity. As a result, *qanats* are highly resilient to disruption. Well shafts at regular intervals along the route allow ventilation, and when viewed from above these look like a line of craters.

Qanats are linked to water reservoirs and water mills, with the water often being used for agricultural irrigation. As with *subak*, equitable sharing of water resources is an important priority. Many *qanats* are still functioning today, highlighting their extreme longevity. Eleven of those in Iran are on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In other countries, similar constructions also occur in Afghanistan, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

Putting it into practice

Buro Happold is the name of a British engineering consultancy. In collaboration with indigenous communities and

Julia Watson, it created an installation focused on urban planning ideas, called *Symbiocene*, for the 2022 London exhibition *Our Time on Earth*. *Symbiocene*, whose name conveys a sense of interconnection, features architectural models overlaid with video projections, and looks at how a selection of three of these indigenous technologies could be adopted by the modern industrialised world.

From the *Ma'dan*, it formulated the idea of putting homes on floating islands that can be off-grid and use composting toilets. This would be particularly useful for surviving increasingly frequent flood events exacerbated by climate change, and for responding to rising sea levels.

Khasi living root bridges inspired a proposal to use bamboo scaffolds to train ficus trees into position, as a means of creating covered walkways leading to public transport nodes. Shading is important because of rising temperatures, further exacerbated by the urban heat island effect, and a comfortable walk to access public transport will make it a more appealing means of travel. But unlike some other solutions, this slow process would take a very long time to implement, putting it at odds with the worlds of mainstream construction and capitalism.

The *subak* water-sharing model was an inspiration for proposing a neighbourhood-scale reed bed system for water treatment. In rich countries, all treated water is usually purified to drinking water standards, using a substantial quantity of energy and chemicals, when only a fraction of this water is ultimately drunk. Buro Happold suggested a two-step process where neighbourhood cooperatives decide how much water needs to be purified for drinking, with the rest going to the reed beds, which would also be used for growing food, and directed to purposes such as showering, toilet use and laundry.

An innovative and generous parallel idea is the use of blockchain technology to share profits arising from these solutions with the indigenous communities that inspired them.

High-tech is not always the answer, and sometimes elegant and deceptively sophisticated alternatives exist, hidden from public view. The media could help by curbing its focus on dysfunction and negativity, and by spreading more information about these indigenous technologies and other environmental solutions. These are at risk of being lost due to an array of different pressures and need to be preserved. 🌱

Martin Oliver is a writer and researcher based in Lismore.

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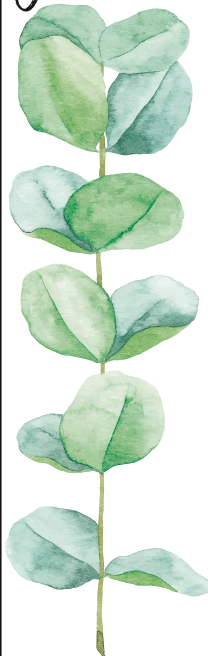
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Momentum

n 1 a property of a moving body that determines the length of time required to bring it to rest when under the action of a constant force or moment.

2 strength or force gained by motion or by a series of events.

Like a pendulum swinging slow but steady, life requires momentum. Momentum is movement. Kinetic energy. Heat. A force that drives you forward. Momentum is the beat of your heart pumping blood around your body, keeping you breathing, moving, living. It's the beat that prevents you from feeling stuck, that pushes and propels you towards the life you want to live. That could be big goals like moving to a new house or starting a business, or smaller daily ones like instilling healthy habits or learning a new skill. To build momentum, commit to a daily practice. Whether that's meditation, exercising or studying, devoting even a few minutes each day will nudge you closer to your goals. Momentum can be just tiny steps, consistently, like that pendulum — slow but steady. As Albert Einstein said, "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."







The perfect winter remedy

There's something exhilarating and poetic about being the first to walk across fresh snow. Here, we take a journey to Victoria's Falls Creek to make fresh tracks and admire the rugged snow-capped mountains glistening in the morning sun.

Words MEG LAW



"Immerse yourself in nature's symphony and let your senses burst with joy."

~ Tom Brown Jr

A feeling of escapism comes with flying solo down a black run on skis, zigzagging between trees, competing against yourself and clocking your own velocity and speed — the stillness and peacefulness that comes with standing on your own at the top of a mountain after a morning hike, surrounded by a blanket of thick white snow with nothing but the crisp, icy cold air to keep you company.

Compare this with the stark contrast of the chaos in the main village with children squealing as they fly past on their toboggans, families happily building snowmen, snowball fights, learners

colliding with their limbs and ski poles in an awkward tangled web of defeat. Just as no two snowflakes are ever the same, humans have differing ideas on what "floats our boat" and what makes us truly happy. For me, it is the snow.

There is something about a trip to the snow that feeds my soul. The whole notion of a winter escape gives me energy, ignites my sense of adventure and activates my passion for being immersed in nature.

For some, winter is synonymous with staying indoors and rugging up. Heaters cranked up, fires burning, ugg boots on — these cosy images are enough to keep us from heading outside all winter.

But in my mind, nothing compares with rugging up in my red woollen beanie, a scarf and matching mittens and feeling

fresh snowflakes land gently on my pink mottled cheeks. I feel young and playful. I want to run, skip and make snow angels.

Then later, when I hit the slopes and ski down a freshly groomed track I get the same sense of liberation and youthful exhilaration. I giggle with glee as my feet dangle over the chairlift, the cold, harsh wind slaps me awake and my eyes feast upon the spectacular unmatched panoramas of the Victorian Alps.

At the end of a long day of physical exertion, I find myself in a tranquil state of bliss. Whether it be nursing a warm cup of chocolate by a log fire or sipping on a tepid glass of mulled wine recounting tales of the day with friends, I succumb to a newfound peacefulness, an inner happiness; a feeling that is hard to replicate elsewhere.



Opposite page On route to Falls Creek via The Great Alpine Road with views over Mt Hotham.

Top The setting sun casting long shadows over Falls Creek. *Left* An extensive lift network operates across Falls Creek.

Falls Creek

Falls Creek is Victoria's largest ski resort. In winter, this alpine resort is home to the largest ski and snowboarding terrain in Victoria before it effortlessly transforms itself into a natural haven and outdoor mecca for mountain biking, hiking, trail running, kayaking and fishing.

Falls Creek Resort offers 14 lifts, 92 runs and the perfect mix of beginner, intermediate and advanced terrain. But it's not just the epic skiing and boarding on offer. The mountain also packs a punch with its rugged snow-covered peaks, towering snow gums and spectacular scenic views that will have nature lovers picking up their jaw from the floor.

There's also plenty of après-ski mischief to be had on the mountain, whether you're tempted by one of the

many bustling bars for a cheeky ale or butterscotch schnapps or prefer to dine on some gooey baked camembert with apple and honey or a buttery clam chowder.

Located in North East Victoria, this popular resort evokes a storybook ambience synonymous with a fairy tale with its alpine-style chalets, lodges, luxe hotels, fairy lights and old-world charm. It has an altitude reaching up to 1850 metres above sea level and is home to Australia's highest body of water, Rocky Valley Lake.

At night you can see thousands of twinkling stars against some of the darkest skies in the world, far from light pollution.

Flow-on effects

The positive flow-on effects and benefits to the mind, body and soul from being in

a cold alpine environment make a trip to the snow a perfect winter remedy.

In recent years, numerous experimental psychology studies have linked exposure to nature with increased energy and a heightened sense of happiness and wellbeing. It goes without saying that when we spend more time in nature we feel greater vitality, more energised and positive, and have improved resilience and physical health.

More and more studies worldwide have found that humans' health and wellbeing benefit from spending time in nature. From reducing inflammation and restoring immunity to lowering stress levels and boosting energy, there's no doubt nature heals.

But most of us don't need research to support the idea that being at one with



The adrenaline kicks in with the chairlift ride up the mountain as the wind slaps your cheeks awake and the immensity of the freshly packed snow beneath awaits.



Escape routes

Go

Falls Creek is a 4.5 hour drive from Melbourne CBD in North East Victoria.

Visit

Falls Creek is Victoria's largest ski resort, with a good mix of beginner and advanced terrain. In summer it transforms itself into an outdoor mecca for mountain biking, hiking, trail running, kayaking and fishing.

Stay

Astra Lodge, a classic European alpine lodge, was awarded Australia's best boutique ski hotel for seven consecutive years by the World Ski Awards. Centrally located on mountain, luxe living (but with a cosy, relaxed vibe) and unparalleled views of Falls Creek. Elegant studio apartments and deluxe rooms. Comes complete with its own day spa, magnesium pool, on-site bar and restaurant, exclusive snow transfer service and even your very own sommelier. Book for peak winter season in advance at astrafalls.creek.com.au.

Don't miss

Weekly fireworks during winter, night skiing and boarding and resting your aching muscles with a mulled wine paired with baked cheese and apple by an open fire.

Plan

Plan your Falls Creek snow trip at skifalls.com.au and falls.creek.com.au.

nature simply feels good. A gentle breeze, the warmth of the sun or the sound of rain, nature evokes a peace and tranquillity that can't be found elsewhere.

Within minutes of arriving at Falls Creek, I notice my shoulders visibly drop and relax and my smile widen. There is nothing more liberating than clicking on my skis and zipping up my snow jacket to hit the fresh powder, explore the unknown and push myself out of my comfort zone on new trails.

Moving my body in the crisp Victorian air is the perfect antidote to winter stagnation, and can help lower blood pressure, improve cardiovascular health, increase flexibility and boost mood.

It's the ultimate calorie burner, too. A brisk stroll in the snow can often turn into a vigorous heart starter and is incredibly effective in improving blood sugar and insulin intolerance.

Physical activity in the mountains certainly improves your fitness, as even with gradual walks and hill climbs, more

METs (the ratio of your working to resting metabolism) are required. With this in mind, you don't have to rely solely on skiing or snowboarding to improve your health; you can also try some fun alternatives in the alpine setting, including snowshoeing, deep-snow hiking or cross-country skiing.

According to research, cold weather appears to trigger calorie burn. Cold temperatures signal your "brown fat" (the fat that allegedly helps burn "white fat") to get to work, meaning that winter weather can be the catalyst for weight loss. That is, providing you lay low on the artisan cheese and those heavy craft brews.

Like all forays into the natural world, just be sure you activate all of your senses, soaking up the sounds, colours, tactile sensations, tastes and aromas, and appreciate nature in its purest form.

Rejuvenate complexion

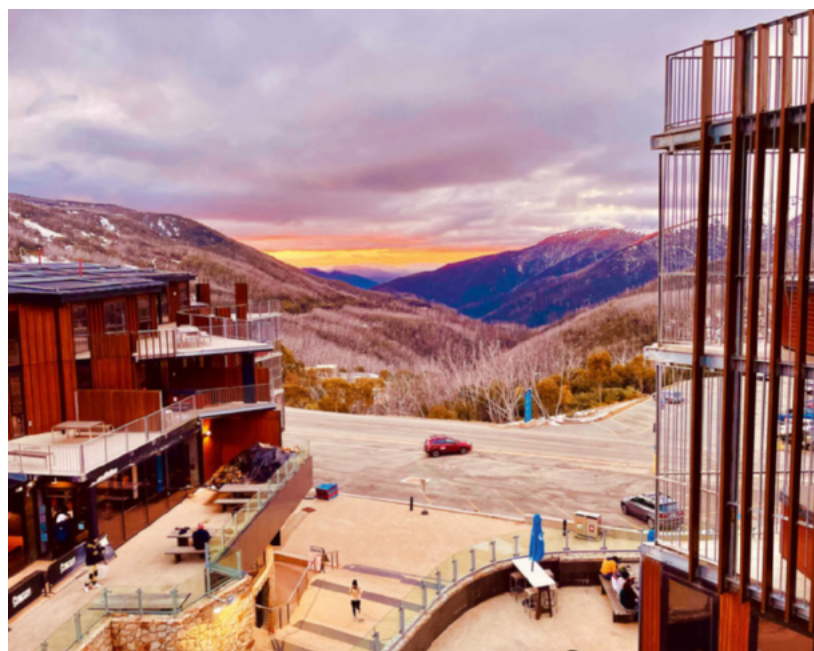
Another added perk of chilly temperatures and an alpine environment is that it can keep you looking younger.

Cold weather enhances the complexion and rejuvenates skin — which is quite ironic as when we think about winter weather we conjure up images of dry hands, cracked noses, red cheeks and a slew of unsavoury skin conditions that colder temperatures inflict upon us.

But in the spirit of testing this theory out, I checked myself into the Astra Lodge Day Spa to see if this was true. Like a big brown grizzly bear, I wanted to take full advantage of this cosy, luxe winter retreat, and if I had my way I would have settled into a long slumber until spring.

A trip to the snow is not just about testing the limits or reaching new heights, so it was time for this adventure junky to swap her thrills and spills for rest and relaxation.

With my face lathered in a soothing concoction of Australian organic clay and native botanical extracts, my skin therapist explained the basis of the theory that cold weather can indeed act as a tonic or astringent, keeping pores less visible and refined, slowing down



A brisk stroll in the snow can often turn into a vigorous heart starter and is incredibly effective in improving blood sugar and insulin intolerance.

and preventing the secretion of sebum, keeping shine at bay and reducing acne.

According to the beauty world, cold weather promotes blood circulation in both the face and body, having a magical effect on reducing inflammation, puffiness and swelling to the eyes and face which, in turn, can keep you looking younger.

Immune system benefits

Next up, I retreated to the Astra Lodge library and climbed into a plush sofa lounge with a soft cashmere blanket and a cup of steaming herbal tea and delved into some textbook theories surrounding the wellbeing benefits of colder climates.

When your immune system adapts to cold environments, its ability to fight off infection gets stronger. I had heard this before about people experiencing reduced allergies and inflammation in colder temperatures but wanted to find out if this indeed had merit.

In summary, mountain life takes advantage of specific climatic conditions

to treat chronic allergic diseases including eczema, asthma, nasal allergies and other ailments.

Add to all this the health benefits of increased vitamin D, adapting your oxygen levels to suit the colder climate, the physical exertion that comes from a day on the slopes, the mental health perks of simply building a snowman or tobogganing down the hill, catching fresh snowflakes as they fall ... the list is endless.

We all find wellness in different ways. Some may find it from tackling a black run with determination and speed. Others may find it by creating daily rituals like reading by the log fire, strolling through the snow gums or bobbing up and down in a magnesium pool. Some, like me, may like a combination of all of the above.

After a week experiencing all that mountain life had to offer, I can concur that the cold climate and alpine environment had a profound effect on me — a wellness experience which provided me with a powerfully transformative flow.

Top left The quiet breath of the mountain is all that is heard on a bluebird morning at Falls Creek. *Top* From its gentle slopes to its steep pitches, the mountain shares its majestic gift with village companions. *Above* Astra Lodge at Falls Creek: the perfect apres ski haven to relax and unwind after a full day of skiing.

I reaped the health benefits and left feeling energised and uplifted.

As I drove back down along the winding roads of the Bogong High Plains, all I wanted to do was breathe in the crisp mountain air and stay in this winter retreat forever.

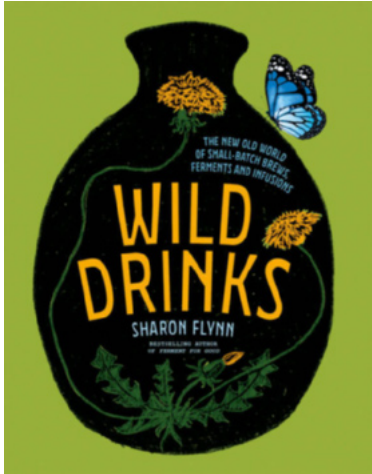
You see, even winter has its role in nature's grand plan, and if we're brave enough to step outside and experience it during the polar months, its magic will touch you in more ways than one. 🌿

Meg Law is a travel writer who lives on Victoria's famous coastline, The Great Ocean Road. She is happiest when she has her pen in hand documenting her latest adventures, or with her husband and two mini explorers in tow.



Wild Drinks

By SHARON FLYNN



This is an extract from Wild Drinks: The New Old World of Small-Batch Brews, Ferments and Infusions by Sharon Flynn, published by Hardie Grant Books, RRP A\$39.99, available in stores nationally.

Wild Drinks by Australia's top fermentation expert, Sharon Flynn, contains everything you need to know about infusing, brewing and fermenting delicious drinks. Across six lengthy chapters, you'll learn the basics of wild fermentation, the equipment you need, tips and tricks as well as over 60 recipes. In it, discover drinks made from grain, including farmhouse sake, wild beer and kvass. You can also enjoy recipes for wild apple cider, country wine and wild soda as well as crowd favourites like kombucha, mead and ginger beer. On your journey, you'll reduce waste and use fermentation by-products in recipes for crackers, pancakes, risotto and more. The how-to guide *Wild Drinks* is a perfect jumping-off point for anyone who is curious to learn more about the magical world of brewing and fermenting your own drinks.



Rhubarb Fizz

This is a gorgeous, sweet, tart fizz that can get slightly boozy. Rhubarb is great for your gut and has been used medicinally for thousands of years. I craved it in all its forms all through my pregnancies and beyond.

Makes: 2L **Preparation:** 10 mins, plus 1 hour sitting time **Fermentation time:** 3–5 days
Equipment: 2L jar, muslin (cheesecloth), bottles

300g chopped rhubarb (about a bunch)
250g fine sugar

Splash vinegar (white wine, apple-cider vinegar or kombucha)

Juice ½ lemon
2L water

Freeze and thaw the rhubarb if you have time; it'll bring out the flavour a little more.

Place the rhubarb in the jar with the sugar, vinegar and lemon juice and leave to macerate for an hour. Add the water and stir well.

Cover with a cloth and leave for 3–5 days, stirring now and again and checking on the flavour. When it is no longer too sweet and is slightly

effervescent (and before it turns too sour), prepare to bottle.

Strain through a cloth over a sieve, gathering up the fruit and squeezing it to get as much liquid out of the rhubarb as possible. Reserve the spent fruit for other uses (see Note). Pour into good-quality bottles. You can add complexity at this stage by adding a few coffee beans and vanilla or a handful of rose petals, for example.

Lid your brew.

Leave out on a bench to develop fizziness. Depending on your brew, it will take anywhere from a day to a week. If keeping an eye on it is inconvenient, let it age in the refrigerator.

Note: You can store the spent rhubarb in a 2 per cent brine to eat like a pickle, or cook it up with some sugar and apples until soft. Serve with yoghurt or in pies.



You Say Limoncino I Say Limoncello

As long as someone is saying it. There are a lot of lemons in this recipe — or shells of lemons. This is a job for when the trees are dripping with lemons and you have already squeezed them for lemon curd or lemonade ... or maybe they are golden lemons with less juice than they promise.

No matter, you can take the peel and freeze the fruit to use in another ferment. Let's make good use of the peel.

Limoncello or limoncino, depending on what part of Italy you are in, loves to wait for you in the freezer for an unexpected moment after a lively, creamy, carbohydrate-rich lunch with wine and warmth and friends. Finish with a limoncello. Drink in the winter sun.

Makes: 2L **Preparation:** 30 mins

Infusion time: 3–4 days, plus 2 weeks

Equipment: 2L jar, muslin (cheesecloth), bottles

30g lemon zest or slivers, from organic lemons (see Note)
Juice 1 lemon
1.5L vodka (I use vodka at 40 per cent ABV)

Syrup
600mL water
6 small lemon leaves, crushed (optional)
600g (2¾ cups) sugar

Wash the lemons well and let dry. Zest with a microplane if you like as it more easily avoids the pith, but long, carefully administered slivers are more traditional. You choose.

Add zest or slivers and lemon juice to the jar, pour over the vodka and seal. Put in a place out of the sun, within easy reach so you can shake the jar twice a day. Just look and shake, don't open. Leave for 3 or 4 days.

After the first infusion, make a syrup. Bring the water to a boil in a small saucepan and add half the lemon leaves, if using.

Blanch them quickly (about 10 secs) then remove. Add the sugar to the water and stir until dissolved. Cool.

Line a strainer, carefully strain the lemon zest or slivers from the liqueur, then add to the syrup. Taste — add more sugar or lemon juice accordingly. Pour into clean bottles, add a lemon leaf, if using, to each and seal. Let the limoncello rest for a minimum of 2 weeks. You need to put it into the freezer and pull that baby out when the timing is right.

Note: You'll need about a box of unwaxed organic lemons for this recipe.



Wild Mead

A wild fermented mead is simply water and honey, left out to attract yeast.

While I do occasionally add yeast to my mead, I prefer making it without additional yeast — it's something to do with the purity of the ingredients and the magic of fermentation at its most innocent.

Preparation: 5 mins **Fermentation time:** 10 days, plus 2 weeks

Equipment: Bucket, crock or large jar, muslin (cheesecloth), jar with airlock, bottles

1 part raw honey (see Notes)
4 parts water

Mix the honey and water in your chosen wide-mouthed vessel and cover with cloth. Stir vigorously about 5 times a day, making a decent whirlpool, then stir in the opposite direction. It's a lovely and traditional thing to use a porous stick that will catch yeasts, which will remain in the wood if you allow it to dry. You can then perhaps inoculate your next brew with the stick. This is a witchy thing — let's not dull that with scientific descriptions! Stir like this for about 5 days; it will get frothy on top and the aroma wafting up will be tantalising.

Keep stirring intermittently for another 5 days. When the bubbles start to ease, strain the mead into a jar with an airlock. Sit it somewhere you won't

Champagne yeast (optional; see Notes)

forget it and wait until the bubbles in the airlock start to slow — maybe another week or 2. Strain well, bottle, refrigerate and let the mead age in the fridge for a couple of weeks.

Notes: The ratio of honey to water can be adjusted according to your palate. You may prefer a less sweet ratio of 1:6.

As an indication of the alcohol level of this wild mead, mine tested at 12 per cent ABV made at a 1:4 ratio.

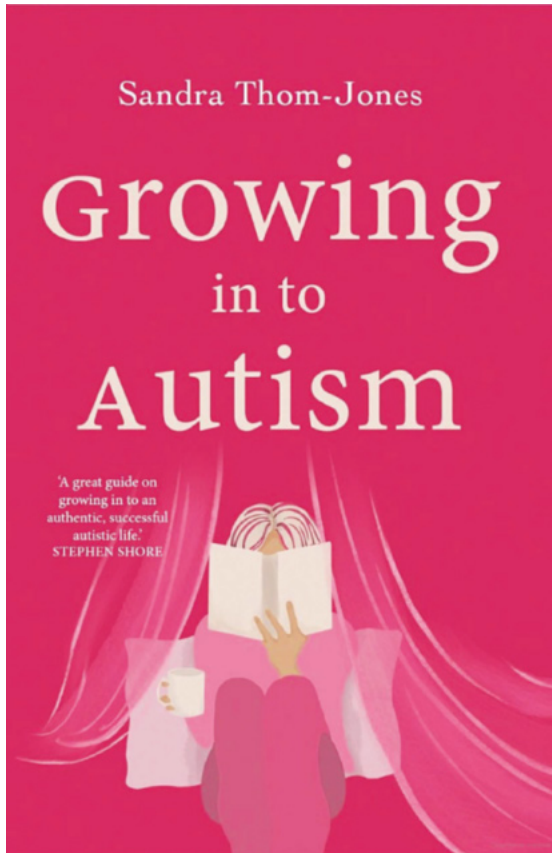
After letting a couple of batches go overtime, and running out of uses for the resulting vinegar, I felt bad about the wasted honey. After all, it came from the hardworking bees in our backyard hive. In came the champagne yeast. I use it from time to time and I know it works.



counter culture

Reviews by Kate Holland and Jo Jukes

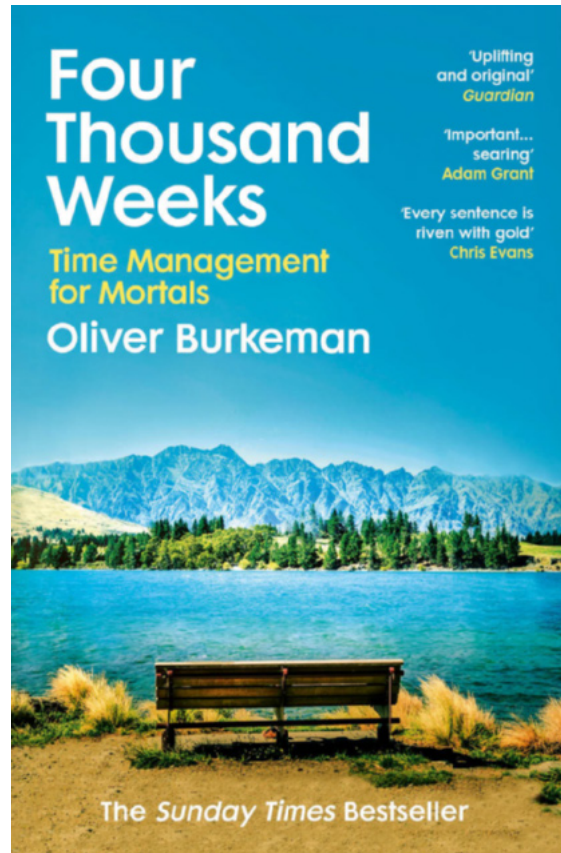
fiction



Growing in to Autism

SANDRA THOM-JONES, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS
An estimated one in 70 Australians are on the autism spectrum. If you are not on the spectrum yourself, chances are that you know someone who is: a family member, colleague or friend. *Growing in to Autism* is part memoir, part exploration of autism in all its forms. Academic, researcher and mother Sandra Thom-Jones shares her story of gradually putting the puzzle pieces of her life together to realise she was autistic and of making sense of her eventual diagnosis. Filled with amusing anecdotes and personal stories, alongside plenty of solid research, *Growing in to Autism* offers a window into life with autism, and is a reminder that we still have a long way to go to make our world more inclusive for neurodivergent people. **JJ**

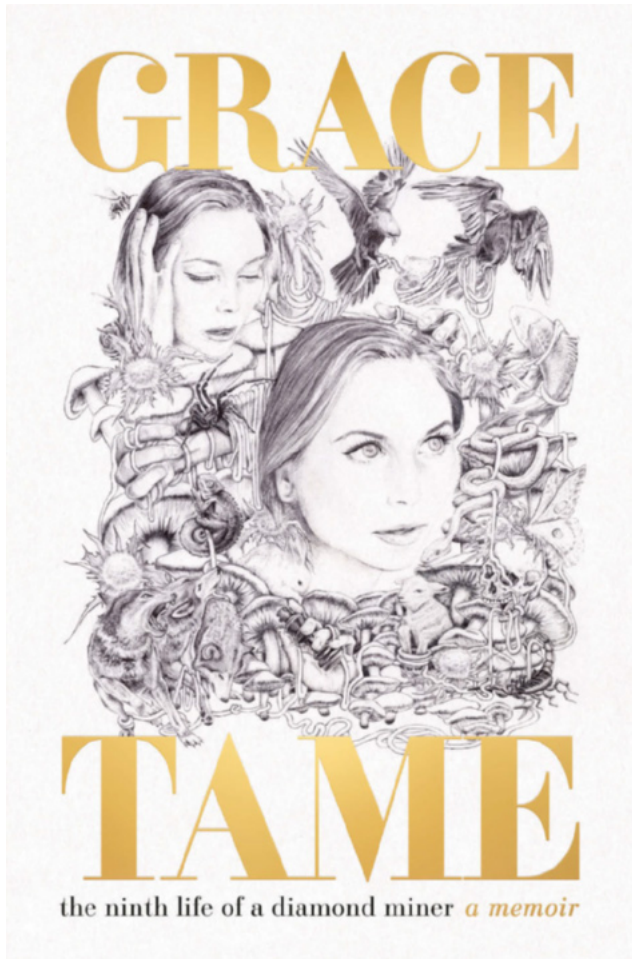
non-fiction



Four Thousand Weeks

OLIVER BURKEMAN, PENGUIN
Do you own your time, or does your time own you? That's one of the questions explored in *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals* by Oliver Burkeman; its title refers to the number of weeks in the average human lifespan. We have developed all the apps, appliances and technology to give us the upper hand over time, but Burkeman argues that it only serves to make us more impatient, irritable and burnt-out. With the added insight of philosophers, writers and researchers, *Four Thousand Weeks* deep dives into an exploration of the human construct of time and how it came to dominate our lives, and offers practical tips on how to re-frame our relationship with time. Thought-provoking, page-turning and endlessly fascinating. With potentially four thousand weeks at your disposal, consider spending just one with this book. **JJ**

non-fiction



The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner

GRACE TAME, MACMILLIAN

Grace Tame's memoir, *The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner*, is a potent account of her story, in her words and on her own terms. From a young age, Tame's life was defined by uncertainty, by trauma and strength and by sadness and hope. As a teenager, she found the courage to speak up after experiencing awful and ongoing child sexual abuse. In 2021, Tame was named the Australian of the Year and became the catalyst for a tidal wave of conversation, change and action. Like Tame, *The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner* is sharply intelligent, deeply meaningful and often blisteringly funny. It offers a constructive and optimistic vision for a better future for us all. **KH**

podcasts



Growing Cut Flowers

NICOLE & SARAH FROM LET'S GROW, GIRLS

Life is often sweeter when you stop to smell the roses. In their podcast, *Growing Cut Flowers*, hosts Nicole and Sarah (jointly known as Let's Grow, Girls) explore not just how to grow flowers, but broader ideas on how flowers can bring joy and escapism and improve our wellbeing. Episodes cover topics including gardening for mental health, growing your own wedding flowers and exploring creativity with flowers. Speaking with gardening experts from around the world, the podcast aims to simplify complex topics so that listeners can grow their own flowers at home. Whether you're a green-fingered expert or are "branching out" as a newbie, *Growing Cut Flowers* is a fun listen that is full of inspiration and ideas on how flowers can brighten up both your garden and your life. **JJ**



The Curious Life

JANA FIRESTONE

How can you turn tragedy into triumph? That's what therapist and author Jana Firestone seeks to discover in her uplifting podcast *The Curious Life*. Firestone interviews well-known personalities from television, sports and the media, as well as lesser-known people, to discover stories of how they endured their hardest times and reframed their experiences to go from surviving to thriving. Firestone interviews with compassion, understanding, warmth and (where appropriate) a little humour. Whether it's plummeting 14,000 feet to the ground in a skydiving incident and living to tell the tale, or reclaiming a sense of identity after gender transition, the inspiring stories of her guests will sometimes make you gasp, smile or even shed a tear. *The Curious Life* can serve as a reminder that light can be found even in the darkest of days. **JJ**

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Beauty created by nature

Fusing the power of nature with the potency of traditional skin wisdom is what sets The Herb Farm apart. We test out the natural skincare and body care range that hails from our New Zealand neighbours.

Words KATE HOLLAND

My intention for 2023 is to be more present with my time. Last year, the present moment was elusive and often hidden underneath piles of washing, to-do lists, half-finished sentences and half-booked holidays. But now, starting at a sparkly new year, my goal is to slow down and absorb as many moments as I can. How, with a very active toddler and the juggle of full-time work, am I going to do this? With a new skin and body care routine.

The Herb Farm's range of natural skin and body care anchors me daily in the present moment. First, I use the Softening Rose Cream Cleanser. My skin is typically dry; I can't use heavy cleansers as they strip my skin of its natural oils. This cleanser, however, is like mother's milk for my skin. My pores lap up the organic shea butter, evening primrose oil and sweet almond oil. It's soft and creamy, and gives my skin the hydration that it so desperately needs. I simply massage two pumps onto my skin morning and night, then rinse off with warm water.

You may have heard about Bakuchiol oil? If not, Bakuchiol is a natural retinol alternative and a miracle for my skin. The Herb Farm has blended Bakuchiol with

hemp, almond oil and rosehip oil to create a potent face oil that anchors me deep into the present. Not only does it support collagen production, but it also improves skin elasticity — two things my skin has been missing since becoming a new mum and passing all my finite collagen to my son through my breastmilk. Collagen is wasted on the young; I am sure of it! Luckily, The Herb Farm's Transforming Bakuchiol Face Oil is restoring the collagen I've lost and leaving it feeling luminous.

I use The Herb Farm's Nourishing Rose Face Cream to soften and protect my skin and provide hydration throughout the day. Cleverly formulated to work with the natural oils of the skin, the cream adds an extra layer of protection against the elements. I live by the beach in Byron Bay and spend a lot of time in the sun; I wear this cream as much as I wear sunscreen.

I've levelled up my shower routine by including The Herb Farm's Mother To Be Body Oil. Previously, my shower was a quick two-minute "pits and bits"-type situation. Mum life. I didn't really have the time nor see the point of standing in the shower for hours until I started using body oil. Now, it gives my shower time purpose. I rub a few

... I thank my body for growing and sustaining my sweet boy and send an extra dose of love to the areas that have changed since becoming a mum.

generous drops all over my body. As I do, I thank my body for growing and sustaining my sweet boy and send an extra dose of love to the areas that have changed since becoming a mum. The oil can help prevent stretch marks, increase the skin's elasticity and is safe for mum and bub. With 100 per cent natural ingredients like sweet almond oil, avocado, lavender and tangerine, this oil is grounding and nourishing. It also drops me into the present moment and I now embrace a good, long, solo shower for that "me" time.

After, I like to use the Almond & May Chang Body Lotion. The smell takes over my senses and I'm reminded of the almond tree in the orchard of my childhood house. As I breathe it in and smooth it over my body, I slow down and enjoy the memory.

Like many, I forget about regularly moisturising my hands and décolletage area. The Herb Farm make this easy with their soft and soothing Refining Hand & Décolletage Cream. This nutrient-rich cream has been formulated with mamaku, liquorice and seaweed extracts to firm and even skin tone and pigmentation. I keep the cream in my car and use it each time I buy my morning chai.

The Herb Farm's Hydrating Overnight Face Mask is a favourite addition to my nightly routine. There's something very healing about wearing a mask to bed — it feels like a three-hour spa treatment for my skin. While its antioxidants deeply hydrate my skin overnight, I simply sleep, then I wake up with radiant skin. The mask contains Boréaline® Expert, which has been scientifically proven to fight against the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles — I certainly have a few new ones of those that I'd like to soften.

And lastly, The Herb Farm's Soothe & Repair Cream is my latest mum hack. It lives in my nappy bag and I use it on my son whenever he has dry or itchy skin. Made with blackcurrant, linseed, flaxseed, lavender and olive oil, the Soothe & Repair Cream relieves and heals his irritated skin. I also love to rub it on my elbows, knees and heels.

The Herb Farm's all-natural, farm-to-face skin and body care products not only soothe and nourish my dry skin, but also anchor me into the present moment — now that is kicking off the year with good intentions. 🌿

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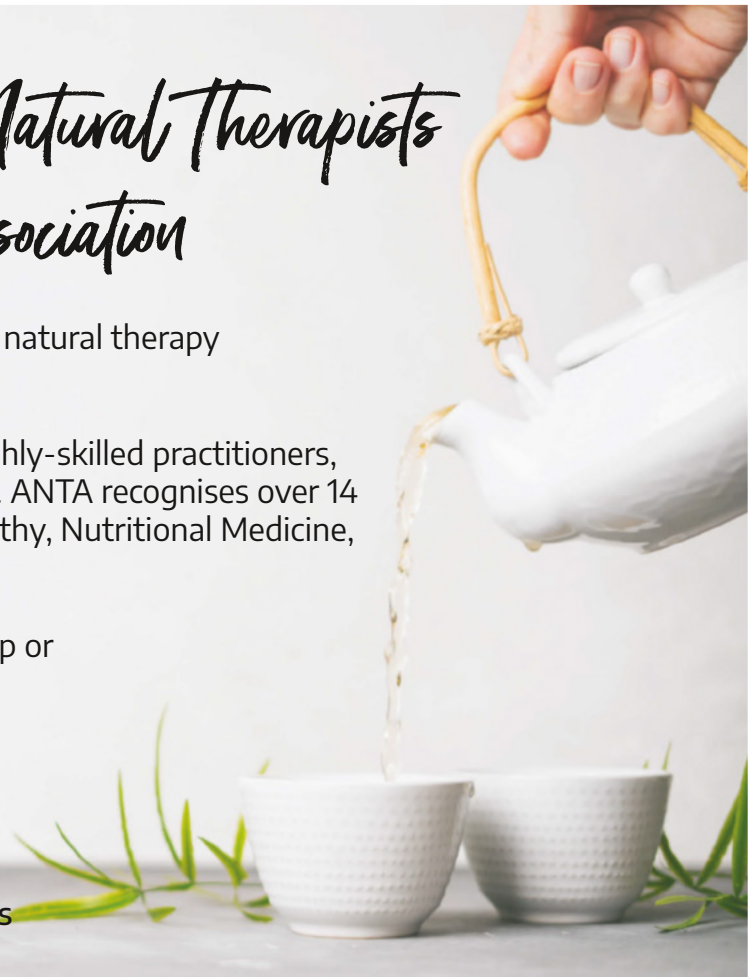
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A day in the life of a clinical nutritionist

We speak to Margo White, a clinical nutritionist and Endeavour graduate, about why it's important to eat the rainbow, what to do if you have fussy eaters and things she didn't know when first starting out.



What first sparked your interest in nutritional medicine and why did you choose to study at Endeavour?

I've always had a bit of an interest in food but my interest in nutritional medicine began after having my first child. She was ready for solids and I wanted to give her the best start to life, so I started researching and looking into how to support her through food and nutrition. I then had a second child and found myself feeling a bit lost and like I was looking after everyone in my family, but not really looking after myself. I desperately needed something that was just for me, that was also interesting and stimulating. I saw an advertisement for an Endeavour open day, went to the open day and immediately knew that I needed to enrol into the Bachelor of Health Science (Nutritional and Dietetic Medicine). It just felt right.

What does a usual day in your life look like as a clinical nutritionist?

As I am a mother to a tween and a teenager, my morning usually starts with helping them get ready for school. I then take my puppy for a walk and we drop my son at school on the way. When I get home, I normally make myself breakfast which is usually leftovers, eggs or homemade granola, yoghurt and fruit. I then start my working day and will either head to one of the clinics I work at for face-to-face consultations or I work from home doing online consultations. I normally have lunch around 1pm and am generally back home around the time my kids get home from school. I tend to check in with them and see how their day went, then I might have another one or two

online consultations. Around 6pm I start getting dinner ready, then help my kids get ready for bed. Once they are in bed, I like to watch Netflix with my husband, or I finalise treatment plans from the day's appointments. And by 10.30pm I am in bed.

Are there things you now do in daily life that you hadn't anticipated when you first became clinical nutritionist?

I didn't anticipate the amount of marketing and social media work that is required to promote myself and my business as a clinical nutritionist. At times it feels like I need a marketing degree as well!

What advice do you have for mothers of fussy/curious eaters?

- Share healthy meals and snacks when possible with your children. Lead by example. Your child may be more inclined to try a new food if they see you enjoying the same meal.
- When introducing new foods, add small amounts. For example, add a small piece of broccoli beside mashed potatoes. Encourage your child to touch, smell or lick the food but don't pressure them. Keep offering foods to your child they have previously refused by putting them on their plate. It can take on average 10 to 15 times of offering a new food to a child before they even attempt to taste it.
- Make food fun and attractive. For example, make silly faces out of meals or cut sandwiches into different shapes with cookie cutters.
- Where possible, get them involved by encouraging your child to cook with you.

They can do simple things like stir the bowl, grate cheese or peel a carrot.

- Keep mealtimes relaxed, fun and stress-free.

What are three things we can do for our health right now?

- 1 Move your body** — I recommend you find a form of exercise you love and do that. It doesn't really matter what it is as long as you enjoy doing it enough to keep doing it!
- 2 Stay hydrated** — Drinking adequate water and achieving optimal hydration is important for just about every function and cell in your body. It's required for energy production, detoxification, digestion, joint lubrication, brain function, circulation and kidney function.
- 3 Eat the rainbow** — Phytonutrients give fruit and vegetables their distinct colours and are full of vitamins and minerals our bodies need to stay healthy and strong. The more colourful fruits and vegetables you can add into your diet daily, the better!

Any final words you wish to share?

While studying at Endeavour, I learned so much more than just the course content. The Bachelor of Health Science taught me how to understand and apply my learning style, what a healthy relationship with food looks like and how important it is to look at health through an evidence-based, holistic approach. 🌱

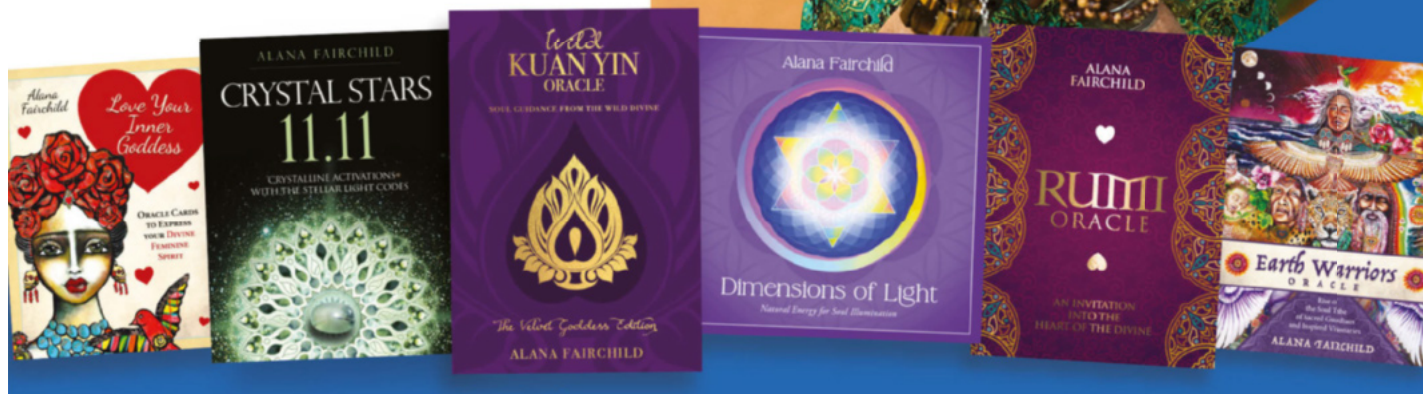
Margo White is a highly qualified clinical nutritionist and founder of wholebodynutrition.com.au. For more, visit endeavour.edu.au



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Vitamin D's powerful antioxidant properties protect the skin from environmental toxins and support a strong immune system.

The sunshine vitamin

Vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin", is most recognised for its importance in bone mineralisation; however, its significance in the body reaches far beyond the skeleton. Vitamin D plays a role in the proper functioning of almost every tissue in the body, including the brain, heart, muscles, immune system, reproductive system, hair and skin. So it is no wonder that a vitamin D deficiency is associated with cancers, autoimmune diseases, heart disease, neurological and mood disorders, subfertility, hair loss and a number of skin conditions including acne, eczema and dermatitis. Living in a sunny country doesn't necessarily mean you're exempt from deficiency, and you may be surprised at how many clients I see in my clinic that are vitamin D deficient in Australia. Fortunately, it is an easy vitamin to test for, and there are several safe ways to ensure your vitamin D levels are adequate without burning your skin, because radiant health requires optimal vitamin D.

Beauty benefits

The sunshine vitamin not only promotes a healthy mind and body but possesses a number of beauty benefits for skin and hair.

The skin is the body's first line of immune defence against microbes, and vitamin D plays a role in ensuring this antimicrobial barrier is strong. Alongside barrier protection, vitamin D's powerful antioxidant properties protect the skin from environmental toxins and support a strong immune system, which is important for fighting and destroying free radicals that cause premature ageing and disease.

Vitamin D also helps with optimising skin hydration, encourages new skin cell growth, turnover and repair, and is a powerful anti-inflammatory that is particularly beneficial for wound healing and the management of acne, eczema, rosacea and dermatitis.

Vitamin D also plays an important role in normal cell growth and function of hair follicles. Androgenetic alopecia and telogen effluvium are two common types of hair loss. Alopecia areata occurs when the immune system attacks the hair follicle, whereas telogen effluvium is a temporary form of hair loss that is associated with hormonal changes, high stress and other health conditions. Studies have shown a relationship between hair loss and low vitamin D levels, and increasing these deficient levels has been shown to result in hair growth.

Vitamin D may also be involved in hair greying and whitening during childhood or early adulthood, and supplementing has been shown to improve premature greying.

Healthy vitamin D levels

A level of 50 nanomoles per litre (nmol/L) or less on a blood test has been widely used to define vitamin D insufficiency.

Vitamin D deficiency can occur when dietary intake is low, which is often seen in vegetarian and vegan diets, or when exposure to sunlight is limited,



the kidneys cannot convert 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) to its active form or absorption of vitamin D from the digestive tract is inadequate.

As a clinician, I want to see around 100nmol/L for optimum mind and body health.

How to increase vitamin D levels

The most well-known source of vitamin D is via synthesis in the skin following sun exposure. The sun's ultraviolet B rays interact with a protein called 7-DHC in the skin, converting it into vitamin D₃, the active form of vitamin D.

While the sun is the best and most natural source of vitamin D it is important to be mindful of its power. Fifteen minutes of sunshine per day with your arms and legs exposed is adequate to maintain a healthy level of vitamin D.

If you live in a colder climate, work indoors or experience any of the aforementioned symptoms it is a good idea to have your vitamin D levels checked and begin to be more conscious of eating vitamin D-rich foods and possibly supplementing with a good-quality vitamin if on the lower end.

The recommended supplement dosage for vitamin D₃ is between 1000IU to 40,000IU depending on your deficiency. When purchasing a supplement look for vitamin D₃ (cholecalciferol) as this is the more stable, better-absorbed form compared to vitamin D₂.

There are only a few food sources of vitamin D, including cod liver oil, cheese, egg yolks, mackerel, salmon, tuna and beef liver. Because it is not easy for many individuals to obtain adequate vitamin D intake from natural dietary sources alone, many countries fortify foods such as orange juice, milk, yoghurt and cereal with vitamin D.



10 reasons to love bone broth

If you've got a bone to pick with bone broth, I understand. While I personally love bone broth and found it essential in my gut-healing journey, I know that to others it can sound a little ... unappetising.

If that's you, I get it, but I would love to have the opportunity to change your mind.

What is bone broth?

Before we start, bone broth is vastly different from the packaged chicken stock you may have used to make soup. Bone broth is made by simmering the bones and connective tissue of animals. It's a nutrient-dense stock that forms the backbone of many a soup and sauce, but can also be drunk on its own. You can make bone broth out of practically any animal, including chicken, beef, fish, buffalo or lamb.

I'd love to share with you 10 reasons why I think that bone broth is super-healthy and why you might like to include it in your diet. By the way, if you are vegan or vegetarian, then homemade vegetable stocks are delicious and nutritious for you too.

Bone broth is mineral-rich

If minerals and vitamins were dollars, bone broth would be rich! Bone broth contains protein, collagen, calcium, selenium, fatty acids, magnesium, potassium, manganese, zinc, iron and vitamins A and K. This provides your body with essential nutrients in an easy-to-eat and very easy-to-digest format.

Your gut loves it

Bone broth has been used for centuries as a digestive tonic, helping heal and seal the digestive tract's lining while reducing inflammation in the gut. An amino acid called

glutamine found in bone broth helps maintain the intestinal wall's function and prevents a leaky gut. Emerging research suggests that glutamine, along with other amino acids found in bone broth, may benefit people with irritable bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

It's an inflammation fighter

Bone broth contains the anti-inflammatory amino acids glycine and arginine. Why does this matter? Well, chronic inflammation can lead to a whole host of diseases, including arthritis and cardiovascular disease; therefore it's crucial to eat a highly anti-inflammatory diet and why I'm on team bone broth.

It's excellent for the health of our joints

Cartilage in the joints shrinks and wears down with overuse, which can cause damage, pain and atrophy. Luckily, research indicates that collagen consumption can improve joint health and decrease knee pain and stiffness in people with osteoarthritis.

It can improve our brain function

Bone broth can be beneficial for our nervous system. The healthy fats within bone broth provide a source of fuel for the brain.

Hello, glowing skin

Collagen is blowing up in the beauty industry, and with good reason. Collagen is a significant component of the skin, helping keep skin wrinkle-free, plump and glowing. Unfortunately, as we age, our collagen production rate declines, so it's crucial to replenish it through the diet to help slow skin ageing and reduce fine lines and wrinkles.

It supports the immune system

The small intestine acts as the first line of defence for our immune system. If the



LEE HOLMES

runs *Supercharged Food* and recently released her book *Supercharge Your Life*. Visit her blog at superchargedfood.com for cooking inspiration, recipes and tips.

gut barrier becomes leaky, this can disrupt immune system function. We know that bone broth is protective for our gut, so it's also a massive supporter of the immune system.

It can assist with weight loss and weight maintenance

If you are looking for low-calorie options to support a healthy weight, bone broth is an excellent option. Bone broth is full of protein, which can increase satiation while being low-calorie, which is ideal for the waistline.

It can act as a sleep aid

Glycine, naturally found in bone broth, may increase relaxation and promote sleep. Studies have shown that those who took glycine before bed fell asleep faster, maintained a deeper sleep and woke less throughout the night.

It's a bone protector and supporter

Our bones are made mostly of collagen, which supports their structure and keeps them strong. Collagen consumption can increase bone mineral density and stimulate bone growth. Bone broth is also rich in calcium, magnesium and phosphorus, which create and maintain healthy bones. 🍷

Recipe

Supercharged Lamb Bone Broth

Think before you throw out the trimmings and bones from your next lamb roast. Lamb broth provides similar nutritional benefits to a gelatine-rich beef broth, but with the comforting flavour of lamb to add variety to your soups.

Serves: 4-5

60mL extra-virgin
coconut oil

1kg lamb marrow bones
2L filtered water

2 carrots, peeled
& roughly chopped

2 stalks celery,
roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic

1 onion, peeled & quartered

1 bay leaf

2 tbsp apple-cider vinegar
Celtic sea salt & freshly
cracked black pepper,
to taste

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Place a flameproof casserole dish on the stovetop over medium heat and melt the coconut oil. Add the bones and stir to coat. Add the lid and transfer the casserole dish to the oven. Bake for 30 mins or until bones are browned.

Transfer to the stovetop, cover with the filtered water and add the remaining

ingredients, including seasoning. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to as low as possible and simmer for 4-6 hours. Add more filtered water from time to time if necessary.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool, then strain and refrigerate until the fat congeals on top. Skim off the fat and store the stock in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer or freeze in ice-cube trays.





JACKIE FRENCH
is the author of *The Chook Book* (Aird Books). Her oldest chook, Gertie, is now 17. Although Gertie's sisters have all long since fallen off the perch, Gertie still lays extremely large brown eggs most days of the year. Get in touch with Jackie via facebook.com/authorjackiefrench, twitter.com/jackie_french and instagram.com/jackie_french_.

Compost grows the best spinach possible, both in taste and quality of leaf.

The tastiest greens

I grew up with “spinach”, and yes, the inverted commas are appropriate. It was really silver beet, grown in the Queensland heat, with enormous dark green leaves that were almost as tough as carpet and needed thorough boiling, though possibly not as long as my mother boiled them for. Mum always put veggies in a large pot of water in case the phone rang and she didn't get back to the stove for 40 minutes or so, though if she was in a hurry she might just splodge a heap of dark green semi-cooked leaves on one side of the plate. At least our jaws got lots of exercise.

I rediscovered silver beet at Mr Doo's next door: stir-fried leaves, chopped stems and all, with various sauces. It was a mystery how Mr Doo could produce something so delicious in a few minutes when my mother's efforts looked more like something the dog had brought up.

These days, I love silver beet. It grows in the heat and cold when other veggies give up. If the weather's hot and dry and the leaves are a bit tough, remove the veins and stems and just keep the green. Purée it in soup, or chop finely for stir-fried dishes, or even pizza, or for spinach and ricotta triangles and the thousand other ways silver beet and other tough greens have been used.

I loved silver beet so much once I learned to use it well that I never bothered much with English spinach. Anything spinach can do, silver beet does better, though with less fuss and more of it.

And then it rained. It has been raining most days for the last two years. And our English spinach had grown into vast, tender green leaves that taste sweet and I'm making all my silver beet recipes again, but this time using the spinach they were designed for.

They are fabulous. Pass me another spinach triangle darling, and some more spinach frittata.

How to grow spinach

Spinach needs water. I have finally learned that spinach doesn't just “need enough” to make it grow — lots of water and regularly is required. This helps the soil stay moist to get flagrantly soft leaves.

Plant your spinach leaves at any warm time of year, when there'll be at least eight weeks till frost. Feed it well. The more you feed spinach, the more it will feed you, but don't put fertiliser on dry soil or, if you do, water it in well. Compost, of course, grows the best spinach possible, both in taste and quality of leaf, but spinach is fairly tolerant when it comes to plant tucker. Pick as soon as the leaves are big enough.

You can also try “baby spinach” for salads. Sprinkle seed thickly, feed and water well, then pick the leaves when they're the size of your little finger or smaller. A box of baby spinach can be grown on a sunny patio or even during winter in a box or pot near the hottest, brightest spot in the house. With care, you can keep harvesting it for 12 months.

Spinach and silver beet can be grown in pots, too. Try the coloured variety, with its red, pink and bright yellow stems, in a row in pots against a warm sunny wall, or by the sunny railing on the patio, or even on



the window sill or a window box, for greens any time you want to pluck them.

If you don't mind slightly tougher forms of spinach, there are a lot to choose from. Warrigal spinach is native to Australia. In a hot wet year vines can literally grow a metre across the lawn, or climb up the veggie garden fence. It easily grows wild, so I never bother growing it; just look for wherever it has sprung up this year and pick the youngest and most tender tendrils. It does need blanching: dip it in boiling water for 30 seconds then throw out the water to get rid of some of its high levels of oxalic acid. It can then be cooked in any way you like — it has enough structural integrity even to be stir-fried after its dunking. It's tougher-leaved than either spinach or silver beet.

The various varieties of aibika (*Abelmoschus manihot*) are excellent for subtropical to tropical climates. There's also a red-stemmed variety which I haven't tried. You can also grow it as an annual in temperate areas. Our only attempt grew strongly in summer but vanished with the first breath of cold. Okinawa spinach (*Gynura crepidoides*) is possibly the fastest-growing green of all, but once again, it needs tropics, water and tucker.

Brazilian spinach (*Alternanthera sissoo*) is also known as “poor man's spinach”. It grows prolifically in wet, tropical areas, in a bright green mound, but is not really worth trying in cooler climates.

Ceylon spinach (*Basella alba*) is also a perennial in frost-free areas but tolerates more cold than Brazilian spinach. It's a climber, so let it wind its way up your garden fence or trellis. Give it plenty of food and water.

Egyptian spinach (*Corchorus olitorius*) is another for the tropics and subtropics but will also grow in temperate areas. It's a fast-growing annual up to about a metre tall, with yellow blooms. The young leaves can be eaten in salads. This makes it sound like the perfect green veggie, but it can also be slightly bitter. If you have a choice, grow spinach instead, or warrigal spinach if you need something faster and more productive, and grow one of the many kinds of lettuce for salads.

When your spinach and silver beet go to seed, try cutting them back to the stem for a few months. They should begin producing new leaves and new seed heads. Eat the leaves, keep cutting them back, and by late spring they may possibly forget about seeding and give you another year of delightful greens. No guarantees, but it's fun when it happens. 🍷



The nature of integrative pet care



Is there evidence for the use of natural therapies such as herbs and acupuncture for treating pets? The answer probably depends on what is meant by evidence. A better question might be: How do holistic veterinary practitioners make ethical and best-practice decisions when recommending a treatment modality for a patient?

Integrative medicine is a curious balance. As a trained scientist, I always want to know what a treatment is and how it works. One definition of evidence-based medicine is to use good evidence to make sound clinical decisions. However, in practice, most vets also base treatment decisions on prior learning, experience and communication with their peers.

One common assumption is that the best evidence comes from double-blind randomly assigned controlled studies (RCTs). These are difficult to achieve even in conventional veterinary medicine. Ideally, the population in the study has minimal variation, and all have the same problem in a controlled environment. The intervention being studied is a single treatment or intervention — in the case of medicine, ideally a single compound with a known action.

But this artificial situation doesn't translate into a real-life biological patient, in a real environment. Our patients are different breeds (or species), of different ages, living in different environments. Many have more than one health problem. So can the results of a controlled trial be applied in practice?

The situation is even more complex when looking for evidence for the use of natural medicines. RCTs are not a good model for studying alternative modalities such as acupuncture or herbal medicine. Herbs are not a single compound, but a whole plant made up of many compounds that may have different and sometimes opposing effects. A herbal formula multiplies this complexity. One advantage of this is that it reduces any adverse effects because the amount of each herb or compound is very small. Improvements may take longer, but they may also last longer. By utilising multiple natural compounds, there is also often

a synergistic benefit, where the sum of the benefits of the whole plant is greater than that of the benefits of the individual compounds contained within that plant.

If you follow the structure of a standard clinical trial when creating a model for investigating traditional Chinese herbs or acupuncture, then it is difficult to study the treatment as it is traditionally used. For example, traditional acupuncture is tailored to an individual patient and uses points that address an individual imbalance and local points for a specific condition. So two dogs receiving traditional acupuncture to treat hip dysplasia may have different prescriptions of points. But a clinical trial of acupuncture for hip dysplasia may use a "cookbook" approach and compare a set of patients using the same points, with a subset control group that does not receive acupuncture.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) also includes diet and lifestyle changes that are important for long-term improvements, but these wouldn't be considered in a controlled trial.

Despite these challenges, we do consider science, as well as the tradition, when making treatment recommendations.

I'll try to give one example. In TCM herbal medicine, we are trained to first make a TCM diagnosis, create a goal for treatment and then prescribe a herbal formula. We may refer to biomedical scientific research to fine-tune the choice. For example, when prescribing herbal support for a patient with a cutaneous mast cell tumour, we may make a TCM assessment of "Blood Deficiency". (In TCM, Blood Deficiency and Blood Stasis are common imbalances in dogs presenting with skin tumours.) The TCM herbal formula Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang (XFZYT, literally "Drive Stasis from the Mansion of Blood") is prescribed for Blood Deficiency and Blood Stasis. Histamine release from degranulating mast cells is a potential complication and driver of mast cell cancer. One of the sub-formulae contained within XFZYT: Si Wu Tang (or "Four Materials Decoction") has been shown to reduce histamine release from mast cell tumours in mouse studies. Other herbs in the formula have numerous non-specific anticancer, anti-angiogenic and anti-inflammatory effects.

This example is oversimplified, and in integrative care a patient is also likely to have diet and lifestyle changes, other herbs and supplements and conventional care. It illustrates, however, how we may approach combining science and tradition.

My approach to integrative veterinary medicine has always encompassed science and tradition. Over time, there is an increasing body of research, which may increase the "evidence" for use of complementary and alternative treatments. The challenge is to ensure the studies are of good quality and relevant. We also need to continually reflect on our practice and ensure that the treatments we recommend benefit our patients, whether that be improved overall survival or their quality of life. We must also communicate with our peers and share our results.

What an exciting time to practise integrative care. 🌱



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is a Sydney-based anti-ageing physician and writer. He is the author of three books including his latest, *The Wellness Guide to Preventing the Diseases of Ageing*. He has also designed the app *The Diet Guide to Ageing Prevention*.

Can we stop the ageing clock?

In recent times there's been an explosion of hypotheses and technologies that might make the elusive promise of eternal youthfulness an achievable reality. Scientists are currently falling over each other in their enthusiastic zeal to explain how ageing can be aborted and even reversed. There's no shortage of strategies that promise to assuage our collective desire to remain forever young. Stem cell rejuvenation, injecting young blood into the aged, persistently eating less, intermittent fasting, drugs such as rapamycin which promote the elimination of cellular garbage and metformin, a pharmaceutical used to treat diabetes but which can also ramp up stem cell production, have all been posited as longevity promoters. These drugs are not without their side effects. Rapamycin can weaken the immune system while metformin can deplete your body of energy-providing B cell vitamins. Just how plausible, accessible and safe are all these approaches, or are we being sold unrealistic hype by avaricious hucksters keener on the dollar than our wellbeing?

They can also mutate into cancer cells, which makes them doubly undesirable. Once again scientists have orchestrated a suis generis combination of actors harnessing the power of the vitamin-like substance quercetin and dasatinib, a drug commonly used in leukaemia chemotherapy, to eradicate senescent cells. This twosome has already been used to treat fibrotic lung disease and diabetes-associated kidney dysfunction, albeit in small-scale pilot studies. The authors of this discovery have cautioned that we have a long way to go yet before research informs us that these substances are ready for prime time.

That's the problem with stem cells. They might work in the test tube, on animals and in limited studies on humans, but we don't yet have the evidence that they might de-age us.

Mitochondrial dysfunction

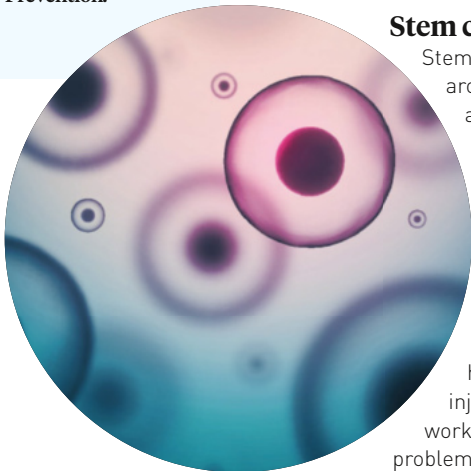
Mitochondria are the batteries that energise your cells, and like all batteries they eventually become disabled and dysfunctional. The race has always been on to come up with that omnipotent antioxidant that would coat your mitochondria in a protective shield, enabling them to withstand the mounting chemical salvos that ultimately cremate this indispensable energy generator.

The closest we've come to unveiling the mitochondrial holy grail is a nutrient called coenzyme Q10. This is an antioxidant that operates at the epicentre of energy production within this organelle. It is obtained from food mostly of animal origin such as oily fish including salmon and tuna, organ meats like liver, as well as nuts and whole grains, but the vast majority of the coenzyme Q10 we need is manufactured in the body. This function declines substantially as we get older, which is why taking supplements might be helpful. The problem is it's not very well absorbed, which has led to the formulation of refined iterations like ubiquinol, idebenone and MitoQ, designed to maximise its accessibility to the mitochondria. Human studies showing that supplementing with these actually slows ageing have yet to be executed.

Telomere shortening

Telomeres are protective caps at the end of chromosomes where your genes are housed, and like aglets, the small bits of metal at the end of shoelaces, they preserve their integrity, allowing the ongoing replication of your cells. With ageing they become frayed and shortened, making replication more difficult and growing older imminent. Restoring telomeres has similarly been a steadfast preoccupation of the anti-ageing community. Vitamin B12, vitamin C, the drug metformin, caloric restriction and a formulation known as TA-65, that contains the herb astragalus and other natural ingredients, have all been espoused as telomere preservers.

Centenarians enjoy longevity due to a combination of fortitude, stoicism and fortunate genetics, not by embracing the above technologies. Whether we can use these tools to achieve similar Sisyphian achievements has yet to be determined.



Stem cell restoration

Stem cell technology has been around for a while, and there's an abundance of research showing that these primordial cells that are primed to build tissues and organs anew can be utilised to replace ailing and decrepit body parts that are no longer serving us. These cells are located in your fat from whence they can be harvested and purified and then injected back into your body to work their rejuvenating magic. The problem is that these stem cells aren't exactly hardy and robust. They deteriorate rather easily, acquiring the diminished and ageing features of the very cells they are designed to replace. No problem: ingenious scientists have found a way to overcome this obstacle.

What they did was pair resveratrol, found in the skin of red grapes, an antioxidant already embraced by the anti-ageing community as a potential revitalising blockbuster, with a drug called 5-azacytidine, a substance with matching preservation potential. The aim was to fashion a uniquely potent stem cell booster that would guarantee stem cell survival and ongoing replication in the harsh and unforgiving terrain of the ageing body. Metformin, the diabetic drug, has been similarly repurposed to achieve such an outcome. Eating less has also been found to seed stem cells, at least in older mice.

Aside from devising a methodology to foster stem cell immortality, scientists have also had to focus on another spectre that threatens the durability of stem cells and that is the presence of senescent cells. As the name implies, these are cells that have undergone age-related degeneration and obsolescence and their dying embers emit nefarious chemicals which destroy stem cells.

The closest we've come to unveiling the mitochondrial holy grail is a nutrient called coenzyme Q10.



Recurrent sinusitis

Sinusitis is a condition of inflammation of the nasal passages. Recurrent sinusitis is a common problem, but few people realise the implications unless it is severe. A 45-year-old man came into the clinic sniffing loudly. He had been having trouble with recurrent sinus problems for as long as he could remember. Despite multiple visits to a variety of doctors, including surgeons to enlarge his nasal passages, he was still experiencing problems breathing.

For years he had been suffering regular bouts of sinusitis, frontal headaches, facial pain in the sinus area and teeth and a persistent cough — as though the mucus was running down the back of his throat, known as postnasal drip. These symptoms had greatly impacted on his sleep over the years — he would wake up with his nose blocked and not being able to breathe — which further impacted on his overall health and immunity. These symptoms were not necessarily seasonal. Inhalant allergies are a common cause of sinus problems, but they are more common in spring due to pollens, and autumn from grasses, but this man was experiencing sinus symptoms most of the year with no particular pattern, and only relieved by regular medication.

Treatment

Over the years he had been prescribed multiple courses of antibiotics to deal with the repeated infections, but they kept recurring. He was almost constantly taking antihistamines and had used a variety of pharmaceutical nasal sprays regularly for many years. He had noticed that if he didn't use the sprays at night he couldn't breathe through his nose, and therefore couldn't sleep.

We discussed the addictive nature of these sprays. They can be extremely difficult to stop as they create a rebound effect, increasing the mucosal discharge between doses. I proposed alternatives such as nasal irrigation techniques using saline to clear the sinuses, including the use of a neti pot. This is an ancient technique and can be very effective if done regularly.

Another tip was to only use the spray in one nostril at night for several weeks, the time it usually takes to improve. While doing this, one nostril will be blocked, but the one with the nasal spray being relatively clear, the person can breathe a little. Over time the unmedicated nostril gradually clears and the nasal spray can be stopped in both nostrils. Using a saline only spray available from pharmacies could be used as a backup if needed.

A common reason for a recurring sinus condition is a yeast overgrowth caused by candida, triggered by multiple doses of antibiotics. On questioning, the patient had constant issues with his digestive system, with significant bloating and wind along with colicky pain, and had a long history of constipation. He had major sugar cravings so was regularly eating sweet foods, lollies, chocolates, cakes etc and drinking several bottles of soft drink

daily. These symptoms plus the history of antibiotics are common clinical manifestations of a candida overgrowth, commonly accompanied by low energy and sinus symptoms among others.

His diet was low in fruit and vegetables and high in meat and dairy — despite him saying he thought he reacted to dairy he drank milk in his coffees, drank flavoured milk and ate cheese most days, because he liked it. Dairy foods were therefore also a potential problem. As he was busy he also ate several meals a week at fast food outlets.

He drank very little water and often went to the pub after work with his mates having a few beers, saying this helped him to relax.

His energy was very low, partly because of the lack of sleep but compounded by the poor diet, candida overgrowth and lack of nutritious food. Antihistamines can also make a person tired.

On the positive side, he liked exercise so worked out at the gym three or four times a week. He also liked the social aspects of belonging to a gym.

Starting with the basics, I asked him to remove all sugars and dairy foods from his diet, except for three or four pieces of fresh fruit per day. After discussing dairy alternatives, I recommended coconut kefir to provide probiotics. As an alternative to soft drinks and milk, I suggested drinking up to two litres per day of bottled or filtered water. Adding the juice of a lemon or a little fruit juice used like cordial made this more palatable. I also encouraged him to increase his vegetable intake, particularly of green vegetables.

He was taking a zinc supplement, so we added quercetin, vitamin C and a B complex. Cod liver oil was considered important both for membrane repair, as an anti-inflammatory and to improve his very dry skin. We discussed quercetin as a possible alternative to antihistamines, which could also be taken as an acute remedy if he needed it.

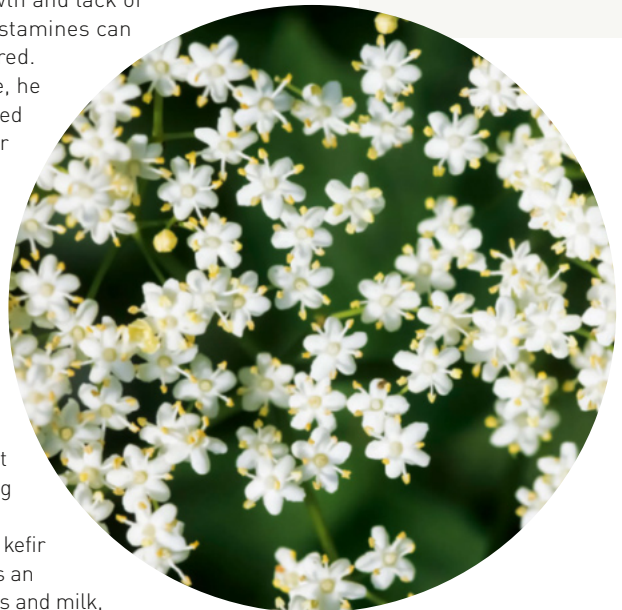
There are also some excellent herbal remedies for sinus problems associated with a yeast overgrowth. Elderflowers are the classic anti-inflammatory sinus remedy and we combined this with fenugreek to thin the mucus, gymnema to reduce his cravings for sugar and pau d'arco as an antifungal and digestive to be taken initially three times a day.

While he had considerable difficulty managing this program initially, particularly the dietary changes, over time he gradually became used to it, his sinusitis was improving, and as he was also sleeping better his energy improved. Overall he gradually started feeling much better, which encouraged him to continue. 🌿



KAREN BRIDGMAN

*is a holistic practitioner
at Lotus Health and
Lotus Dental in
Neutral Bay.*



*Elderflowers are
the classic anti-
inflammatory
sinus remedy ...*



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Pisces

Still digesting the rare 2022 Pisces alignment, now Sun's return fills in the picture: when true to your heart, you have Jupiter's blessings on your side and can let go of the doubts that sometimes beset ultra-sensitive Pisces. Then right on the change-oriented Full Moon of March 7-8, Saturn enters Pisces. This begins over two years in which Saturn will lead you. Gradually, a deeper sense of structure assists you to action changes long visioned. March 29 to April 6 is a standout time when Moon, Mercury and energiser Mars all harmonise with Saturn.



Aries

For the Ram, a sprinkling of inner calm never goes astray, best achieved by a daily practice. Since your ruler Mars enters cautious Cancer on March 25, and Saturn is emphasising spiritual discipline for the next two years, this will ease your way through a fateful time. A rare two New Moons in Aries, first on March 22's Equinox, then on April 20 a solar eclipse in Aries, make these potent months. You are building foundations for changes whose time has come. March 2, 12, 22 and 28-31, then April 11-30, are inspiring first steps.



Taurus

March 17-23 is fateful in sweet ways as Venus and Moon's Node align in early Taurus. Pleasant gatherings beckon, and a special meeting around March 20-22 adds significance to New Moon. Once the first Crescent Moon highlights Taurus, turning the Taurus duo to a trio on March 24 and 25, your sense of purpose responds, energised. Make the most of this by actioning ideas between now and April 15. Once Messenger Mercury goes Retro in Taurus on April 21, that earmarks the period until mid-May for consolidating and reviewing what you have started.



Gemini

Both intellectual and hands-on skills are a Gemini gift but multitasking can keep you ever on the run. While Mars moves to complete a rare six months in Gemini on March 25, you can finesse your ability to balance mental heights with satisfying practical pursuits. March 1-12 facilitates this, helped along by Mercury, Venus and Saturn. Or March 15-17 can be a harsh reminder. A more balanced rhythm is likely to dramatically improve relationships, most noticeable March 18-31. Then when Lover Venus enters Gemini on April 11, your soul pleasures just increase.



Cancer

As the Moon's sign, you wax and wane, shine brightly and hide away. Pisces time from late February to March 21 is likely to showcase both extremes. You start the month buoyed up by expansive roles, but by mid-March some withdrawal is needed. At least a hiding-out day on March 17 extended into the weekend would serve you. When energiser Mars enters Cancer on March 25, to remain until late May, your schedule will be demanding. So maximise your effectiveness April 3-11, then May 24-30.



Leo

Your Leo fire is fed by Venus on March 2 and 12, yet March requires a slow pace. Hold back on exciting plans from March 15-19 to allow for creative renewal. From March 21's Equinox to March 28, Fire energy and optimism rise, a new beginning beckons. When Moon grows each night until Full Moon on April 6, your ideas and plans mature. Yet large numbers of planets could pour Water or throw Earth on your raring-to-go ideas in April. This means that collaboration and compassion are the necessary fuel for a soulful and satisfying April.



Virgo

Clever, detail-conscious, and able to change plans are Virgo gifts. With Virgo Full Moon on March 7-8 these abilities are heightened. A happy link between Sun, Moon and Uranus illuminates your path of emergence. Saturn enters your relationship sign on March 8 to stay for over two years, demanding your gifts of flexibility. March 31 to April 8 includes another potent Full Moon and presents opportunities to finesse practical relationship skills. While April 15 and 20-21 May reveal flaws, April 24-30 is sublime.



Libra

Libra Full Moon on April 6 is your lunar climax, during a week that emphasises responsibilities and rewards financial restraint. You first get to feel the excitement of Aries on March 28 and April 10-12 when Mercury, then Sun, draw close to expansive Jupiter. Yet success in March and April depends upon embracing the Earth/Water harmonies, which boost both projects and emotional sensitivity. Life will reward you achieving a balance between surfing feeling currents, as well as enjoying the cool heights of thinking.



Scorpio

On March 25, Mars moves into a compatible Water sign and that strange disconnect between thinking and feeling starts to shift. You are coming to the end of a fateful Scorpio eclipse period in early May, so a sense of completion is in the air through March and April. From March 17, Venus in your partner sign ensures that caring relationships take more prominence. Likewise, Water harmonies between Mars and Saturn in late March keep developing throughout April as Water/Earth harmonies.



Sagittarius

Quick to embrace adventure, you have had a few false starts lately. Mars has been an opposing force for months, and March 25 ends this. Plans that were conflicted finally flow. Home and family will demand a lot of attention from March 8 through April. It will be a two-year journey in which serious Saturn urges you to see the benefits in building firmer structures around home life. March 21 to April 20 hosts a Sun sign period that is great for romance. Better still, Jupiter is in Aries until mid-May, boosting courage to follow your heart.



Capricorn

Capricorn eats up hard tasks yet emotional challenges are a different matter. Regardless of your wary attitude to emotional demands, Ruler Saturn begins a two-year journey through the emotional Water sign of Pisces on March 8. This will prove to be a source of satisfaction and prompting you to let people in. March also smiles upon home and family with Jupiter expanding your confidence. Since Venus spends March 17 to April 10 helping love to shine, relationships are a source of pleasure.



Aquarius

You ruler Saturn finally leaves Aquarius on March 8. As if aided by synchronicity, Saturn joins Sun and Mercury already in Pisces, right on Full Moon. Now you are prompted to better embody the values you speak, and to structure your resources for greater ease and flow. Beneficial Jupiter says home and clan support these changes. You get a taste of this sea change on March 2-3, with the best saved for March 12, 18-21 and 31. Then April 6-11 sees you fully in your stride, Pluto urging transformation and evolution.



Thriving with a rare disorder

WellBeing reader *Tessa Koller* shares experiences of living with a rare disorder and what it takes to thrive in the digital era.

Words **TESSA KOLLER**

At first glance, nobody can tell all the struggles I've endured in an era that is all about image. While genetic disorders affect individuals in rare cases, intellectual disabilities, depression and anxiety occur most frequently in men and women. These conditions are only some of the health issues I regularly face.

In retrospect, I shouldn't be alive given the battles I've fought and health challenges that have nearly ended my life. I'm one of those unlucky few who has dozens of medical diagnoses with numerous compounding symptoms. I live with a rare genetic syndrome known as 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome, also known as DiGeorge syndrome.

Get to know 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome

22Q11.2 deletion syndrome is caused by a microdeletion of the 22nd chromosome and is next door to Down syndrome. Within recent years, women and men have been discovering later in their adult life that they have this syndrome.

It wasn't until I was 24 and earning my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree when a cardiologist diagnosed me with 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome. It came about after I fainted in my drawing studio. However, all my life, I was categorised as different and suffered from dozens of minor to major ailments and delays in my childhood education and throughout my adult life.

It's worth being in the know of 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome, because with more discussion and awareness more diagnoses will manifest. This could mean lives will be saved if the deletion is found early in patients, providing further options for treatments.

Symptoms

There are more than 200 medical symptoms associated with 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome. Geneticists, cardiologists and immunologists are the specialists known to identify cases in individuals with congenital and structural heart disease. Specifically, I am primary immune deficient and most of my infection-fighting T-Cells my system produces are defective. These defects complicate my body's ability to ward off infections and diseases.

I struggle with chronic fatigue and repeated heart episodes caused by

supraventricular tachycardia. As much as I dislike interrupting my workday for napping, I've learned that a nap is a source of energy and essential for productivity. I've witnessed the consequences of overworking and ignoring these symptoms. On the opposite side of the spectrum, I've reaped the benefits of responding to my body's needs accordingly.

The turning point

After I graduated college and proudly earned my BFA in 2008, I spent one year coping with the news of my 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome diagnosis. In the spring of 2009, I underwent image scanning, and my cardiologist unveiled an anomalous coronary artery defect. The heart defect can induce sudden death in men and women before the age of 40, and I found myself facing the possibility of yet another open-heart surgery.

For four months, I went through various medical evaluations to determine the position of my artery and if I was a good candidate for the surgery. A date was scheduled to have the heart operation on Tuesday, August 18 at 5am. My anxiety and mental health were in despair and I was terrified beyond words. In that waiting period, I produced more than 30 abstract paintings and took sewing classes as a coping mechanism to overcome crippling anxiety. I had also designed my first clothing line and was expanding my creative horizons.

A medical evaluation showed that I have a right anomalous coronary artery and not a left. That's a classic 22nd chromosomal deletion defect. I have an unusual heart anatomy: the organ is turned to the right with a right aortic arch instead of a left. My surgery was then cancelled, and in late autumn of 2009 I began the most creative and rewarding journey of my life.

I was participating in runway shows, showcasing my handmade clothing designs and having gallery exhibitions. But with my successes came more health problems.

In December of 2015, while I was travelling for the Christmas holiday, my lung with the congenital cyst collapsed on an aeroplane and I had lung surgery that Christmas Eve. Following the trauma, I began suffering from full-body pain flare-ups and was diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

Three years later, it was early in 2019, digestive distress symptoms prompted me to seek medical care for ongoing intestinal problems. A CAT scan revealed that I had



a splenic artery aneurysm, and it was repaired at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago. The aneurysm was symptomatic and the size of a mandarin orange by the time of the surgery. It was another turning point as I became single after 10 years and relocated back to my home town outside Chicago.

I was tasked with recovering from surgery and heartache while simultaneously re-establishing my sewing and art businesses.

The pandemic in 2020 forced me to isolate until vaccines were available. But despite having received the vaccines, in August of 2021 I fell ill to the Delta variant of COVID. The symptoms of long COVID sent me to the emergency room a lot. Somehow, I was borderline septic shock, but after five days I fully recovered.

Then, this past spring, long COVID spiralled into an autoimmune response, and I was diagnosed with the autoimmune form of vasculitis called Behçet's syndrome. Behçet's flare-ups can last up to four to six weeks, affecting every inch of the body, and it's excruciating to experience.

Designing hope

Today, I treat holistically through diet, homeopathy and natural sources of healing. Meditation, breathing techniques and affirmations moved me through illness, grief and hardships. I must stress the importance of counselling and a support system. I had arrived at a place of accepting my whole self in all my flaws, surgeries and hardships.

Being of service in my sewing and art has inspired me to be of better service to myself and mental health. Creating art and using my voice to share my story was how I found my purpose. The diagnosis of 22Q11.2 deletion syndrome taught me to embrace these challenges through creative expression.

Daily, I receive emails from perfect strangers all over the world that ask me about work and commission me to draw their family portraits. They proceed to share their stories with me, and it profoundly affects me. It's these connections with people that bring me the most joy and motivate me to keep soaring to new heights. I hope that my story may inspire others to believe in themselves despite their challenges and differences. 🌈

To learn more about Tessa visit tessakoller.com.

Unearthed

Nourishing and natural health products and services from our advertisers.

Beauty

1 Young Living

Simplify your skincare routine with BALANCE by Young Living, featuring BALANCE by Young Living Cleanser that prevents breakouts and clogged pores, Dual-Phase Toner which helps reduce the appearance of pores and blemishes, and the Mattifying Lotion to lock in the moisture. Make skincare simple and effective enough that it will stop being a nightly chore and become a treasured moment of clarity.

W: youngliving.com.au

2 Rose Plus Booster

Touted as liquid gold, we believe this is the best face oil ever! With devotees like Kate Hudson, Emma Watson and Brooke Shields, it's no wonder the Rose Plus Booster has such star appeal.

W: mvskintherapy.com

3 Retreatment Botanics

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W: retreatmentbotanics.com

4 Eco Tan

Face Tan Water is a game changer. It's easy to apply, works quickly and subtly while clearing your skin at the same time. Pop some on while feeling drab and two hours later you will be left with a radiant glow.

W: ecotan.com.au

5 Dermatonics Nourishing Face Oil

A true hero product in the Dermatonics® skincare range, Nourishing Face Oil helps calm the skin and boost hydration. With ultra-pure oils that help calm inflammation and provide antioxidants, it is a perfect addition during dry months, at night and for facial massages.

W: dermatonics.com.au



6 Skin Glow with Elasticin®

The first ingestible in the Dermatonics® skincare range is the amazing new marine collagen-based Collagen Peptide Supplement with vitamin C. With a lovely subtle natural orange flavour, the peptides in Skin Glow with Elasticin® have been scientifically proven to accumulate in the skin, cartilage and joints.

W: dermatonics.com.au

7 Mineral Facial Sunscreen SPF50

Dermatonics Mineral Facial Sunscreens SPF50 are zinc oxide (25 per cent w/w) physical sunscreens blended with hyaluronic acid. You will enjoy a light and dewy finish with the standard sunscreen or a tinted version. Both sunscreens will help you to achieve consistent daily protection.

W: dermatonics.com.au



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8 The Herb Farm

The Herb Farm's Restoring Ginkgo Eye Cream is packed with high-performing natural ingredients like Herb Farm-fresh ginkgo extract and Boréaline® Expert to fight free radicals and the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It's also completely fragrance-free to better suit the delicate eye area.

W: theherbfarm.com.au/products/restoring-ginkgo-eye-cream

9 re'new

Learn and experience the future of ingestible beauty with re'new. This perfect daily dose of "on-the-go beauty" will surprise your tastebuds with its burst of berry while supporting skin hydration and elasticity with its 15g of collagen.

W: redrinks.co



9



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10 Hair Volume™ by New Nordic

Hair Volume™ is an award-winning formula that supports hair growth and nail and skin health. This alternative hair loss treatment combines apple extract, millet and horsetail plant with zinc and biotin, making this product rich in protein and keratin, known for strengthening and volumising hair and increasing elasticity in the skin.

W: newnordic.net.au



11

11 Sanctum

Revitalise your skin and senses with this rose-inspired re-energising mist. Complete with more than 96 per cent certified organic ingredients and actives, it's a 100 per cent natural and vegan formula to soothe, tone, hydrate and firm your complexion. Keep one with you for a pick-me-up spritz!

W: sanctumaustralia.com



12

12 Wanderlust

Embrace the season of change with Wanderlust plant-powered Wise Woman Day supplements, formulated with ashwagandha, black cohosh and shatavari to help relieve symptoms of menopause.

W: wanderlust.com.au



13

Travel

13 Explore Shoalhaven

Rejuvenate and reconnect with yourself in Shoalhaven. Breathe, flow, indulge and rewind among epic escarpments and 100 beautiful beaches. Join a retreat or curate your own wellness escape as you browse through local guides, healing therapies and indulgent experiences at their website.

W: shoalhaven.com



14

Eco-Household

14 Amaroo Eco Soap Nuts

Amaroo's soap nuts are made from a 100 per cent natural cleaner that grows wild in the Himalayas. They are most commonly used as a laundry detergent, but can also be used as a personal cleanser, shampoo, general-purpose cleaner, car wash, pet wash, carpet and upholstery cleaner and much more. They are non-allergenic, antibacterial, antimicrobial, antifungal, biodegradable and economical. Available in 100g, 250g, 500g and 1kg.

W: amaroeco.com.au

Food and drink

15 Nerada Organics Lemon and Ginger Herbal Infusion

Nerada's most popular organic brew is the Lemon and Ginger Herbal Infusion. ACO certified organic using the finest ingredients from Nerada's trusted growing partners, it's packed locally in Brisbane.

W: neradatea.com.au

16 Organic Merchant Immune Tea

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W: organicmerchant.com.au

17 Organic Merchant's Soothe Dust

Organic Merchant's Soothe Dust has been carefully formulated by founder and residing naturopath, Chalimah Jeanne. Created from a blend of organic, award-winning raw cacao, the dust is 100 per cent ACO Certified Organic.

W: organicmerchant.com.au

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Food and drink

18 Sea Amour

Sea Amour Wellness delivers on purity, sustainability and a commitment to overall health and wellbeing with its premium wild-caught marine collagen peptides supplement from the Atlantic Ocean. Packed with 18 amino acids for gut health, glowing skin and wellbeing, Sea Amour Wellness delivers this all-in-one teaspoon that completely dissolves in juices, smoothies, water, tea or coffee.

W: seamourwellness.com.au

19 Vital

Introducing the new vegan Vital supplement range, each a complex blend of plant-based active ingredients to naturally support your body to promote general health and wellbeing. Always read the label. Follow the directions for use.

W: vitaleveryday.com

20 Harmony Menopause

Developed specifically for women, the Harmony Menopause range contains a synergistic blend of herbs, vitamins and minerals to provide everyday support during perimenopause and menopause. With targeted formulations for symptomatic relief, make your menopause experience a positive one with Harmony, traditionally used in Western herbal medicine to relieve symptoms of menopause.

W: takeharmony.com.au

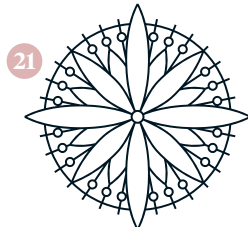
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Complementary health



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ENDEAVOUR Short Courses

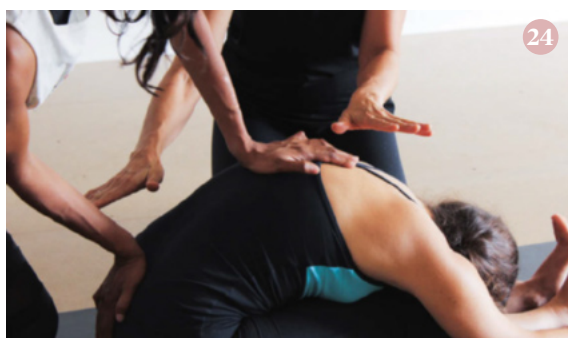
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21 Endeavour College Short Courses

Endeavour College of Natural Health is the leader in natural health education. Now offering short courses in nutrition, mental health and wellness, business and natural health, Endeavour College has been educating the nation's leaders and game changers for more than 45 years.

W: endeavourshortcourses.edu.au

22 Endeavour College

Endeavour College is known as the centre of excellence for natural medicine and is respected for its internationally recognised academic teams and high-calibre graduates. Offering courses in naturopathy, nutrition, Chinese medicine, health science, remedial massage and now short courses in nutrition, mental health and wellness, business and natural health, they're the best at it because it's all they do.

W: endeavour.edu.au

23 Alyte

Alyte is a new social fitness app built to create an online space for wellbeing. Our purpose: human, health and happiness. Offering on-demand Pilates, yoga, stretch and meditation, the Alyte experience is like going to a fitness studio with your friends but online.

W: alyte.app

24 Yoga Teacher Trainings with Byron Yoga Centre

Byron Yoga Centre has over 30 years' experience in offering quality teacher trainings. Two hundred- and 300-hour all-inclusive residential courses are run from the tranquil Byron Yoga Retreat Centre just a short bike ride from Byron Bay's beaches. You can also choose from a range of four- and six-day short courses in remedial yoga, yin, restorative, trauma-aware yoga and meditation.

W: byronyoga.com

25 Affordable Yoga Retreats in Byron Bay

Byron Yoga Retreat Centre is a tranquil eco-haven just a short bike ride from Byron Bay's beaches. Choose from three-, five- or seven-day all-inclusive retreats that include the full program and massages. Guests enjoy nourishing vegetarian food, the lush gardens and swimming pool and authentic yoga that comes from Byron Yoga Centre's 35 years of experience.

W: byronyoga.com

26 iKOU

Naomi Whitfeld is the Founder of iKOU, an iconic Australian organic skincare and spa lifestyle brand. Naomi's book, *iKOU: Energise your Life*, is a beautifully presented and inspiring 344-page read. In it, you'll learn the iKOU story,



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along with wellness tools to energise your life and inspire rituals to rest, relax and restore — such as to de-stress or improve sleep. The book also features intuitive meal planning and nourishing food recipes. When we are busy or lacking energy, we often stop paying attention to the fuel we are feeding our bodies. Naomi hopes to inspire people to nourish their busy bodies with healthy and nutritious foods and to experience what it means to truly thrive through a wellbeing lifestyle.

W: ikou.com.au



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Thinking about a career in yoga? Discover Byron Yoga Centre, one of Australia's longest-running yoga studios. Established in 1988, Byron Yoga Centre is known for its authentic and comprehensive yoga trainings.



Byron Yoga Centre has over 30 years' experience and is one of the best-known training options for new and established yoga teachers. It has trained more than 3000 yoga teachers and offers an ever-evolving range of courses. Choosing Byron Yoga Centre for your training assures you of quality and authenticity.

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200-hour RYT certificate at the successful completion of the residential training. Those with limited time can opt for the 12-day concise course. This requires additional correspondence components and practical teaching following the residential training, so it can take a few more months until you are certified to teach.

300-hour Level 2 Teacher Training

Byron Yoga Centre also offers this as a 20- or 12-day option. Both residential courses require additional online study and practical teaching experience before you are awarded your 300-hour qualification. You can then apply to Yoga Alliance for your 500-hour RYT certification. Students who did their 200-hour training with another Yoga Alliance-accredited course can join this 300-hour course once they complete a short online Conversion Course.

The 300-hour training appeals to those who want to delve deeper in yogic philosophy, pranayama and meditation. You will also develop your teaching skills through workshops and the practical teaching opportunities on the course.

500-hour course

Give your teaching career a head start with a 500-hour qualification. Byron Yoga Centre runs a back-to-back Level 1 and Level 2 as a 40-day residential course at Byron Yoga Retreat Centre, ideal for those with aspirations to fast track their career in yoga teaching.

Yin yoga

Six-day training to explore the theory and methodology of this potent practice. Become equipped to add Yin Yoga to your classes or self-practice.

Restorative yoga

Four-day course dives into this deeply relaxing modality. Learn how to correctly prop and teach a range of poses, the background and the many benefits.

Prenatal yoga

Nine-day course equips you to become an 85-hour RPYT to teach prenatal classes and to welcome pregnant students into a general yoga class.

Remedial yoga

Six-day training led by Bec Isaacs, for those looking to expand their knowledge of applied anatomy and gain a more individual approach to teaching.

Meditation teacher training

Six or nine days with Swami Pujan. Establish and deepen your meditation practice; learn to teach meditation as part of a yoga class.

Trauma-aware yoga

Four-day course for teachers to look at the impacts of trauma and how to incorporate trauma awareness into classes to better assist students. 🧘

For more details on all Byron Yoga Centre's trainings and retreats visit byronyoga.com, email admin@byronyoga.com or call 02 6685 8327.

Byron Yoga Retreat Centre

You will be staying at Byron Yoga Retreat Centre if you choose to study Byron Yoga Centre's residential courses. The tranquil eco haven is just a short walk or cycle from Byron Bay's beautiful beaches and iconic town.

The accommodation is clean and comfortable, and the yoga studios and swimming pool are surrounded by lush gardens. The wonderful plant-based food is fresh and nourishing and much of the produce comes from the onsite organic gardens or is bought from local suppliers.

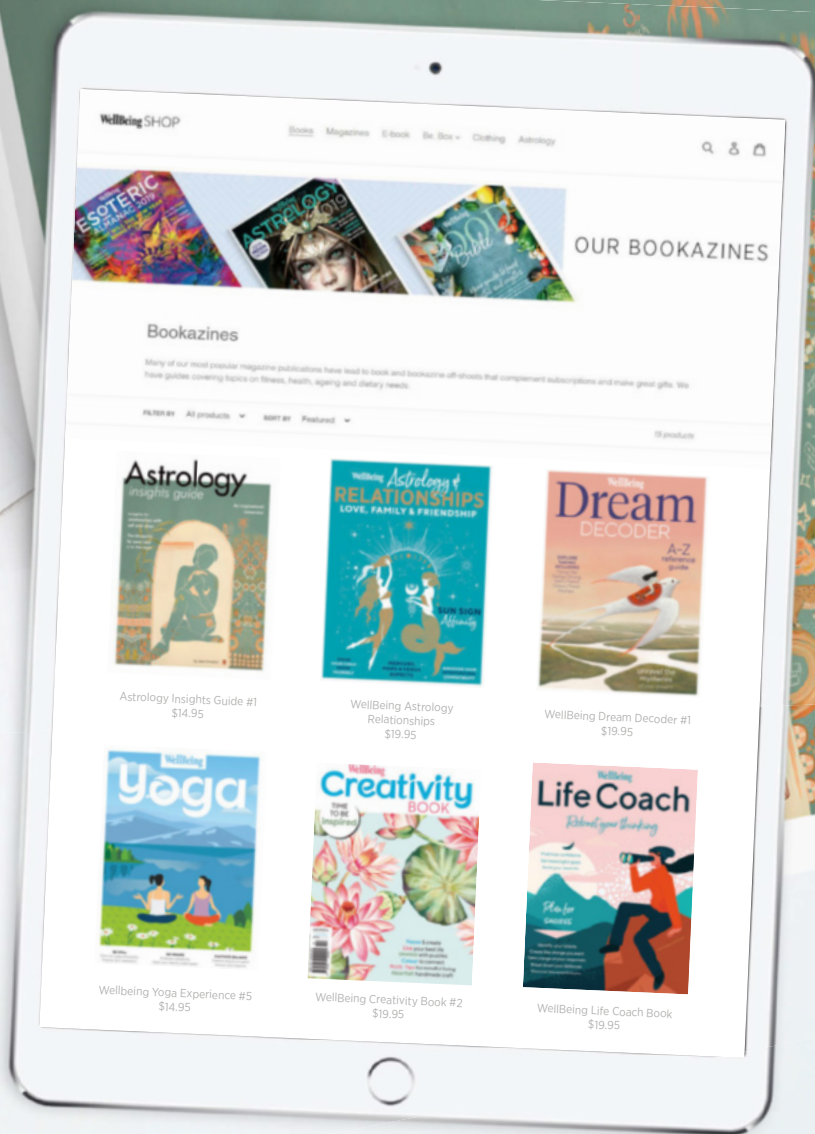
Staying at the Byron Yoga Retreat Centre for your training will ensure you are supported and nurtured in every way to maximise the opportunities offered.



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What's on

What's coming up for you

Autumn

March

~ **March, Global**
Endometriosis Awareness Month
endometriosisaustralia.org

~ **March, AU**
The Water Challenge
waterchallenge.org.au

~ **March 16, AU**
National Close the Gap Day
antar.org.au

~ **March 18–22, AU**
Walk for Water
walkforwater.org.au

~ **March 19, Clare, AU**
The South Australian Autumn Garden Festival
saautumnmgardenfestival.com.au

~ **March 20, Global**
International Day of Happiness
dayofhappiness.net

~ **March 22, Global**
World Water Day
worldwaterday.org

~ **March 24–April 2, Orange, AU**
Orange F.O.O.D Week
orangefoodweek.com.au

~ **March 25, Global**
Earth Hour 8.30pm
earthhour.org.au

~ **March 31–April 2, Swansea, AU**
ECHO Festival
echofestival.com.au

April

~ **April, Global**
IBS Awareness Month
fodmapfriendly.com
~ **April, Newcastle, AU**
Newcastle Food Month
newcastlefoodmonth.com.au

~ **April 7, Global**
World Health Day
who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2023

~ **April 16, Canberra, AU**
The Canberra Times Marathon Festival
solemotive.com/pages/canberra-times-marathon-festival

~ **April 22, Global**
Earth Day
earthday.org

~ **April 30, Mornington, AU**
Mornington Running Festival
morningtonrunningfestival.com

Illustrations Getty Images



Far left Tranquillity found
Editor Kate recently spent two solo nights at 28 Degrees right in the heart of Byron Bay. The beautifully designed guest house offers laid-back luxury with a private plunge pool and cloud-like king bed. Designed by Deb Garske, 28 Degrees is an adults-only accommodation with the conscious traveller in mind. For more, visit 28byronbay.com.au.

Left WellBeing in the world
WellBeing 201 must be one of our favourite covers yet! What do you think?

Right Lazy beach days
Editor Kate and her son Harrison love spending their days at the beach. On this day, they were amazed by all the different textures of nature – so beautiful!

Autumn

These are the fruits and vegetables that are in season and so will be the freshest.



May

~ **May, AU**
Mindful in May
mindfulinmay.org

~ **May 1, Brunswick, AU**
Healthy Body & Soul Festival
healthybodyandsoulfestival.com

~ **May 6-7, Sunshine Coast, AU**
Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) Innovation & Practice Forum
essaforum.com.au

~ **May 14, AU**
Mother's Day Classic Walk or Run
mothersdayclassic.com.au

~ **May 15, Global**
International Day of Families
un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-families

~ **May 19, Global**
World IBD Day
worldibd.org

Vegetables Asian greens (buk choy, choy sum, gai lan, wombok), avocado, beans (butter, green and snake), beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, capsicum, carrot, celery, chilli, cucumber, daikon, eggplant, leek, lettuce, field mushrooms, okra, olives, onions (brown, red and spring), parsnip, peas, potato, pumpkin, shallot, silver beet, spinach, squash, swede, sweet corn, sweet potato, taro, tomato, turnip, zucchini.

Fruit Apples (Fuji, Gala, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith and Red Delicious), banana, breadfruit, cumquat, custard apple, fig, grapes (Muscat, Purple Cornichon, Sultana and Waltham Cross), guava, kiwifruit, lemon, lime, mandarins (Imperial), melons (honeydew and rockmelon), nashi, orange (Valencia), papaya, passionfruit, pears (Beurre Bosc, Howell, Josephine, Packham, Red Sensation and Williams), persimmon, plum, pomegranate, quince, rambutan, raspberry, rhubarb, rockmelon, tamarillo.



Above Exploring Shoalhaven
Shoalhaven is a place to rejuvenate and reconnect. Editor Kate cannot wait to indulge and rewild among epic escarpments and 100 beautiful beaches as she enjoys a wellness retreat. Read all about it next issue! Visit shoalhaven.com for more.

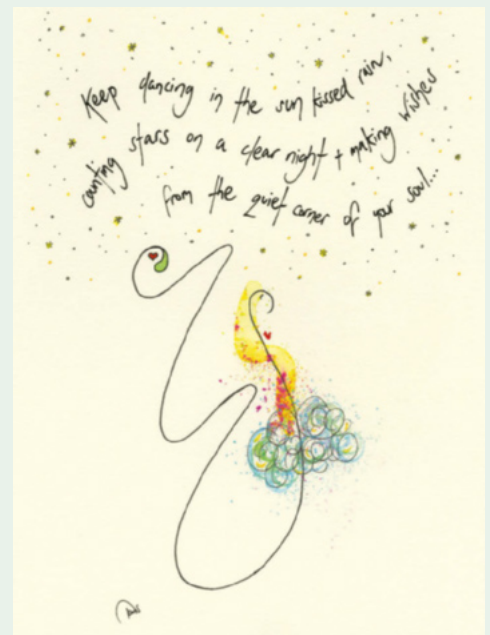


Illustration Tams at Soul Stories: soul-stories.com



moments of wonder

Aztec solar farmers

Before the arrival of the Spanish in 1519, the basin now known as Mexico City was home to around three million people. To feed so many people in a region featuring a dry spring and summer monsoons, the Aztec farmers needed a precise understanding of when seasonal variations would happen. The question has been, how did they achieve such specific understanding? Some refer to the so-called “Aztec calendar” as represented by the Sun Stone, but that stone was in fact solely a piece of sculpture intended for ceremonial purpose, a bit like Nelson’s Column. The answer to the secrets of the Aztec calendar may be even grander. Aztec manuscripts referred to Mount Tlaloc, which lies at the east end of the basin. Astronomical computer modelling has shown that a long causeway structure lying in a temple on the top of Mount Tlaloc aligns with the rising sun on February 24, the first day of the Aztec year. It seems likely that the entire Valley of Mexico was one giant observatory. By standing at a particular spot each day and noting where the sun rose over the mountains, the Aztecs maintained an exact farming calendar that allowed them to plant and harvest when needed to feed the millions living in the basin.



moments of wonder

Life's rocky journey

*It has long been acknowledged that meteorites landing on Earth contain organic molecules such as amino acids and could have brought life to Earth. It's a theory known as lithopanspermia, and basically involves interplanetary transport of microorganisms on rocks. In 2013 a paper published in the journal *Astrobiology* suggested that this passage of life might not be one way, using statistical methods to show that rocks from Earth could have been transported to other planets. If that sounds like a typical statistical inaccuracy to you then you might like to rethink.*

In 1971 the Apollo 14 astronauts, as is routine, brought back rock samples from a Moon mission. The samples are not always examined immediately, and it was only in 2019 that a particular rock was analysed. The analysis revealed that the rock was about four billion years old, but its age was not the only important feature of the rock. Analysis revealed that the rock contained quartz, feldspar and zircon, which are all unusual on the Moon but very common on Earth. Chemical analysis also showed that the rock formed in a temperature similar to Earth's but unlike the Moon's. In summary, the astronauts had brought a piece of Earth rock home, and not only Earth rock, but the oldest Earth rock ever discovered. It was liberated from Earth four billion years ago when asteroids were regularly impacting the "Hadean Earth".

Undoubtedly, the journey of life throughout the universe has been a rocky one.




moments of wonder

Opening the henge

A henge is a prehistoric circular, or sometimes oval, structure that dates to between 3000 and 2000 BCE. There are around 100 henges still surviving across Britain and Ireland. The feature of every henge is a ring-shaped bank on the outside and a ring-shaped ditch on the inside. These rings encircle a central circular area. Some henges have additional structures like standing stones or timber posts inside the earthworks. All henges have openings or causeways that run through the earthwork circuits to the central circle, and if they have two causeways they usually face each other across the circle. Mostly henges are somewhere between 20 and 100 metres in diameter, except for a few “superhengens” like the ones at Durrington Walls and Avebury in Wiltshire.

When henges were being built, people lived in small communities, raised livestock, grew crops, foraged for some food and made things such as pottery and leatherware. How did henges fit into their society? We know they were not defensive because the ditch sat inside the bank, suggesting they were meant to keep things in (rather than out). If we want to get some insight into how henges might have been part of life we can take a trip to Wiltshire.

Woodhenge stands just north of the village of Amesbury and about three kilometres northeast of the most famous of all henges, Stonehenge. At Woodhenge concrete posts now mark the spots where rings of massive timbers once stood surrounded by a small henge earthwork. At the centre of the Woodhenge site the remains of a three-year-old child were buried. Woodhenge is slightly oval and its axis is aligned to the sunrise and sunset. Next to Woodhenge is the Durrington Walls superhenge, which once contained timber circles too, and was also aligned with sunrise. The River Avon runs next to Woodhenge, and if you follow the river it brings you to the Avenue earthwork that leads to Stonehenge. The stones at Stonehenge are aligned perfectly for midwinter sunset. If you let your mind go there, it is easy to imagine rituals at Durrington Walls and Woodhenge at midwinter sunrise then taking a trip down the Avon and concluding your rituals at sunset at Stonehenge.



"All great acts are ruled by
intention. What you mean
is what you get."

~ Brenna Yovanoff

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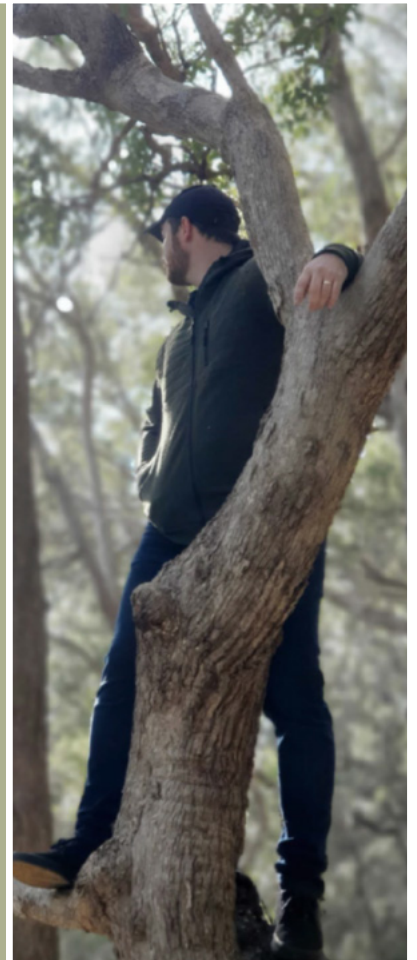


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